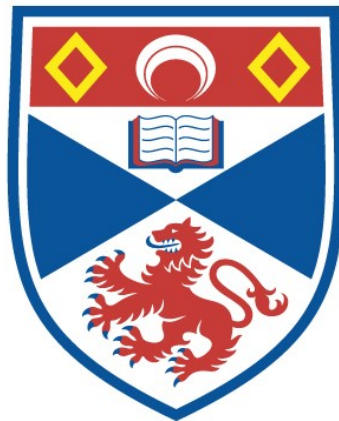


**IMPRESSIONS OF MONTSERRAT :  
A PARTIAL ACCOUNT OF CONTESTING  
REALITIES ON A BRITISH DEPENDENT  
TERRITORY**

Jonathan Skinner

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD  
at the  
University of St Andrews



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A PARTIAL ACCOUNT OF CONTESTING REALITIES ON A BRITISH  
DEPENDENT TERRITORY

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The dust of exploded beliefs may make a fine sunset.

(Madan 1934: no other references available)

What is then this ethnographer's magic, by which he is able to evoke the real spirit of the natives, the true picture of tribal life?

(Malinowski 1978: 6)

## ABSTRACT

This thesis portrays a diversity of impressions of Montserrat, a British Dependent Territory (BDT) in the Eastern Caribbean.

The thesis is a postmodern rejection of Grand Theory in the Social Sciences. First I interrogate the nature of social anthropology, both its theoretical and methodological assumptions. I then establish my own anthropology which is postmodern - partial, relative, uncomfortable and uncertain, and above all, impressionistic. The substantial chapters in the thesis support this postmodern impressionistic anthropology by referring to an ethnographic encounter with the competing and highly contested realities expressed by myself, some Montserratian poets, some calypsonians, some development workers, some local Montserratians, some tourists and the Montserratian Government and Tourist Board, and some travel writers.

More precisely, the Preface reviews social anthropology as an uncomfortable and uncertain discipline. It also establishes and justifies my postmodern impressionistic anthropology which is thereafter illustrated by ethnographic vignettes in the following chapters.

Via the anthropologist's impressions, Chapter One introduces the reader to the place and people of Montserrat.

In Chapter Two, Montserrat is filtered through poets' impressions of the island and islanders, namely through the poets of the Maroons Creative Writing Group which is led by Dr. Howard Fergus.

Chapter Three goes on to show that impressions of Montserrat, despite their highly contested nature, can be held not just singularly - as in the case of individual poets, but also plurally - as constellations such as the contrasting world-views of Montserratians and development workers on Montserrat.

Chapters Four and Five continue my ethnographic impressions of Montserrat by presenting, respectively, the labours of several calypsonians on Montserrat who seek public recognition for their work, and, union leader, Chedmond Browne's struggle to maintain the trade union workers' employment at Plymouth Port.

The final two chapters - Chapter Six and Chapter Seven - recede (ethnographically) from Montserrat: the first by considering the competing impressions and controversial histories of St. Patrick's Day, an annual celebration and commemoration on Montserrat; and the second by presenting a diverse selection of travel writers' impressions of Montserrat. The contentious content of both chapters affirms and reinforces the need for my postmodern and impressionistic approach to an anthropological investigation on Montserrat.

Finally, the Conclusion to the thesis sums up the aforementioned chapters and makes general comments towards establishing a reflexive and sustainable postmodern impressionistic anthropology.

## CONTENTS

<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>viii</b>
<b>Preface - "Take only impressions, leave only monographs": towards a postmodern, impressionistic anthropology</b>	<b>x</b>
Anthropology - uncomfortable, uncertain, and postmodern	xi
Writing impressions - the diversity of Haile Selassie's coronation	xxviii
I) Wilfred Thesiger and the colonial coronation of Ras Tafari	xxix
II) Evelyn Waugh and the comical coronation of Ras Tafari	xxxvii
<b>Chapter One - Introducing Montserrat Place and Mons'rat Neaga</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter Two - "Barbarian" Montserrat: expressive poetry from Howard Fergus and his Maroons</b>	<b>28</b>
A token Maroon	28
My token Tuesday - a commentary	35
Howard Fergus - in the company of "Barbarians"	46
Caliban's colony - Howard Fergus's "Barbarian" poetry on Montserrat	51
<b>Chapter Three - Conversing Montserrat: two place-settings evoking two constellations of realities on development and dependence</b>	<b>76</b>
The politics of development on Montserrat	78
Developing Montserrat the ODA way	79
New Year's Day interlude	91
Developing Mons'rat the Mons'ratian way	92
Commentary	100

<b>Chapter Four - Rum &amp; coke and calypso: explicit commentary in private and public spaces</b>	<b>106</b>
Calypso as social commentary	109
Calypso as carnival performance	117
Calypso as expressive performance	120
Calypso as impromptu performance	126
Scene I - calypso in the den	128
Scene II - dubbin' in de den	132
Scene III - calypso denouement	137
<b>Chapter Five - Chedmond Browne: teaching the past, protesting the present, altering the future</b>	<b>145</b>
An opening gambit - meeting the task master	147
<i>En passant</i> - Chedmond Browne and his liberation theology	153
"Check" - Propaganda and Plymouth Port	167
"Castle?" - A <i>Liberator</i> rebuttal	175
<b>Chapter Six - 'The Way The Caribbean Used To Be'? St. Patrick's Day and the 'Black Irish' of the 'other' Emerald Isle</b>	<b>191</b>
Celebrating or commemorating St. Patrick's Day, 1995?	197
Diverse impressions of St. Patrick's Day	210
Exposed - John Messenger's 'Black Irish' of Montserrat	218
The future of St. Patrick's Day and the 'Black Irish'	225
<b>Chapter Seven - Travel writing or ethnography: unmentionable glimpses into the author's personality</b>	<b>238</b>
Fulfilling fantasies: the process of travel writing on Montserrat	243
With imperial eyes: the travel writer's gaze on Montserrat	250
I) Books	251
II) Letters	258
III) Newspaper and magazine articles	260
Travel writers - 'innocents abroad'?	270

<b>Conclusions - Postils, postulations and postliminy: an overview of this thesis</b>	<b>287</b>
I) Blurred impressions - anthropology and the anthropologist	289
II) Social commentaries - poetry and calypso	293
III) Opposing conversations on Montserrat	294
IV) Arenas of contest: St. Patrick's Day and the travel writer's gaze	300
<b>References</b>	<b>329</b>
1. General references	330
1.1. General references	330
1.2. General poetry volume references	341
1.3. General music references	342
2. Montserrat references	343
2.1. Montserrat references	343
2.2. Montserrat music references	346
2.3. References to Howard Fergus's work	347
2.3.1. Fergus - anthologies	347
2.3.2. Fergus - histories	347
2.3.3. Fergus - histories cited from newspapers	348
2.3.4. Fergus - poems cited from newspapers	348
2.3.5. Fergus - forthcoming	348
2.4. Montserrat travel writing references	349
2.5. References to Montserrat news pieces	353
2.5.1. Chapter prefaces and postscript	353
2.5.2. <i>Pan-Afrikan Liberator</i> pieces	354
2.5.3. Montserrat newspaper pieces	356



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I dedicate this thesis of parts to those affected by the Chances Peak volcano, both those alive and dead. May this be of some assistance.

[I]n the course of our presentation, Gluckman said, "You're absolutely wrong about this - it's not that way at all," and then he explained how it was. On he went, and in the course of the explanation, the decisive crucial factor was that the Zulu said this - he gave it as a quotation from an important Zulu chief.

Well, that was fine. They were very polite and hospitable, and I think Max then took us all out and bought us beer. Yonina and I ended up at Max's house and stayed for dinner, and someplace along that time - I don't know whether it was Yonina or I - but we suddenly realised: Max Gluckman had worked in Zululand, and it was a well-known, well-established, well-authenticated fact that all of his field notes had been burned up in an unfortunate fire. He had them all in a little out-house behind - and while he was away doing something, his field notes burned up.

So the next day we said to Max, "Are you sure that the decisive piece of evidence" - we repeated the statement of the Zulu informant.

"Oh," he said. "Absolutely!"

So we said, "Max, if your field notes all burned up, and you don't have any, you have a good memory - to remember verbatim what was said."

"Oh," he said, "that was not memory, verbatim. That was structurally correct."

So we began to explore what was structurally correct, and he said, "That's what a Zulu informant would have said had I asked him the right question."

So we went back to London feeling that, somehow - very interesting, anthropology, isn't it? That's the way it's done.

(Schneider 1995: 128-129)

**Preface - "Take only impressions, leave only monographs": towards a postmodern, impressionistic anthropology**

Tourists who travel to the islands of the Caribbean, to Papua New Guinea, or Morocco are encouraged to be environmentally friendly, to preserve and conserve the tourist destination for others who undoubtedly follow behind them. In their contact with other places and other peoples, tourists are encouraged to "Take only Photographs, Leave only Footprints".<sup>1</sup> The ideal tourist is one who, thus, leaves undisturbed the corals off Thailand's Ko Samui island,<sup>2</sup> fails to score his name in the side of the Sphinx in Egypt, and refrains from hiring a member of Jamaica's 'foreign service' - a 'Renta A Rasta' to fulfil her sexual fantasies.<sup>3</sup> Responsible, ethical, and politically correct, the ideal tourist comes and goes: their footprints on exotic shores are washed away; their baggage is returned intact laden with souvenirs; their values and lifestyles are reaffirmed; and their 'sacred journey'<sup>4</sup> - their pleasure pilgrimage - is consigned to the cognitive hold of their memory as they continue with their everyday profane professions. Tourists, however, rarely live up to such an ideal. Many tourists are racked with the desire to travel and encounter difference - sometimes sexually; the desire to leave a mark - sometimes a signature suggesting immortality; and the desire to collect a souvenir - sometimes an appropriated lodestone from a brief experience. Such touristic desires correspond, strikingly, with anthropology: according to Pierre van den Berghe, 'tourism can even be seen as a mirror of anthropology itself: both constitute a quest for the other. In a sense, ethnic tourism is amateur anthropology, or anthropology professional tourism.'<sup>5</sup> A correspondence or a confusion between tourism and anthropology, van den Berghe concludes, '[p]erhaps, in the end, we all yearn to achieve better self-understanding by looking at others.'<sup>6</sup>

The subject of this preface is not the tourist visits to the islands of the Caribbean, to Papua New Guinea, or Morocco, but the visits of anthropologists who, I argue, instead of taking photographs and leaving footprints, take impressions of their visits and leave for posterity monographs about their visits. Whether it be Thomas Eriksen in Trinidad,<sup>7</sup> Marilyn Strathern in Papua New Guinea,<sup>8</sup> or Clifford Geertz in Morocco,<sup>9</sup> I argue that *all* anthropologists gain but impressions - his or her own, and those of

others. These impressions I refer to as “anthropological impressions”: subjective world-views - ‘loops of thought’ for Nigel Rapport,<sup>10</sup> multiple realities as I, using the work of Richard Shweder, would like to explain them. They grow out of experiences. They converge as inter-subjective constellations. They diverge as incommensurable positions. They are as subordinate and obscure as the world-view of a cult. They are as dominant and totalising as the world-views underpinning the work of a multinational corporation. They are multiple. And they are partial - partial in the sense that there is a diversity of impressions, but not one complete and whole impression. Ironically, I seek to explain below my own postmodern impressionistic anthropology which - itself - has grown from my studentship as an anthropologist schooled and experienced by impressions of this academic discipline. As an introduction to this thesis, this preface is where I set out my conceptual tool kit, my *bricolage*:<sup>11</sup> it is here that I construct my impressionistic anthropology out of pre-existing definitions of anthropology, social theories, and artistic experiments. The first section of this preface establishes my postmodern and anthropological convictions. This is followed by a second section which proposes an impressionistic principle of human understanding. Taken together, these two sections set up a conceptual base underpinning the rest of the thesis which is, essentially, an exemplification of my impressionistic anthropology. In sum, then, my work is a drifting attack against those who face - from the shore - the postmodern breakers, and cling to their footprints in the sand (in rejection),<sup>12</sup> or have been stranded on the beach like jetsam (in renunciation).

### **Anthropology - uncomfortable, uncertain, and postmodern**

Anthropology has been described, variously, by its professional practitioners as ‘an inquisitive, challenging, uncomfortable discipline’ (Raymond Firth);<sup>13</sup> as a ‘virtual anti-discipline’ (Keith Hart);<sup>14</sup> as an ‘intellectual poaching license’ (Clyde Kluckhohn), ‘born omniform’ as a social science (Clifford Geertz).<sup>15</sup> As a(n) (anti-)discipline, anthropology draws forth many such ambiguous, effusive, and ineluctable comments. Firth does, however, go on to add that this “uncomfortable discipline” works by ‘questioning established positions and proclaimed values, [and] peering into underlying

positions'.<sup>16</sup> These indeterminate remarks precipitate my discussion of what James Fernandez considers to be a very pragmatic but uncertain enterprise.<sup>17</sup>

More specifically, Fernandez identifies anthropology's main concern as 'how humans in real situations get things done'.<sup>18</sup> By 'doing ethnography'<sup>19</sup> - the activity of both conducting first-hand ethnographic research (fieldwork) and ethnographic writing (the monograph) - the anthropologist is expected to gain material about humans in different places and situations which, according to Daniel Miller, can then be generalised with other ethnographic observations to either confirm or refute models of 'modern' life.<sup>20</sup> Rooted in 'ethnographic enquiry', Miller finds this anthropology far more testing than other disciplines such as Cultural Studies and Gender Studies.<sup>21</sup> In essence, his anthropology is about the observation, generalisation, and comparison of human life. This strikes a chord with Kirsten Hastrup who believes that there is 'a distinct anthropological project, the object of which is to provide ground for comparison and generalisation of social experience on the basis of concrete ethnography.'<sup>22</sup> And certainly, the work of our anthropologists in Trinidad, Papua New Guinea and Morocco are testimony to this goal: Eriksen compares his visits to Trinidad with a visit to Mauritius to generalise some comments about ethnicity and nationalism;<sup>23</sup> Strathern generalises her knowledge of Papua New Guinea with the wider Melanesian ethnographic region to enter into a discussion about cross-cultural comparisons;<sup>24</sup> and Geertz contrasts observations about Islam in Morocco with Islam in Bali as a way of developing theoretical observations about the social role of religion in general.<sup>25</sup>

Yet, as the American anthropologist Alfred Kroeber has duly noted, anthropology has great scope and character: for him, anthropology is 'the science of man', an endeavour which explores the interplay between the natural and the nurtural, the organic and the social - the results of which are a split-stream physical anthropology and cultural anthropology.<sup>26</sup> Though not often recognised, there are some very different strands of anthropology ranging from "the social" which has a British emphasis upon concepts such as society, social structure, and social organization, and "the cultural" - an American dominated collection of cultural, physical, and linguistic anthropologies.<sup>27</sup> My aim here, however, is not to chart an historical trajectory for anthropology, for history, as I go on to demonstrate, is partial, relative, and impressionistic itself.



Nevertheless, I concede that it is necessary to present a range of anthropologies from which I draw my own pick 'n' mix anthropology. Here I betray my own influences which are inescapably British, European and North American, and "social". Chronologically, as the British anthropologist Adam Kuper would have us believe, 1922 is the historical baseline for a modern British social anthropology, the year that W.H. Rivers died, and the year that Bronislaw Malinowski and Alfred Radcliffe-Brown published their first major monographs<sup>28</sup> (*Argonauts of the Western Pacific* and *The Andaman Islanders*, respectively),<sup>29</sup> ushering in a "functionalist" tradition. Malinowski, in particular, advocated a period of fieldwork for an ethnographer to observe and record 'the *imponderabilia of actual life*',<sup>30</sup> the intention being 'to grasp the native's point of view, his relation to life, to realise *his* vision of *his* world',<sup>31</sup> and to show how the observed society and social institutions function together as an integrated, organic whole. Radcliffe-Brown, at the same time, established a comparative fieldwork method, one which compares the different contexts of a custom to abstract its essential significance.<sup>32</sup> From this, Radcliffe-Brown developed his conception of social anthropology as 'the comparative study of forms of social life amongst primitive people',<sup>33</sup> 'the theoretical natural science of human society',<sup>34</sup> a 'comparative sociology'.<sup>35</sup>

Social anthropology developed in Great Britain from these two founding fathers, progressively becoming a more abstract and conceptual study of social processes and social structures - the connectedness between individuals.<sup>36</sup> British social anthropology was established during the last decades of British imperial rule, 'rooted' - as Talal Asad trenchantly observes - 'in an unequal power encounter between the West and Third World [...] that gives the West access to cultural and historical information about the societies it has progressively dominated'.<sup>37</sup> So too, its underlying tenets are rooted in Enlightenment ideas and ideals,<sup>38</sup> namely, 'the belief that people [can] comprehend and control the universe by means of reason and empirical research' (George Ritzer).<sup>39</sup> Yet, social anthropology is by no means colonialism's handmaiden. Anthropological knowledge of colonial peoples does implicate anthropology in the colonial process, making the subject useful for colonial Administrators, and a threat for anthropology's colonial subjects - many of whom underwent decolonisation in the 1950s and 1960s. Nevertheless, Kuper rightly declares that social anthropology can

also play a key - if uncomfortable - role in challenging and unsettling the assumptions of colonial regimes, colonial social structures, and colonial policies.<sup>40</sup> Kuper especially laments the absence of anthropological studies of colonial settlement and administration,<sup>41</sup> a deficiency which my thesis attempts to rectify somewhat.

Through the 1960s and 1970s, British social anthropology continued to be influenced by a range of theorists and theories, all jostling and competing for dominance and disciples. Edmund Leach (who, like Gluckman, also lost his fieldnotes),<sup>42</sup> along with Mary Douglas, imported his own variation of structuralism from France where it was being propounded by Claude Levi-Strauss. By drawing upon the interest of Emile Durkheim's *Année Sociologique* in the primitive mentality,<sup>43</sup> and the structural linguistics of Ferdinand de Saussure and Roman Jakobson,<sup>44</sup> Levi-Strauss had developed a technique for uncovering the universal principles of human mentality which he considered to be unconscious and highly structured. This savage thought - '*pensée sauvage*'<sup>45</sup> - works in analogue: man imposes order and patterns upon his social and natural world by arbitrarily classifying objects and their boundaries. Though the boundaries, categories, and oppositions may be arbitrary, the relationships between them are more universal in character.<sup>46</sup> Consequently - so Levi-Strauss reasons - in order to 'derive constants', it is necessary for the anthropologist to transcend ethnographic observation, to go 'beyond the conscious and always shifting images which men hold'.<sup>47</sup> In practice, Levi-Strauss performed a succession of structural analyses from myth to kinship to cuisine,<sup>48</sup> all symbolic systems; Douglas made a symbolic interpretation of the rules of purity and pollution to reveal a unity of experience,<sup>49</sup> and Leach, amongst other illustrations, used the structural method to explain why we demarcate time in different ways.<sup>50</sup>

Though some anthropologists were influenced by this structuralism hybrid, others interested in explicating issues of class, primitive society, exploitation, and modes of production in society, sought a marxist framework for their analyses. The British domiciled anthropologist Maurice Bloch, especially, made use of Marx's historical theory for the evolution of society, one which critiques capitalism for its inherent self-destructiveness, and analyses society according to its division of labour.<sup>51</sup> Equally all-encompassing and revisionist as the structural approach is to social anthropological

material, marxism offered its disciples an opportunity to reanalyse previous anthropological work with “new” insight: by the time that Mary Douglas reinterpreted the food taboos in Leviticus,<sup>52</sup> Peter Worsley had reanalysed Meyer Fortes’s study of the Tallensi in West Africa from a marxist perspective,<sup>53</sup> and other structuralists were bringing new analyses to what the Nuer meant when they said twins were birds.<sup>54</sup> Twenty years on, revisionism continues apace with Jonathan Friedman’s marxist-driven historical-evolutionary re-analysis of Leach’s structural ethnography of the Kachin of Highland Burma.<sup>55</sup>

The structuralist and marxist movements added to the diversity of what had previously been a functionalist dominated social anthropology, one which had automatically attributed an intrinsic coherence to any alien system of organisation under examination. Malinowski’s empirical participant observation still remained the normative *rite de passage* for the neophyte anthropologist, however, Radcliffe-Brown’s comparative and generalising project fell under increasing scrutiny. In *Rethinking Anthropology*, Leach had declared the followers of Radcliffe-Brown to be ‘anthropological butterfly collectors’,<sup>56</sup> criticising the inductive nature of comparison (the movement from the particular case to the general feature to the universal characteristic). Leach offered a more deductive and ‘speculative generalisation’<sup>57</sup> (the inferring of particular instances from a general law) as a way of escaping such tautologies. This re-examination of anthropology’s epistemological base became even more heated in the 1970s with the influence of two American anthropologists, David Schneider and Clifford Geertz, both of whom subscribed to a meaning-centred approach to the study of culture - variants on a symbolic anthropology: Schneider presented a study of American kinship as a cultural system of symbols and meanings rather than functional relationships<sup>58</sup> whilst Geertz offered a semiotic theory of culture involving the interpretation of ‘thick [ethnographic] description’.<sup>59</sup> Like Malinowski, Geertz’s aim is to gain access to ‘the conceptual world in which our subjects live [...] to converse with them.’<sup>60</sup> For Geertz, this is to be done by ‘sorting out the structures of signification’, by ‘guessing at meanings, assessing the guesses, and drawing explanatory conclusions from the better guesses’; concomitantly, all anthropological writings are second and third order interpretations - only the “native” makes first order interpretations of *his* culture.<sup>61</sup> In practice, then, Geertz *interprets* great significance in the cockfight in Bali, claiming



that it gives him access to - a way of reading - Balinese culture; that the cockfight functions as 'a metasocial commentary [...] a Balinese reading of Balinese experience, a story they tell themselves about themselves.'<sup>62</sup> Yet Geertz did not convince Vincent Crapanzano who argued that Geertz provides his reader with no understanding from the native's point of view. 'There are only the constructed understandings of the constructed native's constructed point of view', chides Crapanzano.<sup>63</sup> In sum, it would appear that British social anthropology is compromised by its uncomfortable methods: the ethnographic results of the anthropological discipline - marked by the anthropologist's individual participant observation - are themselves distrusted by the natives subjected to the anthropological gaze, as well as other anthropologists reading the results of one anthropologist's experiences. And social anthropology is riddled with epistemological uncertainty: whichever theoretical paradigm it embraces to process 'local knowledge'<sup>64</sup> contains its own inherent shortcomings and limitations and is eventually superseded by another totalising grand narrative,<sup>65</sup> even interpretive anthropology.<sup>66</sup>

Whilst Leach replaced Radcliffe-Brown's functionalism with variations of Levi-Strauss's structuralism, he wryly remarked that:

[a]mong social anthropologists the game of building new theories on the ruins of old ones is almost an occupational disease. Contemporary arguments in social anthropology are built out of formulae concocted by Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown and Levi-Strauss who in turn were only 'rethinking' Rivers, Durkheim and Mauss, who borrowed from Morgan, McLennan and Robertson-Smith - and so on.<sup>67</sup>

Following on from Leach, David Parkin attempted to replace a structuralist anthropology with a semantic anthropology in the 1980s, criticising structuralism for denying man's agency, for reducing his interpretive and meaning-making capabilities, and for premising fundamental structures of the human mind.<sup>68</sup> And on top of Crapanzano's criticism of Geertz, I might add my own criticism from my postmodern position(s), one which focuses upon the contrariness of Geertz's interpretism which, despite acknowledging that '[c]ultural analysis is intrinsically incomplete', and implying

that there are endless levels,<sup>69</sup> nonetheless presents and analyses 'the Balinese cockfight' as a generic cultural symbol amongst a homogenous Balinese people,<sup>70</sup> as well as distinguishing the order of interpretations - one for the native, two for the anthropologist (Geertz) interpreting the native, three for the anthropologist (Crapanzano) interpreting Geertz.

In his writings, Geertz has always drawn upon an eclectic mix of ethnographic and literary sources. In so doing, Geertz has been closely associated with what Bob Scholte identifies as '[t]he literary turn in contemporary anthropology', one which 'deals with the textual and literary issues of ethnographic writing, production, construction, description, legitimacy, and authority'<sup>71</sup> precisely because of the problem with fathoming the native's meaning in the field, and the anthropologist's meaning in his or her text. This attention to reading and writing in social anthropology arose from a growing reaction against structuralism and against the ideas and ideals of the Enlightenment in social anthropology as well as in the other social sciences and literary-based disciplines. Eclectic and inter-disciplinary, in 1980, Geertz encouraged this blurring of boundaries between disciplines - 'genres', as he termed them.<sup>72</sup> Structuralism - as a form of literary criticism - analyses languages and texts according to the arbitrary, but structural, relationships between signifiers and signifieds which Saussure found constitute the linguistic sign; the 'apple' sound image is the signifier for the signified concept of the apple, for instance. Post-structuralism, however, stresses the signifier - rather than the signified - in this structural relationship, with the result that the "truth" of the text lies not behind or within the text, but in the reader's productive relationship with the text.<sup>73</sup> In other words, the reader responds and performs with the text; without the reader there is no text. In the extreme opinion of Jaques Derrida, the linguistic sign is completely uprooted as signifiers float free from their extra-linguistic referents - meaning, therefore, is endlessly deferred.<sup>74</sup> This crisis of certainty with respect to the ability to write accurately for the reader, to represent, and transfer meaning, has been furthered by an amorphous diversity of postmodernisms which also have had their impact upon social anthropology.

Postmodernism is elusive and characteristically difficult to define; perhaps best described by what it is not. Robert Pool has posited that there might even be 'as many

postmodernisms as there are authors who write about postmodernism.<sup>75</sup> Two well-read proponents of postmodernisms are Jean-Francois Lyotard and Fredric Jameson, both of whom make different claims about the(ir) (anti-)theory - which I go on to cannibalise in my own anthropology of impressions. Jameson has identified postmodernism in spheres of representation from economics to painting, writing to philosophy, cinema to architecture. Economically, according to Jameson, we are in the last phase of capitalism - society is post-industrial and capitalism is multinational; aesthetically, the commercial frontiers between high culture and popular culture have been effaced; in art, pastiche effaces parody as Andy Warhol's 'Diamond Dust Shoes' replace Van Gogh's 'A Pair of Boots'; in language, the signifying chain has been snapped.<sup>76</sup> I can continue: in fashion, we cannibalise former styles and reinvent retro and "Laura Ashley"; in architecture the Pompidou Centre reveals its innards, and the shopping mall has become the tourist attraction;<sup>77</sup> in time, we think of the present historically - historicism effaces history, and we are trapped in the ever-present synchronic; in film, *Last Action Hero* and *The Cable Guy* - films lampooning the film world by pastiche - (con)fuse "the real thing" experience and the "better than the real thing" experience; in literature, Italo Calvino writes novels about writing novels, and Umberto Eco writes - Travels in Hyper-Reality - without certainty;<sup>78</sup> and in photography, Sherrie Levine gains fame by photographing other people's photographs creating perfect copies, imitations mocking, blurring, and destroying the original - the result, a deceptive substitute, a simulacrum. If Modernity is the questioning and criticising of our ability in order to build grand theory, to write universal history, to discover truths about mankind, and to differentiate between the real thing and a representation of the real thing, then Postmodernity is an anti-Modernity, and not just a hyphenated follow-on ph(r)ase. As John Urry explains, '[p]ostmodernism problematises the distinction between representations and reality'.<sup>79</sup> Or, more famously, as Lyotard declares, the postmodern condition is an 'incredulity toward metanarratives',<sup>80</sup> a rejection of Enlightenment ideas and ideals in a world which has changed from a world with an industrial *mode of production* to a technological world where computerised knowledge - a consumable end in itself - has become the principal *force of production*.<sup>81</sup> We in-habit(at) a postmodern world: a depthless world of 'simulations',<sup>82</sup> and institutionalised voyeurism; a world too complex and fragmented for any reductionist, essentialist, or universalising social theories or philosophies; a

world of relative positions and native perspectives without privilege.

Whether in praise or in criticism, both post-structuralism and postmodernism have had a significant impact upon social anthropology in Britain as well as in Europe and North America. However, because of the complexities and ambiguities of the literature (is not an anti-theory a theory in its own right?) - and despite the anti-essentialist positions of postmodernism, Robert Ulin has argued that many critics have been using the term postmodernism wrongly.<sup>83</sup> Ulin postulates that postmodernism is a 'textual turn', a concern for the representation of the 'other' through the writing of ethnography, one which therefore includes a great variety of writings written between, for example, Edward Said's exploratory question in 1978 ('[h]ow does one *represent* cultures?')<sup>84</sup> and Geertz's reminder in 1995 ('[t]he representation of others is not easily separable from the manipulation of them.')85 Neither Said nor Geertz deny the possibility of representing others, but they do insist that the representations are subjective - truth being a Nietzschean illusion<sup>86</sup> - 'embedded first in the language and then in the culture, institutions, and political ambience of the representer.'<sup>87</sup> These issues were taken up in two potent volumes: Writing Culture, a collection of papers that expressly 'argues that ethnography is in the midst of a political and epistemological crisis: Western writers no longer portray non-Western peoples with unchallenged authority; the process of cultural representation is now inescapably contingent, historical, and contestable';<sup>88</sup> and Anthropology as Cultural Critique, a work which celebrates the creativity and experimental nature of ethnographic writing which George Marcus and Michael Fischer trace from the 1960s.<sup>89</sup> Despite Stephen Tyer's denials,<sup>90</sup> the 'Rice Circle' of anthropologists at Rice University, Texas, (Stephen Tyler, George Marcus, Michael Fischer ...) have all been associated with postmodern ethnography, along with other innovative ethnographers in North America (James Clifford, Paul Rabinow, Vincent Crapanzano ...):<sup>91</sup> Paul Rabinow and Vincent Crapanzano for their reflexive and reflective ethnographies set in Morocco - respectively, a discursive fieldwork account,<sup>92</sup> and a study of the mental world of a slum dweller beset by a demon;<sup>93</sup> and James Clifford's literary fieldwork in The Predicament of Culture, an ethnography of the West and the textual tactics of Western ethnographers.<sup>94</sup> If creativity and experimentation are the criteria for postmodern ethnography, then in North America we should also include Carlos Castenada's diary and structural analysis of his pupillage

with a Yaqui Indian shaman;<sup>95</sup> Michael Taussig's deconstructive literary montage of terror, healing, and shamanism in Columbia;<sup>96</sup> and Kevin Dwyer's challenge to the mono-logics of the author's text by giving pride of place to a Moroccan faqir's dialogues with the anthropologist.<sup>97</sup> And amongst the British ethnographers we should include Nigel Rapport's reconstructive conversational journey around a Canadian city which identifies the various linguistic contexts and constructions of violence<sup>98</sup> - an ethnography as exciting as Gregory Bateson's *Naven* almost fifty years earlier;<sup>99</sup> we should also not forget Strathern's aforementioned theorisings upon the writing of anthropology and the representation of societies from a 'postplural perception of the world', one which draws upon Stephen Tyler's concept of the 'emergent mind' of the 'author-text-reader'.<sup>100</sup>

However, as I noted earlier, one person's postmodernism is not another's. Whereas Bruce Kapferer includes as 'post-modern' the work of Clifford Geertz - under the criteria of an unconventional and literary break from anthropology's 'tight analytical frames',<sup>101</sup> this is not a classification about Geertz's work which I would make according to my own working understanding of postmodernism. In Stephen Tyler's opinion of what, for him, constitutes a postmodern ethnography, evocation rather than representation is the key.<sup>102</sup> 'cooperatively evolved' with 'perspectival relativity', 'fragmentary' and temporary - 'without the illusion of the transcendental',<sup>103</sup> ethnography should evoke rather than represent because descriptions of reality are illusory imitations.<sup>104</sup> Perversely, such "writing at the limit" can 'never be completely realised'<sup>105</sup> in ethnography, for we depend too much upon the text and the anthropologist. All we can do, then, is use ethnography as Tyler's 'meditative vehicle',<sup>106</sup> and to continue in our experimental activities, and re-examination of the 'many aspects of our representational praxis' as do the contributors to Allison James, Jenny Hockey and Andrew Dawson's *After Writing Culture*.<sup>107</sup> But, crucially, for me, we are accepting - after Tyler - that we are writing illusions,<sup>108</sup> persuasive fictions,<sup>109</sup> anthropological impressions. These evocations accept and encourage the reader's response to the text, responses which can be different to that of the writer's engagement with his text, and are just as comparable with each other as works of literature and works of art.<sup>110</sup> Perhaps, then, there is a compatibility of fit between an uncomfortable and uncertain (anti-)discipline and an uncomfortable and uncertain



(anti-)theory.

Postmodernism is about breaking 'the ontological and epistemological premises of modernity', as Zygmunt Bauman puts it.<sup>111</sup> The challenging features of the variety of postmodernisms make it suitable as an investigative tool-kit for the eclectic range of ethical, epistemological and even ontological uncertainties which are thrown up by anthropologists. Relativism, rationality, and the relationship between the two are the three main metaphysical doubts identified by the philosopher I.C. Jarvie.<sup>112</sup> How, for example, does the diversity of ethnographic material relate to the unity of mankind? The anthropologist unhealthily perseveres with the native point of view, fearing the anthropologist's sin of ethnocentrism (the assessment of other societies according to the criteria of the assessor's society), blinkered by this holy grail of anthropology, ignorant to the possibility that there may be as many native voices and native points of view as diverse and fickle as our own. What happens, then, when the anthropologist compares two widely disparate and seemingly incommensurable world-views? Richard Shweder raises this problem when examining Hindu and Protestant psychologies.<sup>113</sup> Examining the anthropologist's position, Shweder found that many anthropologists sustain a 'Nietzschean null-reference argument' - the assumption that 'tradition-based reality-positions are imaginary phantoms of mind'.<sup>114</sup> David Schneider, for instance, subscribes to this argument. Schneider's examination of the criteria and reference points for defining kinship - whether it should be according to the various native beliefs about the supernatural, or some observer's beliefs about the scientific facts of biological relatedness<sup>115</sup> - led him to the eventual conclusion<sup>116</sup> that 'there are only cultural constructions of reality'.<sup>116</sup> Schneider was reiterating Berger and Luckmann's original thesis about the importance of looking at what people understand to be "real", and how that is recognised for its independence;<sup>117</sup> for Schneider, this meant acknowledging the native *beliefs* in the supernatural as demonstrably real even if the supernatural itself is not real.

Shweder does not see this as a satisfactory solution to his problem. He does not accept, as Maurice Bloch does, that different people attend to the same reality in different ways,<sup>118</sup> nor does he subscribe to Ernest Gellner's averred faith that '[t]he existence of trans-cultural and amoral knowledge is *the* fact of our lives.'<sup>119</sup> Shweder

seeks a different solution to the problem between relativism and universalism; between the poles of an objective and external reality and subjective multiple realities; or, as Allan Hanson clarifies, an 'objectivism [that] makes truth and knowledge contingent solely upon external reality, [and] relativism [that] holds them to be contingent upon ontological and epistemological standards.'<sup>120</sup> This problem is critical to anthropological studies: the route of all analysis is split between an underlying premiss that there is a 'natural' external bed-rock reality which is glossed over by humanity's (ignorant) traveller's tales - reducing, in my opinion, anthropology to the study of human emulsions; and an alternative haemorrhaging pathway built upon the shifting (and shifty) postulation that reality is multiple, itinerant, and contingent upon people's predicates - resulting, in my opinion, in uncomfortable and uncertain anthropological methods and results. Along with Shweder and the American philosopher Richard Rorty,<sup>121</sup> I favour the latter, an anthropology which is inquisitive and responsive, and receptive to what is designated as the internal as well as to the external - even if the result is an inquiry inclined towards contradiction and heated criticism.

Shweder's solution to the relativist/universalist debate is to accept that there are 'multiple objective worlds'.<sup>122</sup> it is possible to have knowledge of the world even though that objective world is subject-dependent and multiplex.<sup>123</sup> For Shweder, '[t]he fact that there is no one uniform objective reality (constraint, foundation, godhead, truth, standard) does not mean there are no objective realities (constraints, foundations, godheads, truths, standards) at all.'<sup>124</sup> This 'polytheistic postpositivism',<sup>125</sup> is a kind of objective relativism. All that remains, then, is the problem of describing, comparing, and representing these multiple objective worlds, particularly if 'the objective world is incapable of being represented completely if represented from any point of view, and incapable of being represented intelligibly if represented from all points of view at once.'<sup>126</sup> In answer to this, Shweder suggests that we 'view the objective world from many points of view (or from the point of view of each of several prejudices), but to do it in sequence' and 'to feel eager to move on to some other world-view'.<sup>127</sup> In this thesis I do just that: my postmodern approach is both problematic and perspectival: I present a range of impressions of Montserrat from a diverse group of people. Where I differ from Shweder's postmodern realism (one which accepts 'the gap between appearance-sensation-experience and reality'),<sup>128</sup> is in

my collapse of the subjective/objective polarities. For me, these realities are subjective insights and objective truths at one and the same time, depending upon whether they echo the observer's perspective or the native's perspective.<sup>129</sup> Thus, though we cannot escape from subject-dependent and culture-dependent claims, I argue that with our sense impressions, we dance between the compass poles, that even Shweder's 'multiple objective worlds' represent a subject-dependent position, one more in line with "*multiple subjective worlds*".

In my attempt to circumscribe loosely this relativity, the work of American philosopher Nelson Goodman is of some use. Goodman argues that world versions are so disparate as to not be reducible to one true version or reality; that it is inappropriate, for instance, to reduce the art world to the world of physics.<sup>130</sup> A 'rightness of fit' criterion is more in keeping with the diversity of world versions: 'a statement is true, a representation right, for a world it fits';<sup>131</sup> 'a picture is realistic according to the accustomed system of representation';<sup>132</sup> or as Goodman poignantly poses, '[i]f I ask about the world, you can offer to tell me how it is under one or more frames of reference; but if I insist that you tell me how it is apart from all frames, what can you say?'<sup>133</sup> When applied to anthropology, what we can say, as Overing demonstrates, is that '[t]he scientist, artist, myth teller or historian, and shaman-curer are "doing much the same thing" in their constructions of versions of worlds.'<sup>134</sup> The task then, of the anthropologist, is to translate rather than terminate these realities;<sup>135</sup> to 'comprehend in general "other minds"';<sup>136</sup> to encourage what Paul Hirst bills as pragmatic points of contact, 'bridgeheads' of communication.<sup>137</sup>

Suffice it to say, regarding the nature of reality, my impressionistic anthropology utilises Shweder's analysis of multiple worlds and Goodman's frames of reference. I seek to extend Goodman's notion of irreducible world versions (art vs physics) to the world-views held by different people. I have problematised reality, relativity and rationality and set out some of the camps in the debate to show that the issues raised by my impressionistic anthropology can be multiple in worlds and perspectives without necessarily entailing an 'anything goes' relativism.<sup>138</sup> But in remaining close to the native insights whether sought by Malinowski in Melanesia, Leach in Burma, Overing in the Amazon, or Rapport in Newfoundland, I have left unproblematised the



anthropologist's 'ethnographic ventriloquism',<sup>139</sup> the anthropologist's assumption of his detached proximity to his native subjects.<sup>140</sup> I have concentrated, instead, upon establishing an anthropology which connects and builds bridgeheads; an anthropology of impressions, framed realities, and contested worlds; an anthropology which fragments and diversifies according to findings; an IF ... THEN anthropology - as impulse to reach out and connect with the native as the poet, the calypsonian, the clown, and the artist reach out to others. Above all, this perspectival anthropology of impressions does not begin its investigation with an *a priori* stance towards reality. This relativism of mine is, thus, an extension upon the conventional relativism of Melville Herskovits, an American cultural anthropologist who argued that '[e]valuations are *relative* to the cultural background out of which they arise',<sup>141</sup> whether they concern the nature of reality, concepts of right and wrong, normality and abnormality, or perceptions of time, space or size.<sup>142</sup> Herskovits draws our attention to the actor's - emic - point of view, and to the diversity of native perceptions. Yet even Herskovits retained some fundamental universals such as the concept of the individual.<sup>143</sup>

Anthropology is about the various experiences of realities the anthropologist can reflect and reflect upon. They can be individual or collective social realities which are recorded according to the impressionistic experiences of the anthropologist. The anthropologist writes these realities; he "inscribes" social discourse; *he writes it down*,<sup>144</sup> and tries to express and translate what he understands the natives to understand. For me a plurality of impressions, perspectives and interpretations are put on record, none of them original, sacrosanct, or true as Geertz would have us believe. I have already identified the problem of representing and writing. In addition, there is also the problem of assessing what is written. Here I again draw upon Geertz who wrote that '[t]he begetting sin of interpretive approaches to anything - literature, dreams, symptoms, culture - is that they tend to resist, or to be permitted to resist, conceptual articulation and thus to escape systematic modes of assessment.'<sup>145</sup> Is it possible to have a good or a bad impressionistic postmodern anthropology in terms of writing and analysis? My answer is that an impressionistic anthropology should remain open, relative and experimental. An ethnographic recording can only be judged to be faithful or unfaithful, according to whether or not it fulfils the writer's intentions and

the reader's apprehensions. The standards are relative and dependent upon the shifting variables - the IF which precedes the THEN. This anthropology is as relative as its relative performances. It is a phenomenological anthropology paying heed to our experiences and understandings.<sup>146</sup>

Before I go further and exemplify the impressionistic nature of our experiences in the next section, let me give a brief example of how this postmodern anthropology without starting points might work in practice. In his various writings, Nigel Rapport propounds a zealous and transcendent individualism, declaring the body to be the repository for the human subject.<sup>147</sup> These assumptions - about Rapport's individual subject - are echoed elsewhere in Anthony Cohen's work about the self-conscious self.<sup>148</sup> Their assumptions run counter to Louis Dumont's suggestion that we can treat the individual as a concept, and henceforth situate theoretical approaches such as methodological individualism (an attention to the individuals' constitution of society)<sup>149</sup> within the modern, dualistic Enlightenment tradition. From his self-conscious position, Cohen rightly chastises Dumont for denying the concepts and values of individuality to non-Western cultures, and for assisting the holistic tradition of American sociology, British structural anthropology and French structuralism which respectively subordinate the individual to society and to the structural uniformities of human cognition.<sup>150</sup> However, my use of this dispute between Dumont and Cohen is not to confer or deny individuality but to examine an anthropological argument as to the innate versus the learned perception of ourselves and others as individuals. It would appear, from Rapport and Cohen's writings, that they take individuality as a given; individuality as innate; individuality as a universal for all people, whether Western or non-Western. Accordingly, Dumont's work on South Indian culture is wrong because it is in conflict with Rapport and Cohen's initial premises. Dumont's argument is valid and rational according to its own premises, but these initial premises are incommensurable with those of Rapport and Cohen's. Likewise, Dumont's use of Indian ethnography<sup>151</sup> to support his argument is equally incommensurable with Rapport's ethnography of Wanet in the English Dales or Cohen's Whalsay in the Shetlands.<sup>152</sup>

I believe that there is a danger for anthropologists such as Rapport and Cohen who accept as universal this concept of the individual, the conscious self within the corporeal body. This is particularly so when, as anthropologists with their diverse anthropological knowledge, they are especially positioned to raise questions and problems rather than answers and circumscriptions. They take for granted the individual and self, and hence the body and attentive mind as a bio-dualistic starting point for anthropological analysis. This is in spite of Friedrich Nietzsche's pronouncements that the body is a political structure of competing organs,<sup>153</sup> Gilles Deleuze's conceptualisation of the body as a relation of dominating and dominated forces,<sup>154</sup> and Rorty's challenge to René Descartes's mind-body distinction and to the philosophical belief that the mind is the mirror of nature with its oblique belief that mental knowledge burnishes that mirror into an accurate representation of reality.<sup>155</sup> They are also deliberately ignorant of the changing perceptions of both the social and physical body recorded by Anthony Synnott for Western thought: the body as Greek tomb of the soul, Christian temple, Enlightened individual, Cartesian machine, existential self, medical cyborg.<sup>156</sup> And this is ethnocentric judging - the religious holism of the Indians whom Dumont researches, the people Synnott mentions who include the shadow in their concept of the body whilst others include spilled blood and faeces,<sup>157</sup> the Canaques of New Caledonia whom Maurice Leenhardt discovered had no individuated notion of the body prior to European contact<sup>158</sup> - according to the criteria of our own culture. Unlike Rapport and Cohen, my aim is relative: to accept incommensurable beliefs and perceptions, to deny universal categories and foundations. As such, my anthropology - uncertain, uncomfortable, and postmodern - is best-placed to accomplish such a task, to make a meaning-centred approach (without starting points) in the study of 'man'.

Though I might be decentring and fragmenting the subject and the body - an arrangement which many would like to keep one within the other, imprisoned - I do so because our diverse, competing, creating, contesting, contradicting selves and world-views can be larger than any physical confines. I do not believe that we are all bound by the body; beliefs, cognitions, perceptions, impressions, selves can be more expansive. The consequences of such articulations entail the adoption of a postmodern approach towards the observation of social interaction and everyday life led by

different people. By accepting the demise of Grand Theory within the social sciences, I am not constrained to Procrusteanate ethnographic impressions to fit functional, structural-functional, structural, or marxist paradigms.

My postmodern anthropology of impressions rethinks aspects of anthropologists' ambitions: in particular - the native's point of view (Malinowski), professional and personal insight into human behaviour (Leach); was it not Leach who once mentioned that '[s]ocial anthropologists should not see themselves as seekers after objective truth; their purpose is to gain insight into other people's behaviour, or, for that matter, into their own.'<sup>159</sup> Whether stranded amongst the Trobriand Islanders of British New Guinea during World War One, or serving as an Officer in the Burma Army amongst the Kachin during World War Two, both Malinowski and Leach, when they could, sought first-hand observations and local explanations of exceptional and everyday interaction. To refine their apologia, they sought a phenomenological, meaning-centred, qualitative approach. Long-term participant observation was the only strategy which afforded them the opportunity to examine - as Ladislav Holy and Milan Stuchlik express it - the context of people's actions and the relationship between their notions and actions;<sup>160</sup> the ability 'to elucidate the meaning of social situations', as Robert Burgess rationalises the field research practice;<sup>161</sup> or, according to Clifford Geertz, the chance to 'attempt somehow to understand how it is we understand understandings not our own'.<sup>162</sup>

My pro-claimed insights and interpretations of the native's point of view derive from semiotic and phenomenological ethnographic practices such as these. Geertz and Holy and Stuchlik believe that they have refined Malinowski and Leach's war-time activities, Geertz not least with his 'semiotic approach to culture [...] to aid us in gaining access to the conceptual world in which our subjects live so that we can, in some extended sense, converse with them.'<sup>163</sup> Similarly, I believe that my postmodern impressionistic anthropology fine-tunes Holy and Stuchlik's phenomenology and Geertz's semiotics when I make the suggestion that meaning is abstruse, elusive, uncertain and inchoate; dictated from the scribe's hand to the eye of the beholder; meaning relies upon the changeable and interpretable (for me) Saussurean connection between the sign and the signified,<sup>164</sup> upon metaphor - a strategy for dealing with a situation (for Fernandez and

myself),<sup>165</sup> and a metaphoric coil of communication which, again, for me, elongates with the poetics of metaphoric evocation and contracts with the attempted one-to-one correspondences of representation. I shall clarify such vagaries in the next section.

### **Writing impressions - the diversity of Haile Selassie's coronation**

I have written a partial and biased account of social anthropology - British, European, North American, and "social". I have shown how anthropologists cut 'n' paste social theories, new for old. Joining the fray, I showed how and why I pick 'n' mixed my own anthropology which is postmodern and relative. I tentatively circumscribed this relative anthropology of mine, and gave an example of how it might improve upon other, less relative, anthropologies. Epistemologically, I retain an anthropology which is uncomfortable and uncertain; once the relative variables and frames of reference have been established, then the comments, communications, and comparisons can begin. Daniel Ingersoll and James Nickell use this 'IF ... THEN' technique when they find that before they can discuss the significance of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Western society, they have to first situate and characterise 'the contemporary Western world view'.<sup>166</sup> In this section I want to go on and explain what I mean when I have been saying that anthropologists' ethnographies, and my postmodern anthropology, are impressionistic. I will do this by comparing two markedly different accounts of the coronation of Ras Tafari in Ethiopia. The accounts are written by travel writers Wilfred Thesiger and Evelyn Waugh. A comparison of their two accounts will serve as a way of illustrating and explaining the impressionistic nature of our experiences, as well as my attitude towards history and reader response theory - both of which are formative aspects in my anthropology of impressions.



### **D) Wilfred Thesiger and the colonial coronation of Ras Tafari**

On 16th October 1930 a party of British representatives left Victoria station in London, bound for Marseilles by boat train. From Marseilles, the group were to sail on the Peninsular and Oriental Shipping Company's (P&O) *Rampura* to Aden. At Aden, they were expected by HMS *Effingham* which was to take them to Jibuti - now known as the Republic of Djibuti, from where they were to catch a train to Addis Ababa, Abyssinia - now known as Ethiopia. The party was a British delegation invited to attend Ras Tafari's coronation as the Emperor Haile Selassie, as 'Light of the Trinity'.

HRH the Duke of Gloucester headed the party which was to represent his father, King George V, at the enthroning of the regent of the only major independent black nation in the twentieth century. Accompanying the Duke of Gloucester was the Earl of Airlie, and five members of staff, including the Abyssinian born British colonial Wilfred Thesiger. Thesiger had met Ras Tafari briefly, in London, in 1924, when he was a pupil at Eton. Before he died, Thesiger's father had been a British Government Minister at Addis Ababa, and so Ras Tafari, the then regent for Emperor Menelik's daughter, had courteously received Thesiger and his mother, even offering the impressionable schoolboy an invitation to Ethiopia. This offer was later extended, taken up, and chronicled in 1930.

Thesiger was, indeed, received by Ras Tafari in Ethiopia; he writes about it in The Life of My Choice<sup>167</sup> - a biography of reflections. The travel writer's book is dedicated to the memory of His Late Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie, and it weaves traces of Thesiger's life together with a brief personalised biography of the African Emperor. Chapter one begins with an explanation of Thesiger's 'native' connection with Ethiopia - a colonial birthright, and a description of his initial meeting with Ras Tafari. This occasion prepares the reader for the subsequent invitation to the Regent's coronation which is described in a later chapter.<sup>168</sup> And the book closes with the chapter 'Last Days of a Civilisation', a mourning for the passing of 'the great man' Tafari and the 'golden age' of his reign.<sup>169</sup>

At Jibuti, the British delegation was met and accompanied to Addis Ababa by the British Ministers of Addis Ababa, Aden, and British Somaliland who were also to pay their respects to Ras Tafari. Once at Addis Ababa, Thesiger was billeted in a tent in the Legation grounds. Thesiger had fond memories of his childhood in the capital city, of the pounding war drums, the Ras and their retainers. But, upon his return, Thesiger was confronted by change, modern cars with their discordant engines, palace secretaries inappropriately dressed in tailcoats and top hats briefing brash journalists about the forthcoming coronation. From his text, Thesiger gives the reader an indication of his desire and longing for his childhood impressions, for the brilliance of the Empire he remembers. For Thesiger, '[t]his was the last time that the age-old splendour of Abyssinia was to be on view. Already it was slightly tarnished round the edges by innovations copied from the West.'<sup>170</sup> In response to these modern infringements upon his memory, Thesiger writes, 'I ignored what I had no desire to see.'<sup>171</sup>

Thesiger coped with the pace of change by biting his tongue; he was determined to see Haile Selassie's coronation due to take place on 2nd November in St. George's Cathedral in Addis Ababa. On that day, their delegation was driven from the Legation to the Cathedral. Outside, a hundred thousand 'serried' supporters watched and waited for their new Emperor. Inside, 'a great number of turbaned priests, holding silver crosses, and deacons wearing coloured vestments and silver crowns', '[t]he air [...] heavy with incense from the many swinging censers.'<sup>172</sup> In his account, Thesiger reports that the foreign delegations, the chiefs from around the Empire, and the local nobles, were all 'accommodated' in a large canvas annexe attached to the church where the crowning ceremony took place. First the Emperor left a sanctuary in the church where he and his Empress had been holding an all-night vigil. Then, just after seven-thirty in the morning, Haile Selassie was escorted by some monks from the Ethiopian Church to his seat on a crimson throne in front of the guests. He was then joined by his Empress who sat on a smaller throne.

This marked the start of the coronation service which was held in Ge'ez - the ancient language of the Ethiopian Church, and lasted for at least three hours. Thesiger does not describe the service in any more detail, other than to add that it was accompanied

by a Coptic choir from Alexandria. However, Thesiger's high regard for the service does become apparent when he writes, '[m]any complained afterwards of its inordinate length. I was not conscious of this - it could have lasted twice as long as far as I was concerned.'<sup>173</sup> Thesiger was captivated by the occasion, the ritual, which involved presenting the Emperor with his robe, his sword, his sceptre, ring and two sacred spears; he clearly relishes such time-honoured traditions as the anointing the Emperor with sacred oil, and the crowning of the Emperor:

[e]ven as a boy, Haile Selassie had believed in his imperial destiny; for nearly twenty years he had survived conspiracies, wars and revolutions, and his resolution had never faltered. The crown settled on his brow. This was his supreme moment; yet his delicate face and sombre eyes remained impassive, showed no vestige of emotion. As the guns thundered their salute, the great Rases and chieftains led by Asfa Wossen, his eldest son, came forward to do him homage: Ras Kassa, his faithful kinsman, Ras Seyum of Tigre, Ras Hailu of Gojjam, Ras Imru, Ras Mulugeta and others. The Empress was crowned, and then the Emperor and Empress entered the cathedral to take communion. They came out at last and Haile Selassie went forward under a crimson canopy to show himself to his people.<sup>174</sup>

Thesiger ends his firsthand description of the Emperor's coronation by reporting that that night there was a State banquet which ended with a fireworks display which fizzled out after two rockets. He then comments upon his private audience with the new Emperor, which took place some days later, Thesiger's meeting with Haile Selassie.

Two days later he granted me a private audience, a remarkable consideration during those eventful days to his youngest and least important guest. He received me with grave courtesy and enquired after my family. When I expressed my appreciation of the honour he had done me by inviting me to his coronation, he replied that as the eldest son of his trustiest friend, to whom he owed so much, it was



proper that I should be present.

I told him how happy I was to be back in his country.

"It is your country. You were born here. You have lived here for half of your life. I hope you will spend many more years with us," was his answer. As he spoke I was very conscious of the smile which transformed his usually impassive face. It was twenty minutes before he terminated the interview. That evening I received two elephant tusks, a heavy, ornate gold cigarette case, a large, colourful carpet and the third class of the Star of Ethiopia.<sup>175</sup>

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Thesiger is attempting to write social reality - to translate his experiences from the realm of his perceptions and impressions to the realm of representations. This is a logocentric exercise - writing reality, an ethnocentric endeavour to record an accurate account of events. But just how accurate, factual, and historical is Thesiger's account?

The account above is my version of Thesiger's account of Haile Selassie's coronation. It is, by necessity, a different account to Thesiger's: mine is another impression of the coronation by nature of its different context, and the reader's and my own intended and unintended meanings gained from the text.<sup>176</sup> These readings, I maintain, are not the second or third order interpretations of an event as Geertz would lead us to believe, even when I am contextualising Thesiger's account, or quoting direct from his writings. In anthropological terms, Thesiger gives his reader an ethnographic description of the coronation, an eye-witness account of a native ceremony; an account with an intimacy of contact about it. Working with his account, my account can also maintain an intimacy with the reader if we bear in mind that reading a text is an active and creative undertaking, one which transforms both the text and the reader.<sup>177</sup> In declaring this, I take issue with the anachronism in Roland Barthes's comment about the singularity of the text's destination when he wrote that 'a text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination'.<sup>178</sup> In other words, for Barthes, texts are multiple,

fragmented and contesting, yet no matter how heterogeneous they are, they are all focused and united at the place of the reader. Blurring boundaries again, I disagree with this absolute reification of the reader and the reading process. Rather than eradicate the concept of the self, why can't we replace it with a notion of selves, partial fragments without whole. 'Every text we read draws a different boundary within our personality, so that the virtual background (the real "me") will take on a different form',<sup>179</sup> so writes Wolfgang Iser who favours the creativity involved in reading a word-painting as opposed to the 'immutability' of passively viewing a pastel-painting.<sup>180</sup> Here, then, the text would be received at a reading by 'the self' as readers, both text and self multiple, fragmented, contesting, contradictory. So, not only am I implying that the self corresponds more closely to Mair's 'community of selves',<sup>181</sup> but also, that the self (like the text) could be a constellation of postmodern impressions. All depends upon the relative position of the anthropologist examining the reader's reading. In your case, you might wish to jump - or zig-zag - between the main-text of this thesis and the endnotes at the end of the Preface, each chapter, and the Conclusion; or you might seek to explore the chapters in this thesis in a different order to the one set out before you.<sup>182</sup>

I would like to submit that Thesiger's account is an account of impressions, impressions without visual pictures. This is not because Thesiger is writing about the coronation from a later date, writing together - with hindsight - his life and Haile Selassie's. It is an impressionistic account because his narrative is based upon experiences which he is trying to communicate to the reader, experiences which, despite the narrative closure of the account, still allow for a certain degree of indeterminacy in the multiple readings possible from the text. To illustrate - at the very least, it is possible to read Thesiger's account to learn about the coronation tradition, to get a sense of Selassie's personage, or to build a character profile of Thesiger. From Thesiger's text, it is evident that Thesiger is keen to implicate his life with Selassie's: before Selassie became Emperor - as Ras Tafari - Selassie exhibited imperial qualities, convictions and aspirations. These beliefs, Thesiger witnessed in London when Selassie was just a Regent; they were later affirmed during Thesiger's guest appearance at Tafari's coronation, and confirmed during Thesiger's audience with the

Emperor and by Selassie's diplomatic rewards. Perhaps we can also add that Thesiger's eyes are blinkered by a colonial gaze, by a self-selecting and contradictory sight, which can both critically appraise the modern cars running down the streets in favour of the traditional surge of a human crowd, whilst later on commenting that their Legation cars were brought to a sorry standstill in the crowded streets.

My reading can continue into the very associations I have for the words in the text. Textual readings are endless and lie in the realm of the readers and the writers. Finally, I would argue that even the historical fact that "Haile Selassie was crowned Emperor of Ethiopia on 2nd November 1930" is open to scrutiny - particularly by theorists such as the post-structuralist Robert Young. Young considers the idea of an 'evolutionary narrative of Western history [...] an arrogant and arrogating narrative'.<sup>183</sup> Young seeks to blur the historical event, to dissolve Western history, and hence 'the West'.<sup>184</sup> He does this by deconstructing the historical event which underpins the historical fact, to reveal a relative heterogeneity of histories for the postmodernist.<sup>185</sup> When the philosopher Gilles Deleuze famously asked "where is the battle?", he answered himself back, describing "the battle" as a phantasm, an incorporeal cloud hovering over the individual actions in the field - 'an effect of meaning not identifiable with anything in the event'.<sup>186</sup> Likewise, when I think to myself about the coronation of Ras Tafari and ask "where is the coronation?", my reply is that what is called the coronation consists of a vast heterogeneous array of individual actions (praying, anointing, crowning, banqueting); none of which constitutes "the coronation" as such; each action fragments further according to the diverse movements, shifting meanings and varied intentions of the spectators, the Ras, the retainers, the priests, the delegations, and the Emperor and Empress. History, for me, is relative, partial, and without totality. Again, I have to accept, however, that others constitute, comprehend, and incorporate history differently, often as a dominant and evolutionary meta-narrative - Kuper's history of social anthropology which I used earlier might be one such example.<sup>187</sup>

Reading Thesiger, I create the atmosphere of the coronation in my mind's eye. There, my imagination "fills in" the indeterminacy of the coronation, based upon Thesiger's narrative cues and my mental clues. The cues are Barthes's 'avenues of meaning', where 'every text is eternally written *here and now*' for the reader;<sup>188</sup> where

impressions appear from a synchronicity of reading;<sup>189</sup> where, as Iser explains, the text becomes the reader's present.<sup>190</sup> It is in this 'here and now' of my readings that the authors communicate various meanings, establishing a connection between writers and readers along a vague but mutually understood and implicitly agreed upon semiotic coil, upon an impressionistic consensus of meaning. In sum, then, I am suggesting that the text and the self can be both singular and plural, that the book should not be treated just as a total repository for the text (the text "becomes" by being read - activated - by the reader), and the body cannot be conceived solely as the repository for the individual subject with diverse world-views. Such a universal conception should, especially, not be held by the (postmodern) anthropologist.

Finally, I argue from my postmodern positions that Thesiger's account of Haile Selassie's coronation can be read as a collection of narrated impressions, just as ethnography can be read as narrated impressions, Leach's "fictions",<sup>191</sup> inherently subjective whether or not the ethnographer's gaze is acknowledged. In sum, my anthropology is impressionistic: it is a relativist's extension of David Hume's 'perception of the mind',<sup>192</sup> a postmodern sensory phenomenism with the anthropological goals of Malinowski and Leach, the semiotics of de Saussure and Geertz, the semantics of Parkin, and the inchoate spaces created by Fernandez. But can our senses be trusted if even Thesiger was able to acknowledge that he ignored what he had no desire to see? For the postmodern anthropologist investigating his subject, there is no true impression, though it is through our perceptions that we lead our lives. It is important to retain a degree of uncertainty, an inchoate space for indeterminate and uncertain readings and impressions, even should I share with my readership the constrained and ethnocentric point of view which views the author as united individual, representative author, mental controller of a physical body living in a modern and progressive society. Many of us are conditioned to read Thesiger as individual-subject-author representing individual-subject-object Haile Selassie at his coronation. In our situation, here, there is no probably no little lack of commensurability between Thesiger's individuality, my culturally instituted individuality, possibly Haile Selassie's individuality, and in all probability your individuality. We all share what Rapport assumes to be a universal individuality, that

which I hesitate to objectify and universalise.

Even Evelyn Waugh shares our cultural and literary communality. Thesiger refers to Waugh in his account of the coronation, 'the one person present with a gift for writing, [...] blind to the historical significance of the occasion, impercipient of this last manifestation of Abyssinia's traditional pageantry.'<sup>193</sup> Thesiger disliked Waugh because of Waugh's different impressions of the coronation affair which he later ridiculed and parodied in his correspondence and travel books. Perhaps as an irreverent, rival writer, Thesiger disliked him so intensely?

I disapproved of his grey suede shoes, his floppy bow tie and excessive width of his trousers: he struck me as flaccid and petulant and I disliked him on sight. Later he asked, at second-hand, if he could accompany me into the Danakil country, where I planned to travel. I refused. Had he come, I suspect only one of us would have returned.<sup>194</sup>

Thesiger enjoys writing-down Waugh - an effete fop lacking in perception because his attempted representation of the coronation relies upon different impressions, experiences and interpretations to Thesiger's. Nevertheless, Waugh's account of the coronation makes for an interesting contrast with Thesiger's account. It validates my impressionistic supposition as Waugh attends to different events and interactions in his humorous endeavour to represent, what was, for him, the reality of the coronation. Read together, the two accounts do indeed show themselves to be writings of at least two respective realities - neither strictly independent, for they each recognise the presence of the other at the coronation; it could be argued, however, that they do not see eye to eye upon their same presence at the same time (the tragic end of empire for Thesiger, a comic party-time for Waugh), and at the same place (Jibuti and Abyssinia for Thesiger, Djibouti and Ethiopia for Waugh), and for the same purpose (to represent King George V for Thesiger, to sell newspaper copies for Waugh).



## II) Evelyn Waugh and the comical coronation of Ras Tafari

For the journalist and novelist Evelyn Waugh, covering Haile Selassie's coronation was part work, part pleasure and part mirth. As he explains in 'A Coronation in 1930', a chapter I culled from Remote People, Waugh had never heard of Ras Tafari, but when planning a journey to China, he read that the Abyssinians were 'deplorably lax in their morals, polygamy and drunkenness', all glamorous reasons for Waugh to run a detour through Ethiopia.<sup>195</sup> He arrived in Djibouti aboard the *Azay le Rideau* along with French, Dutch and Polish delegations, 'envoys of the civilised world', surprised by the amount of attention that the coronation had attracted in the number of delegations and the choice in gifts:

[s]ubstantial sums of public money were diverted to the purchase of suitable gifts; the Germans brought a signed photograph of General von Hindenburg and eight hundred bottles of hock; the Greeks a modern bronze statuette; the Italians an aeroplane; the British a pair of elegant sceptres with an inscription composed, almost correctly, in Amharic.<sup>196</sup>

When they arrived, they found that the trains bound for Addis were all reserved for delegations - one being the Duke of Gloucester's.<sup>197</sup> The English vice-consul of Djibouti managed to include them on one of the trains, and they rode through French Somaliland, stopping at sleepy railway station towns before arriving at Akaki, the last stop before Addis. There, the train stopped for the delegates to shave and put on their uniforms - gold braids, epaulettes, evening coats, waistcoats and top hats.<sup>198</sup> When they arrived, Evelyn and his wife Irene found accommodation in an outhouse behind a hotel. In this way '[t]he preposterous *Alice in Wonderland* fortnight had begun.'<sup>199</sup>

'How to recapture, how retail, the crazy enchantment of these Ethiopian days?' begins Waugh.<sup>200</sup> First is the place and the people: Addis still in construction, a place like a description by Lewis Carroll of 'galvanised and translated reality, where animals carry watches in their waistcoat pockets';<sup>201</sup> and the people - the soldiers like great shaggy dogs - the workers as slow as cows - the Emperor's chauffeur and Army officers,

European - and 'the officials and journalists who pullulated at every corner'.<sup>202</sup> Waugh picturises all these characters of Addis Ababa in fine ink sketches, along with the old Australian prospector 'winking over his whisky', the bankrupt German planter 'obsessed by grievances', Ras Hailu - owner of the Gojam province and the 'Robinson' night-club, and Major Sinclair's Marine band off H.M.S. *Effingham* which was to compete with the native band on the first day of the official celebrations.<sup>203</sup>

The coronation celebrations began with the Emperor's partial unveiling of a statue of a horseman, a Menelik memorial. At the old execution-tree in the capital, the two bands, local spectators, Western journalists, and other dignitaries watched Haile Selassie pull a cord designed to uncover the statue. The plans fail as the act required men with poles, along with the contractor on a ladder, to dislodge the cover. But the Emperor's action initiated his official coronation week.<sup>204</sup> The coronation was also initiated by the world's journalists who had to file all their reports of the coronation ahead of the occasion so that their reports hit the headlines on the day of the event. But up until the afternoon before the service, the location of the coronation was unknown and had to be guessed at. The city cathedral was the most likely location, a probability verified by reports of the construction of a huge tent to the side of one of its walls. Though uncertain as to this location and as to what would take place during the coronation service, Waugh takes pleasure in describing the journalists' far-sighted descriptions:

[s]ome described the coronation as taking place there; others used it as the scene of a state reception and drew fanciful pictures of the ceremony in the interior of the cathedral, '*murky, almost suffocating with incense and the thick, stifling smoke of tallow candles*' (Associated Press)<sup>205</sup>

Waugh and other Europeans witnessed the service which was held in the tent, whilst most Abyssinians waited on their haunches outside. One fortunate journalist titled his report '*Meditation Behind Machine-Guns*' and was nervously gratified to see machine-gun sections covering each approach to the cathedral.<sup>206</sup> But only Waugh was able, with his hind-sighted description, to print the detail of the crown's receptacle, a cardboard hat-box.<sup>207</sup>

The contrasting coronation accounts prompted Waugh to write his own, authoritative version. Predominantly a military celebration, the first day of celebration was in the hands of the church and took place at the cathedral/tent. Waugh and his wife crept into the building at six o'clock on the morning of the crowning. They glimpsed the all-night vigil performed by the Emperor, Empress, and Ethiopian clergy: deacons dancing to the music of hand drums and silver rattles, waving praying-sticks in ecstasy.<sup>208</sup> They then found their seats in the tent outside and waited whilst all around them journalists sent stories to the telegraph office, unaware that it had closed for the day.

Psalms, canticles, and prayers succeeded each other, long passages of Scripture were read, all in the extinct ecclesiastical tongue, Ghiz. Candles were lit one by one; the coronation oaths were proposed and sworn; the diplomats shifted uncomfortably in their gilt chairs, noisy squabbles broke out round the entrance between the imperial guard and the retainers of the local chiefs. Professor W., who was an expert of high transatlantic reputation on Coptic ritual, occasionally remarked: 'They are beginning the Mass now,' 'That was the offertory,' 'No, I was wrong; it was the consecration,' 'No, I was wrong; I think it is the secret Gospel,' 'No, I think it must be the Epistle,' 'How very curious; I don't believe it was a Mass at all,' 'Now they *are* beginning the Mass ...' and so on. Presently the bishops began to fumble among the band-boxes, and investiture began. At long intervals the Emperor was presented with robe, orb, spurs, spear, and finally with the crown. A salute of guns was fired, and the crowds outside, scattered all over the surrounding waste spaces, began to cheer; the imperial horses reared up, plunged on top of each other, kicked the gilding off the front of the coach, and broke their traces. The coachman sprang from the box and whipped them from a safe distance. Inside the pavilion there was a general sense of relief; it had all been very fine and impressive, now for a cigarette, a drink and a change into less formal costume. Not a bit of it. The next thing was to crown the Empress and their heir apparent; another salvo of guns followed, during which an Abyssinian groom had



two ribs broken in an attempt to unharness a pair of the imperial horses. Again we felt for our hats and gloves. But the Coptic choir still sang; the bishops then proceeded to take back the regalia with proper prayers, lections, and canticles.<sup>209</sup>

Mass followed as the Emperor, Empress, and majority of the clergy went back behind curtains, into an improvised sanctuary. This lasted between eleven o'clock and twelve thirty. Dignitaries awaited, their reverie only interrupted by three Abyssinian aeroplanes 'swooping and curvetting within a few feet of the canvas roof.'<sup>210</sup> At the end of the Mass the Emperor returned to deliver a royal proclamation, copies of which were scattered from the air. The clergy broke into dance once more, but retreated when faced by the world's photographers and cinema-men scrambling for their pictures. 'Then at last the Emperor and Empress were conducted to their coach and borne off to luncheon by its depleted but still demonstratively neurasthenic team of horses.'<sup>211</sup> The visitors and spectators then dispersed for their luncheon. For the Waughs, lunch at their hotel left them as depleted as the Emperor's horses for all food supplies had been commandeered by the Government.

There followed six days of 'intensive celebration'.<sup>212</sup> Monday: morning - laying wreaths at Menelik's mausoleum; afternoon - tea-party at the American Legation and fireworks display at the Italian, and a traditional *gebbur* banquet given by the Emperor to his tribesmen (excluding all Europeans, but including one 'coloured correspondent of a syndicate of Negro newspapers'); evening - diplomatic dinner at the Italian legation with a sobering discussion of the Emperor's generous distribution of honours.<sup>213</sup> Other parties and celebrations followed throughout the week with fireworks displays and dancers and, at one, an attempt to show a cinema film. There was a race meeting won by a member of the French Legation, though the Legation showed very bad club spirit by selling very few sweep-stake tickets. Irene appeared in a taxi-cab in the middle of a procession of all the troops. A museum of souvenirs was opened. Troops were reviewed.<sup>214</sup> In all, Waugh admits that 'no catalogue of events can convey any real idea of these astounding days, of an atmosphere utterly unique, elusive, unforgettable.'<sup>215</sup> Waugh turned the irregularities in the proceedings, the unpunctuality

and occasional failures into the essential charm and character of the place, the people, and the circumstances. Such differences and disorders gave Waugh a sense of vibrancy, collision and collusion:

[e]very morning we awoke to a day of brilliant summer sunshine; every evening fell cool, limpid, charged with hidden vitality, fragrant with the thin smoke of the *tukal* fires, pulsing, like a live body, with the beat of the tom-toms that drummed incessantly somewhere out of sight among the eucalyptus-trees. In this rich African setting were jumbled together, for a few days, people of every race and temper, a company shot through with every degree of animosity and suspicion.<sup>216</sup>

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Writers of realities, both Thesiger and Waugh have set down their impressions of Haile Selassie's coronation. Their accounts reflect their recollections of the coronation, perceptions of the coronation and themselves set down for an audience. Together, compared, the two writings are more than different versions (one colonial, the other comical): what the two writers see is what there is, and what they see fit to record is a part of what we see, whether or not their impressions and impressionistic writings depend upon who they are and how they view things. According to the postmodern reader, their realities are partial without being whole, even though one is honourable and the other is preposterous.

The realities which they record are not versions of one reality which they mediate. Realities are multiple and impressionistic, similar and different, and events cover an infinite multitude of indistinguishable actions. These two impressions of Ras Tafari's coronation are but two of many, framed and closed down as a crowning phantasm for Thesiger, a week in Wonderland for Waugh.

These two coronations were referred to as the coronation of 'King Alpha and Queen Omega' by a Jamaican preacher, Leonard Howell. Haile Selassie was Christ returned to earth once more, according to Howell; the Son of God on earth who would repatriate the black man out of Babylon, back to the promised land of Ethiopia. For uttering such claims, Howell was arrested in Jamaica by the British colonial forces, in December 1933.<sup>217</sup> Howell used the arrival of 72 heads of state at Selassie's coronation as evidence of their homage to the 'King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah'.<sup>218</sup> After serving a two year sentence for 'sedition and blasphemy',<sup>219</sup> Howell was released, whereupon he distributed a pamphlet account of the coronation which included telling how the Duke of Gloucester, son of the reigning English king, gave Ras Tafari "a sceptre of solid gold 27 inches long which had been taken from the hands of Ethiopia thousands of years ago".<sup>220</sup> The pamphlet also included a statement to the effect that the Duke's father would serve Selassie to the end. Howell gives us another reality of Ras Tafari's coronation.

Whether by a witness to the coronation or not, the coronation is narrated, reduced and closed down, bounded as an event, read and re-read according to some of the multiple impressions of the event. For Thesiger the coronation is a united crowning colonial moment full of the best of pomp and circumstance. For Waugh the coronation is a week of chaotic charm, haphazard and schizophrenic. For Howell and other Rastafarians, the coronation marks the Messiah's return to earth to redeem the people to their Motherland, Africa. For each of these people, the coronation has more than just a different significance, theirs are more than mere interpretations of an event, their understandings establish different realities. These, then, are my translations of but three 'native' impressions and 'native' insights into the coronation of Haile Selassie: one colonial; one chaotic and comic; another cult-like or religious depending upon the reader's understanding (Haile Selassie's spiritual status is paramount to Rastafarianism).<sup>221</sup>

These native realities are not mutually exclusive or necessarily incommensurable with each other. They frequently overlap as well as contest each other. For Howell, Thesiger and Waugh there is a coronation consensus. For them all, a coronation took

place; here - in an agreement that their event took place - lies some degree of inter-subjectivity between their subjective worlds. This tentative inter-subjective analysis of mine reveals just what is lacking in Shweder's schema of multiple objective worlds which explains incommensurability at the expense of looking into inter-subjectivity. But Waugh and Thesiger enjoyed a different coronation from each other, and all three have widely diverging meanings and significances for the coronation. The Duke of Gloucester features in all three accounts as, variously, Thesiger's travelling companion and bearer of British greetings; Waugh's token colonial train thief bearing gifts; and Howell's symbol of Selassie's potency. If the coronation is to have any reality beyond Thesiger, Waugh, Haile Selassie and other participants, it has to be recorded and framed, and then read by others such as myself and now yourself. The native insights sought by the anthropologist are thus multiplex, mobile and metamorphic - local rather than global. As a postmodern anthropologist, I thus simultaneously entertain the realities of the writers, however incommensurable Thesiger and Howell's realities might be with each other; the one British, colonial and Christian, the other Afrikan, anti-colonial and Rastafarian. In returning to Leach, this, perhaps, is what he meant when he referred to the anthropologist's search for native insights and home truths rather than concrete factualities.<sup>222</sup>

Such native worlds and realities belong not just to exotic tribes of Ethiopia or to the unusual religion of the Rastafarian in the West Indies. Native realities are created and constructed from an individual level in Rapport's Wanet, Cohen's Whalsay, and elsewhere where people see themselves as individuals. They are extended in these places as people build on other ramifications to their world-views and realities which may converge with others - one example might be a particular adherence to Christianity. Further afield lie more divergent and incommensurable native realities such as Hinduism with its accompanying conceptions of *karma* and reincarnation - a point not lost in Richard Shweder's work situated in the overlap between anthropology and psychology.<sup>223</sup> "IF ... THEN", we are to speak of grand-truths then we must write that they are local rather than global. Ironically, from the anthropologist's perspectives, realities are universally subjective and locally objective - in that the native realities of the Wanet villager and the West Indian Rastafarian are *each* true, respectively, for the villager and the Rastafarian. However, from an observer's

allegedly comparative and panoptic vantage point, these insights and realities are often treated and collated as belief systems, and as social constructions - short-sighted convictions overlaid upon an objective reality. In this preface I have maintained an argument against just such an approach - against an anthropology as paint stripper (a null hypothesis study of the different ways that people attend to the same reality).

Why did Thesiger and Waugh write down their coronation realities? Perhaps, as Leach discloses, we have an impulse to express ourselves and our realities - for ourselves and others, a human 'quest for order in disorder' as Leach puts it,<sup>224</sup> or a need to connect. This would explain our need to take photographs and sequence them in albums,<sup>225</sup> our passion to paint and hang pictures in galleries,<sup>226</sup> and our impulse to write prose and poetry.<sup>227</sup> Different mediums: similar impulses. In my writing, I accept and disclose this disorder in life. My writing is necessarily framed, but I also deconstruct myself as I go along; if I were a painter, I would be painting the frame as part of the picture.<sup>228</sup> In this thesis, there are several modest textual experiments within this text. Because of my postmodern perspectives and my impressionistic anthropology, my attention is to write native rather than anthropological assumptions, to evoke partially - as opposed to representing wholly - my "reality" as well as others. I acknowledge my prejudices and biases and limitations and confusions rather than hide them. I accept the indeterminacy of my text from which the reader will flesh out their own reality.<sup>229</sup> With my anthropological opportunities (to participate, to observe, to record, to reflect, to represent, to evoke), and my theoretical appetisers (postmodernism, impressionistic anthropology, multiple subjective worlds, evocative ethnography), but without too many of my own native assumptions (I initially disputed the anthropologists' universals before accepting the natives' own), I hope to narrate a series of ethnographic examples in which I see different individuals evoking, representing, and worldmaking their realities. With all this in mind, I begin, in Chapter One, with my personal arena of investigation, my traumatic social world evoked hereafter, my own impressions of Montserrat ...



## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> This slogan has been adopted by many self-proclaimed "environmentally friendly" tourist organisations.
- <sup>2</sup> (Parnwell 1993: 290).
- <sup>3</sup> (Patullo 1996: 88).
- <sup>4</sup> (Graburn 1989: 25).
- <sup>5</sup> (van den Berghe 1996: 552).
- <sup>6</sup> (van den Berghe 1996: 552).
- <sup>7</sup> (Eriksen 1992).
- <sup>8</sup> (Strathern, 1991).
- <sup>9</sup> (Geertz 1968).
- <sup>10</sup> (Rapport 1993: 80).
- <sup>11</sup> (Levi-Strauss 1962; see also Pace 1986: 141).
- <sup>12</sup> (Gellner 1993).
- <sup>13</sup> (Firth, *Human Organisation*, Fall 1981: 200; see also Wright 1995).
- <sup>14</sup> (Hart, *Cambridge Anthropology*, 1990: 10).
- <sup>15</sup> (Geertz 1993[b]: 21).
- <sup>16</sup> (Firth, *Human Organisation*, Fall 1981: 200).
- <sup>17</sup> (Fernandez 1986: ix).
- <sup>18</sup> (Fernandez 1986: ix). Fernandez goes on to suggest that humans, in their search for identity, end up constructing identities, a necessary and searching activity from which arises a 'growing sense of uncertainty', what Fernandez calls 'the inchoate' (Fernandez 1986: x).
- <sup>19</sup> (Skinner, *Anthropology in Action*, 1997).
- <sup>20</sup> (Miller 1994: 1). Miller presumably highlights his use of the term 'modern' because his work is ardently anti the 'pointlessness and vulgarity' of postmodernism (Miller 1994: 64).
- <sup>21</sup> (Miller 1994: 64).
- <sup>22</sup> (Hastrup 1995: x).
- <sup>23</sup> (Eriksen 1992).
- <sup>24</sup> (Strathern 1991).
- <sup>25</sup> (Geertz 1968).
- <sup>26</sup> (Kroeber 1923: 1; see also 4-5).
- <sup>27</sup> See the 'social anthropology' definition (Seymour-Smith 1986: 259). Whereas anthropologists such as Edmund Leach (1982: 13-54) and John Beattie (1982: 3-15) are very good at situating their anthropology as "social", other anthropologists such as Nigel Rapport (1994) and Kirsten Hastrup (1995) do not make such a distinction. It is interesting to note a confusion of this "social" anthropology distinction from other anthropologies noted such as '*socio-cultural anthropology*' (Benthall 1995: 1, my emphasis).
- <sup>28</sup> (Kuper 1991: ix).
- <sup>29</sup> (Malinowski 1978 [1922]; see also Radcliffe-Brown 1922).
- <sup>30</sup> (Malinowski 1978: 24, author's emphasis).
- <sup>31</sup> (Malinowski 1978: 25, author's emphasis). Elsewhere, Malinowski reiterates his intention which aims 'to understand the native through his own psychology' (Malinowski 1982 [1929]: xlviii).
- <sup>32</sup> (Radcliffe-Brown 1922: 235; see also Kuper 1991: 43).
- <sup>33</sup> (Radcliffe-Brown 1979: 4).
- <sup>34</sup> (Radcliffe-Brown 1979: 189).
- <sup>35</sup> (Radcliffe-Brown 1979: 189).
- <sup>36</sup> Kuper notes that whereas Radcliffe-Brown refused to treat social structure at an abstract level, referring to it as 'an actually existing concrete reality' (Radcliffe-Brown 1979: 192), his colleagues from a younger generation, such as Edward Evans-Pritchard, had no such hang up (Kuper 1991: 53).
- <sup>37</sup> (Asad 1973: 16).
- <sup>38</sup> (Asad 1973: 16).
- <sup>39</sup> (Ritzer 1996: 10).
- <sup>40</sup> (Kuper 1991: 119-120). Kuper also points out that some anthropological studies contributed to nationalist movements (see Worsley 1970), and that even some nationalist politicians such as Kenyatta were trained in anthropology.
- <sup>41</sup> (Kuper 1991: 119).



<sup>42</sup> (Kuper 1991: 143). On a note of interest, Kuper defines Leach's social anthropology as 'the way in which "custom" constrained individual behaviour' (Kuper 1991: 161).

<sup>43</sup> Anthony Giddens notes that the *Année Sociologique* journal was founded in 1896 (1992: 200). No doubt Durkheim's *conscience collective* (the beliefs and sentiments common to the members of a society, expressed as *representations collective*), and his treatment of social facts as things, had an impact upon Levi-Strauss (Kuper 1991: 53-54), as well as Radcliffe-Brown.

<sup>44</sup> (Saussure [a] 1988; Jakobson 1988). Claude Levi-Strauss pays tribute to Saussure's principle of the arbitrary nature of the linguistic sign (Levi-Strauss 1977: 88).

<sup>45</sup> (Levi-Strauss 1962).

<sup>46</sup> (Kuper 1977: 178).

<sup>47</sup> (Levi-Strauss 1972: 82, 23).

<sup>48</sup> (Levi-Strauss 1972: 206-231, 31-54, 81-97).

<sup>49</sup> (Douglas 1996 [1966]).

<sup>50</sup> (Leach 1982: 124-136). In his critique of Levi-Strauss, Leach praises his attempts at fathoming the human mind, though he goes on to disagree with Levi-Strauss's emphasis on a 'semiological' social anthropology (Leach 1982: 7, 98).

<sup>51</sup> (Bloch 1983: 9). See the work of Meillassoux (1981) for an example of a Marxist study of how domestic communities are organised to produce and reproduce.

<sup>52</sup> (Douglas 1996 [1966]).

<sup>53</sup> (Worsley, *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 1956).

<sup>54</sup> See the various contributions to *Man* in 1966 (Firth [a]: 1-17; see also Evans-Pritchard: 398; Firth [b]: 398-399; Needham: 398; Leach: 557-558).

<sup>55</sup> (Friedman 1984: 161-202).

<sup>56</sup> (Leach 1982: 2).

<sup>57</sup> (Leach 1982: 27).

<sup>58</sup> (Schneider 1980: 9).

<sup>59</sup> (Geertz 1993[a]: 5, 6).

<sup>60</sup> (Geertz 1993[a]: 24).

<sup>61</sup> (Geertz 1993[a]: 9, 20, 15). Here I paraphrase Geertz, maintaining the author's original emphasis upon the native's primary interpretation of his culture.

<sup>62</sup> (Geertz 1993[a]: 448).

<sup>63</sup> (Crapanzano 1992: 67).

<sup>64</sup> In *Local Knowledge - Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology* Clifford Geertz explores the tension between local knowledge and global knowledge (Geertz 1993[b]). Here, I appropriate these terms to refer to the local ethnographic knowledge collected by the anthropologist which is interpreted and set within the anthropologist's theoretical knowledge, his global knowledge.

<sup>65</sup> These paradigm shifts in the social sciences are just as revolutionary and bitterly contested as the scientific revolutions identified by Thomas Kuhn (1970).

<sup>66</sup> Ladislav Holy (1987: 13) points out the epistemological problem of how anthropologists recognise units of comparison before making generalisations.

<sup>67</sup> (Leach 1982: v).

<sup>68</sup> (Parkin 1982: xii).

<sup>69</sup> (Geertz 1993[a]: 29).

<sup>70</sup> (Crapanzano 1992: 68, 64).

<sup>71</sup> (Scholte, *Critique of Anthropology*, 1987: 34). Elsewhere, Herzfeld observes that 'any ethnographer is an "active sign" in the ethnographic encounter' (Herzfeld, *Semiotica*, 1983: 258).

<sup>72</sup> (Geertz 1993[b]: 20). Two examples which Geertz gives are Carlos Castenada's parable which poses as ethnography (1990) and Levi-Strauss's theoretical treatise set out as travelogue (1973).

<sup>73</sup> (Sarup 1993: 2-3).

<sup>74</sup> (Sarup 1993: 3). Elsewhere Jaques Derrida explains his use of his *différance* concept, a neologism combining two senses of the French verb *différer* which means both 'to differ' and 'to defer' (1993: 3-5). One of the consequences of post-structuralism has been a resultant criticism of the agency and creativity of the individual. Post-structuralists recognise the tension between the reader of a text's push into their own frame of reference, and the pull of the writer's attempt to impose ordering strategies upon the text, hence, post-structuralists are also known for their textual double - 'deconstructive' - reading of texts (Peck & Coyle 1989: 166).

<sup>75</sup> (Pool, *Critique of Anthropology*, 1991: 312). Elsewhere Edwin Ardener makes the same point about Modernism (Ardener 1985: 47).

<sup>76</sup> Here I am paraphrasing from Jameson (*New Left Review*, July-August 1984). This article was reworked to become Chapter One of Jameson's similarly titled book though minus the useful section headings which featured in the article (1991). See Eagleton (*New Left Review*, July-August 1985) for an engaging response to Jameson's article. On the topic of postmodernism, I am grateful for the "enlightening" conversations and assistance from the postmodern artist and art critic Peter Suchin (*Variant*, Spring 1988).

<sup>77</sup> John Urry notes that the West Edmonton Mall in North America attracted over 9 million tourists in 1987. The tourists were attracted to the Mall because it is a spectacle in itself - 110 acres in size with 828 shops, 110 restaurants, 19 theatres, an indoor lake with submarines, a replica Great Barrier Reef, and a hotel with rooms set out to various themes (Polynesian, Classical Roman, Arabian)(Urry 1994: 147).

<sup>78</sup> (Eco 1986: xii).

<sup>79</sup> (Urry 1994: 85).

<sup>80</sup> (Lyotard 1992: xxiv).

<sup>81</sup> (Lyotard 1992: 3-5; see also Sarup 1993: 133). The contrast between mode of production and force of production is my own.

<sup>82</sup> (Baudrillard 1983).

<sup>83</sup> (Pool, *Critique of Anthropology*, 1991: 310).

<sup>84</sup> (Said 1991 [1978]: 272, author's emphasis).

<sup>85</sup> (Geertz 1995: 130).

<sup>86</sup> (Nietzsche 1911: 180).

<sup>87</sup> (Said 1991: 272). Crapanzano's criticisms of Geertz's interpretation of Balinese cockfights is just one example which I have already mentioned (1992).

<sup>88</sup> (Clifford & Marcus 1986: inside front cover).

<sup>89</sup> (Marcus & Fischer 1986: ix).

<sup>90</sup> In a reply alongside Bob Sholte's article (*Critique of Anthropology*, 1987), Stephen Tyler wrote, categorically, that 'Writing Culture is not post-modern' (*Critique of Anthropology*, 1987: 50).

<sup>91</sup> (Pool, *Critique of Anthropology*, 1991: 309).

<sup>92</sup> (Rabinow 1977).

<sup>93</sup> (Crapanzano 1980).

<sup>94</sup> (Clifford 1988: 12). Clifford considers the work of both Rabinow and Crapanzano in his account (see also Stanton, *Critique of Anthropology*, 1986).

<sup>95</sup> (Castaneda 1990).

<sup>96</sup> (Taussig 1987).

<sup>97</sup> (Dwyer 1982).

<sup>98</sup> (Rapport 1987).

<sup>99</sup> (Bateson 1936). This is a model of 'unrelenting epistemological concerns' according to George Marcus (*Representations*, Fall 1985: 67-68).

<sup>100</sup> (Strathern, 1991: xvi, 26).

<sup>101</sup> (Kapferer, *Critique of Anthropology*, Autumn 1988: 78). This claim is made about Geertz's work in general whilst Kapferer reviews Geertz's new book in particular (1989). Kapferer also reviews Taussig's and Clifford's texts about ethnography which I have already mentioned.

<sup>102</sup> (Tyler 1986: 136, see also 123).

<sup>103</sup> (Tyler 1986: 125, 127, 131, 134-135).

<sup>104</sup> (Tyler 1986: 137).

<sup>105</sup> (Tyler 1986: 137, 136).

<sup>106</sup> (Tyler 1986: 140).

<sup>107</sup> (James & Hockey & Andrew Dawson 1997: 13).

<sup>108</sup> (Clifford & Marcus 1986: 138).

<sup>109</sup> (Strathern, *Current Anthropology*, June 1987: 256).

<sup>110</sup> Here I am leading on from a point made by Rapport to Strathern in personal communication (Strathern 1991: 8).

<sup>111</sup> (Bauman, *Sociological Review*, November 1988: 790).

<sup>112</sup> (Jarvie 1984: 3).

<sup>113</sup> (Shweder 1991: 20).

<sup>114</sup> (Shweder 1991: 42).

<sup>115</sup> The full quotation reads (Schneider 1965: 85-86; see also Shweder 1991: 42):

[m]an's beliefs about ghosts and spirits must be wholly formed by man himself. Whatever unity there is to man's beliefs about the supernatural derives, therefore, from the nature of man himself and not from the nature of the supernatural.

<sup>116</sup> The full quotation reads (Schneider 1976: 204):

[t]he world, at large, nature, the facts of life, whatever they may be, are always parts of man's perception of them as that perception is formulated through his culture. The world at large is not, indeed it cannot be, independent of the way in which his culture formulates his vision of what he is seeing. There are only cultural constructions of reality, and these cultural constructions of realities are decisive in what is perceived, what is experienced, what is understood. [...] Reality is itself constructed by the beliefs, understandings, and comprehensions entailed in cultural meanings.

<sup>117</sup> (Berger & Luckmann 1971 [1966]: 13). According to Berger and Luckmann, reality is 'a quality appertaining to phenomena that we recognise as having a being independent of our own volition' and knowledge is 'the certainty that phenomena are real and that they possess specific characteristics.' They continue with the declaration that society has both an objective and a subjective reality: society has objective facticity and subjective meaning as concrete people make social objects and define society in ways which are objectively open to fathom (Berger & Luckmann 1971: 30, 134).

<sup>118</sup> The full quotation reads (Linguist, *Ethnos*, 1995: 8-9):

[a]s a result of his fieldwork [Maurice] Bloch looks at the world with the eyes of the people he studied, Malagasi swidden cultivators. His perception of the forest is organised by the cognitive models that he shares with these people. Walking through the forest, he 'sees' it in a certain way. Different people, socialised in different cultural groups and having different cultural models of the language unit 'forest' would obviously see different things walking through the same forest. A tourist on vacation would see a beautiful piece of scenery, looking exactly as it does in his brochure; a Greenpeace activist would see an endangered piece of nature in need of immediate protective measures, and an urban shaman would see the spirits of the wood and Small People (also known as dwarfs or leprechauns) laughing and jumping under every bush. The reality outside, the forest, would be the same, existing before and after they walk through it; but, having formed different cultural models, they attend to the same reality in different ways.

<sup>119</sup> (Gellner 1992: 54). In this text, Gellner - a self-proclaimed Enlightenment rationalist - professes a faith in the uniqueness of a truth which we never definitely possess, but one which - unlike relativism - he feels is sufficient for him to be able to discern truths from untruths (Gellner 1992: vii).

<sup>120</sup> (Hanson, *Man*, 1979: 516). Hanson argues that *contextualism* is more appropriate than objectivity and relativity because they are single-contingency theories of truth (one externally contingent, the other culturally contingent); 'truth refers neither to the world alone, nor simply to the propositions we advance about the world' (Hanson, *Man*, 1979: 517). Truth, rather, is doubly-contingent, referring to the relation between the world and our propositions about it. Truth, knowledge and meaning vary according to cultural contexts: they are 'determined in the context of the metaphysical beliefs of the culture or historical period' (Hanson, *Man*, 1979: 520). So, Hanson's contextualism differs from Shweder's multiple objective worlds in that it allows Hanson to hold a constant external reality - one world - with various truths in it.

<sup>121</sup> In a guest lecture at St. Andrews University, Richard Rorty (30th April 1997) declared that it is not possible to operate any independent criteria for assessing the nature of reality. In my opinion, much depends upon the distinction between 'belief' (a conviction of truth) and 'knowledge' (the condition of truth). I 'believe' that this distinction is also blurred and relative.

<sup>122</sup> (Shweder 1991: 29).

<sup>123</sup> (Shweder 1991: 66).

<sup>124</sup> (Shweder 1991: 29).

<sup>125</sup> Whereas positivism is a philosophical system recognising only non-metaphysical facts and observable phenomena, and rejecting metaphysics and theism, Shweder's postpositivism articulates a

relativist position whilst maintaining the accomplishments of science. Shweder incorporates Derrida's 'metaphysics of presence' (Shweder 1991: 60) when he writes (Shweder 1991: 59):

[t]he main thing to be drawn on in postpositivist reflection is a two-sided idea that can be expressed in variant ways as follows. Although (side 1) nothing in particular exists independently of our theoretical interpretation of it (the principle of subject-dependency) and although all theories are inherently underdetermined by the facts (the principle of cognitive undecidability), there still does exist (side 2) the reality and accomplishment of "normal science" operating within the subject-dependent, cognitively undecidable terms of a paradigm.

<sup>126</sup> In Shweder's opinion (Shweder 1991: 64):

[s]ince no reality-finding science can treat all appearances-sensations-experiences as revelatory of the objective world, and since, at least for the moment, no infallible way exists to decide which reality-positives are signs of reality and which are not, much is discretionary in every portrait of the objective world out there beyond our symbolic forms. Reality, after all, for all we can ever really know, may be far away, or deep within, or hidden behind, and thus viewable only "as if through a glass darkly".

<sup>127</sup> (Shweder 1991: 64)

<sup>128</sup> (Shweder 1991: 355).

<sup>129</sup> This point is admirably explained by Bonnie O'Connor (1995: 8-9, author's emphasis):

[w]e tend to refer to our own accepted certainties as "knowledge" and to the claims of others as "belief" when these are incongruent with or contradictory to our own categories and claims. [...] [W]hat is accepted as adequate justification, as proof, as an authoritative source, or as sufficient grounds for making assertions, are *all* culturally defined and vary considerably from one worldview or belief system to another.

<sup>130</sup> The full conundrum reads (Goodman 1978: 2):

[i]f there is but one world, it embraces a multiplicity of contrasting aspects; if there are many worlds the collection of them all is one. The one world may be taken as many, or the many worlds taken as one; whether one or many depends on the way of the taking.

<sup>131</sup> (Goodman 1978: 132).

<sup>132</sup> (Goodman 1978: 130).

<sup>133</sup> (Goodman 1978: 2-3).

<sup>134</sup> (Overing, *Man*, 1990: 603).

<sup>135</sup> (Overing 1985: 3). In conversation, Overing makes the distinction between recording and translating these realities and the further step of assessing these realities (29th January 1997).

<sup>136</sup> (Overing 1985: 1).

<sup>137</sup> (Hirst 1985: 88-89).

<sup>138</sup> With the ability to say anything, comes the criticism that we are saying nothing. In other words, if standards are culturally constrained then relativism leads to nihilism. However, as I have shown, there are constraints placed upon the relativism which I advocate.

<sup>139</sup> Geertz qualifies 'ethnographic ventriloquism' as (Geertz 1989: 145):

the claim to speak not just about another form of life but to speak from within it; to represent a depiction of how things look from "an Ethiopian (woman poet's) point of view" as itself an Ethiopian (woman poet's) depiction of how they look from such a view.

<sup>140</sup> (Todorov, *Anthropology Today*, April 1988: 2-5).

<sup>141</sup> (Herskovits 1955: 350, author's emphasis). Herskovits continues (1955: 351, 356, author's emphasis):

[c]ultural relativism is in essence an approach to the question of the nature and role of values in culture. It represents a scientific, inductive attack on an age-old philosophical problem, using fresh, cross-cultural data, hitherto not available to scholars, gained from the study of the underlying value-systems of societies having the most diverse customs. The principle of cultural relativism, briefly stated, is as follows: *Judgements are based on experience, and experience is interpreted by each*



*individual in terms of his own enculturation.* [...] The primary mechanism that directs the evaluation of culture is ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism is the point of view that one's own way of life is to be preferred to all others.

<sup>142</sup> (Herskovits 1955: 351).

<sup>143</sup> Prior to a chapter on 'Cultural Relativism and Cultural Values' (Herskovits 1955: 348-366), Herskovits has written a chapter considering the relationship between 'Culture and the Individual' (1955: 330-347) which treats the individual as a given.

<sup>144</sup> (Geertz 1993[a]: 19, author's emphasis).

<sup>145</sup> (Geertz 1993[a]: 24).

<sup>146</sup> Alfred Schutz sought a 'phenomenological sociology', drawing upon the work of Edmund Husserl who himself was seeking a 'presuppositionless philosophy' (Wagner 1970: 3, 5). Here is the following useful introduction to phenomenology (Hammond & Howarth & Keat 1991: 1-2):

phenomenology - "to describe objects just as one experiences them, and to extract philosophy from the process" [...] Thus phenomenology involves the description of things as one experiences them, or of one's experiences of things [...] One important class of such experiences of things is perception - seeing, hearings, touching, and so on. But it is by no means the only one. There are also phenomena such as believing, remembering, wishing, deciding and imagining things; feeling apprehensive, excited, or angry at things; judging and evaluating things; the experiences involved in one's bodily actions, such as lifting or pulling things; and many others.

<sup>147</sup> (Rapport 1993; 1994: 40-41; 1997).

<sup>148</sup> (Cohen 1995: 2). Cohen notes that despite anthropologists trying to distinguish between 'individual', 'person', and 'self', such distinctions are arbitrary, and are difficult to sustain.

<sup>149</sup> (Morris 1991: 231-274, 262-274, 262-265).

<sup>150</sup> (Cohen 1995: 14-15).

<sup>151</sup> (Dumont 1970, 1986).

<sup>152</sup> (Cohen 1987). Only in their recent anthropology of consciousness do both Rapport and Cohen, both anthropologists of Britain, attend to 'the philosophical and anthropological legacy of mind-body dualism' (Cohen & Rapport 1995: 2), namely, that 'Western social thought is built upon the Cartesian notion of self consciousness (as expressed in the *cogito*) as the distinguishing characteristic of humanity' (Cohen & Rapport 1995: 1, author's emphasis). Like the authors' earlier works, Questions of Consciousness raises many pertinent anthropological issues about the interpretation, sense-making and meaning of public language, private thought and interpersonal behaviour; it evinces consciousness as 'cursing, dreaming, writing, trancing, multiplying personalities, sloganizing, "sorcerizing", growing and playing' (Cohen & Rapport 1995: 13); but, again, despite all the explorations and questions, the creativity, agency and activity of the conscious inviolable individual remains, one divided - according to Kirsten Hastrup in her contribution - between the 'inner person' (consciousness) and the 'outer reality' of manifest behaviour (Cohen & Rapport 1995: 13). See also Nigel Rapport's work on postmodernism (1994: 39) and his forthcoming work with Joanna Overing (Rapport & Overing, forthcoming).

<sup>153</sup> (Lash 1995: 271).

<sup>154</sup> (Lash 1995: 263).

<sup>155</sup> (Rorty 1996: 12).

<sup>156</sup> (See Synnott 1993: 7-37; Fox 1993; Barrett, *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry*, 1988: 357-388).

<sup>157</sup> (Synnott 1993: 7-8).

<sup>158</sup> (Csordas 1994: 6-7). Csordas is referring to Do Kamo: Person and Myth in Melanesian World by Maurice Leenhardt (1979 [1947]).

<sup>159</sup> (Leach 1986: 52).

<sup>160</sup> (Holy & Stuchlik 1983).

<sup>161</sup> (Burgess 1993: 2).

<sup>162</sup> (Geertz 1993[b]: 5).

<sup>163</sup> (Geertz 1993[a]: 24). Establishing a conversation with other people has often been considered to be an act of translation: for Malinowski, learning a foreign culture is like learning a foreign language (Malinowski 1982 [1929]: xlvii); for Leach, working with natives also involves the translation of

insight for the reader (Leach 1986: 53); and for David Parkin, anthropology is an 'exercise in comprehending the cultural translations of ourselves and of others' (1982: xxiv).

<sup>164</sup> (Saussure [b] 1988: 11).

<sup>165</sup> Fernandez makes use of Kenneth Burke's definition of a proverb ("a strategy for dealing with a situation") in defining metaphor as "a strategic predication upon an inchoate pronoun (an I, a you, a we, a they) which makes a movement and leads to performance" (1986: 8).

<sup>166</sup> (Ingersoll & Nickell 1987: 200).

<sup>167</sup> (Thesiger 1987).

<sup>168</sup> (Thesiger 1987: 88-96). Much of the following text is paraphrased from this chapter.

<sup>169</sup> (Thesiger 1987: 441).

<sup>170</sup> (Thesiger 1987: 91).

<sup>171</sup> (Thesiger 1987: 91).

<sup>172</sup> (Thesiger 1987: 92).

<sup>173</sup> (Thesiger 1987: 92).

<sup>174</sup> (Thesiger 1987: 92-93).

<sup>175</sup> (Thesiger 1987: 93).

<sup>176</sup> Richard Handler and Jocelyn Linnekin make a similar point about our present-tense understanding of 'tradition' (Handler & Linnekin, *Journal of Folklore Studies*, 1984: 281).

<sup>177</sup> According to Wolfgang Iser, the literary text is 'inexhaustible' in that 'the literary text needs the reader's imagination' for it to be realised (Iser 1988: 216, 214). The text - Rapport's 'site for the production and proliferation of meaning within the consciousness of the individual writer and reader' (Rapport 1994: 24) - is where the reader brings aspects of himself in the process of reading, aspects which subsequently affect the reader and the reading.

<sup>178</sup> (Barthes [a] 1988: 171).

<sup>179</sup> (Iser 1988: 227). This is a part of Iser's phenomenology of reading, phenomenology being the way that people experience and understand everyday life.

<sup>180</sup> (Iser 1988: 219). I take from Iser the need to produce a thesis without pictures, a thesis of creative impressions.

<sup>181</sup> (Mair 1977: 130).

<sup>182</sup> It is possible to read the chapters in this thesis in a different order, so long as the reader is aware that some characters are first introduced to the thesis in one chapter, and feature again in successive chapters without introduction.

<sup>183</sup> Young reports Marx's praise for Britain's colonisation of India as an example of this (Young 1992: 2). In his 'Preface', Young situates his work within a post-structuralist frame of reference (Young 1992: vii).

<sup>184</sup> (Young 1992: 20).

<sup>185</sup> (Young 1992: 84). Baudrillard, for example, in his postmodern analysis of the Gulf War reveals a military history eclipsed by the media into a hyper-reality (Baudrillard 1994: 62-65).

<sup>186</sup> (Young 1992: 82). At such a fine degree of analysis, it might even be possible to take exception to the discrimination of individual actions on the battlefield. Young also refers to 'Foucault's phantasms' and thoughts on the history of history (Young 1992: 83-85).

<sup>187</sup> (Young 1992: 12). Young points to a phenomenological influence upon similar trains of thought. Here, no doubt, I also reflect a more extreme stance than those anthropologists who have contributed to the volume *History and Ethnicity*, using it as an opportunity to reformulate the historian's question ("How did the past create the present?") into an anthropologist's question ("How did the present create the past?") (Chapman & Tonkin & McDonald 1989: 5). See also 'The death of the future' by David Lowenthal (1992: 23) where he writes that '[h]istory [...] is a cultural artefact continually refashioned to accord with new needs.'

<sup>188</sup> (Barthes [b] 1988: 173; see also Barthes [a] 1988: 170, author's emphasis).

<sup>189</sup> These impressions many would consider to be solely cognitive and not physical. I do not consider such a distinction and would include a phenomenological dimension to these impressions.

<sup>190</sup> (Iser 1988: 224).

<sup>191</sup> '[M]ost ethnographic monographs are fiction even if the author intended otherwise' writes Leach (1989: 42). Leach's proposition is subsequently attacked by Raymond Firth (1989: 48-52).

<sup>192</sup> (Hume 1938 [1740]: 9). In explaining phenomenalism Laird writes (1932: 25):



[p]henomenalism is the doctrine that all knowledge, all our belief, and all our conjectures begin and end with appearances; that we cannot go behind or beyond these; and that we should not try to do so. Sensory phenomenalism is the doctrine that such appearances are, in the last analysis, either sensations or images which echo and mimic sensations.

I am cautious as to my adoption of this definition coming from a philosopher whose work, Laird notes, has been variously described as empiricism, scepticism, naturalism and phenomenalism. If my thesis is to have any assumptions, I accept, then, that the impression is at the root of all human knowledge, understanding, experience, cognition and communication.

<sup>193</sup> (Thesiger 1987: 91).

<sup>194</sup> (Thesiger 1987: 92).

<sup>195</sup> (Thesiger 1951: 75).

<sup>196</sup> (Thesiger 1951: 76).

<sup>197</sup> (Thesiger 1951: 78).

<sup>198</sup> (Thesiger 1951: 83).

<sup>199</sup> (Thesiger 1951: 84, author's emphasis).

<sup>200</sup> (Thesiger 1951: 85, *sic*). A possible typographical error or pun upon the verb "to retell"?

<sup>201</sup> (Thesiger 1951: 85).

<sup>202</sup> (Thesiger 1951: 89).

<sup>203</sup> (Thesiger 1951: 87-88, 90-91).

<sup>204</sup> (Thesiger 1951: 92).

<sup>205</sup> (Thesiger 1951: 93, author's emphasis).

<sup>206</sup> (Thesiger 1951: 94, author's emphasis).

<sup>207</sup> (Thesiger 1951: 93).

<sup>208</sup> (Thesiger 1951: 94-95).

<sup>209</sup> (Thesiger 1951: 95-96).

<sup>210</sup> (Thesiger 1951: 97).

<sup>211</sup> (Thesiger 1951: 97).

<sup>212</sup> (Thesiger 1951: 98).

<sup>213</sup> (Thesiger 1951: 98-99).

<sup>214</sup> (Thesiger 1951: 100).

<sup>215</sup> (Thesiger 1951: 100).

<sup>216</sup> (Thesiger 1951: 100-101).

<sup>217</sup> (Owens 1984: 16). Howell was charged with using seditious and blasphemous language to boost the sale of his pictures of Haile Selassie.

<sup>218</sup> (Owens 1984: 15, 18).

<sup>219</sup> (Owens 1984: 17, 16).

<sup>220</sup> (Owens 1984: 16-17).

<sup>221</sup> Rastafarianism fits the description of a cult which is 'millenarian', a movement 'in which there is an expectation of, and preparation for, the coming of a period of supernatural bliss' (Worsley 1970: 22).

<sup>222</sup> (Leach 1986: 52).

<sup>223</sup> (Shweder 1991: 58).

<sup>224</sup> (Leach 1986: 86).

<sup>225</sup> (Morris 1994: 15-16). Morris notes that looking at a photograph undermines the temporal and dimensional principles of everyday vision. Despite this comment, she maintains that it is possible to hold a rigid distinction between reality and its photographic representation, one natural, the other unnatural.

<sup>226</sup> Consider 'A Pair of Boots' by Vincent Van Gogh, a painting of peasant shoes with an immediacy for the viewer; a painting which, for Fredric Jameson, can be hermeneutically read as a clue to a wider reality of peasant labouring and a labour intensive division of labour (Jameson 1991: 6-10). Jameson contrasts this with 'Diamond Dust Shoes' by Andy Warhol, a photographic negative of a random collection of shoes hanging lifeless, a commercial and superficial postmodern example of the crisis of representation (Jameson 1991: 10). For some, this means that a critical path can be traced beginning with the end of the doctrine of realism (that '[o]bjects existing outside the mind can be **represented** (reproduced by a concept or work of art) in a way that is adequate, accurate and true') (Appignanesi &

Garratt & Sardar & Curry 1995: 13, authors' emphasis). This eventually gave way to the work of Impressionists such as Cezanne and Monet who painted their perceptions of reality rather than a representation of reality (Appignanesi & Garratt & Sardar & Curry 1995: 14-15). And last, in abstract art, Pollock expressionism, postmodern art, theory is disconnected from reality and art ends with hyper-reality, a simulacrum (reached 'when the distinction between representation and reality - between signs and what they refer to in the real world - breaks down')(Appignanesi & Garratt & Sardar & Curry 1995: 55). See also the four historic phases of art, to paraphrase Richard Appignanesi, Ziauddin Sardar and Patrick Curry who paraphrase Jean Baudrillard, which run from art as the **reflection** of a basic reality, to art as a **mask** and **perversion** of a basic reality, to art with a marked **absence** of a basic reality, to art which bears **no relation** to any reality whatever - it is its own pure simulacrum (Appignanesi & Garratt & Sardar & Curry 1995: 55, authors' emphasis).

<sup>227</sup> (Abrioux 1985: 86). Consider this one-word concrete poem:

#### THE CLOUD'S ANCHOR

swallow

A concrete poem conveys a part of its meaning visually. With this example, Finlay plays the boundaries of visual-verbal representation, forcing the reader to engage with the text in a creative, imaginative and highly visual fashion. Here, the sea and the sky are aligned with each other: the image of the swallow, the shape of an anchor in the sky, a visual reading of a text. Such controversial artistry resulted in Finlay being deliberately omitted from The Faber Book of Twentieth Century Scottish Poetry edited by Douglas Dunn (1993).

<sup>228</sup> Sarup points out that the nature of knowledge has changed: 'computerised knowledge has become the principal *force of production*' (Sarup 1993: 133); it is recognised that scientific knowledge 'does not represent the totality of knowledge' (Sarup 1993: 135). Classical, Enlightenment, and modernist enterprises - of grand models and paradigms, of universal knowledge and essentialising foundations - no longer function in contemporary society. In sum, 'Knowledge is ceasing to be an end in itself' (Sarup 1993: 133). Thus, it is possible to distinguish between Postmodernist plural perspectives and positions - with 'diverse forms of individual and social identity' (Sarup 1993: 130) - and Modernist convictions that experimentation will reveal an inner truth beneath surface appearances. This clause appears to be paradoxical, since many post-structuralists deny the agency of the individual actor. This thesis utilises many points from post-structuralists such as Michel Foucault, Roland Barthes, Jean-Francois Lyotard, Jacques Derrida and Robert Young. This text is also written in a fashion which 'stresses the interaction of reader and text as productivity' (Sarup 1993: 3). However, my appreciation and restricted use of post-structural concepts - which stress the word signifier over and above the concept signified, and which treat reading as active performance - does not mean that I sympathise with Foucault's deconstruction of the subject with his challenge to conceptions of humanity; Derrida's deconstruction of meaning and interpretation with his system of free-floating signifiers; or Barthes's death of the author as the text is severed from creator and is read into infinity by creative readers.

<sup>229</sup> (Lewis, *Man*, 1986: 415).

Date: Wed, 19 July 1995 10:51:23 MST  
From: Global Volcanism Network  
Subject: Soufriere Hills, Montserrat

The following report from the Smithsonian Institution's Global Volcanism Network on 19 July 1995 is preliminary and subject to change as additional information is received.

Soufriere Hills, Montserrat, West Indies  
16.72 N, 62.18 W; summit elev. 915 m

The Associated Press reported a "full alert" on the island of Montserrat Tuesday (18 July) after a light ashfall. The director of an emergency operations center told AP that no mass evacuation was planned, but two schools had been set aside as refugee centers for those living near the volcano who wanted to evacuate. The Synoptic Analysis Branch of NOAA saw no evidence of a plume on satellite imagery.

The following information is from a telephone report to GVN on the morning of 19 July from Richard Robertson at the Seismic Research Unit, University of the West Indies, Trinidad. Based on his conversations with Montserrat residents, this eruption appears to have been a small phreatic event with minor ashfall being spread around the island by local winds. The UWI maintains two seismic stations on Montserrat. Seismicity has been elevated for the past three years, and an earthquake swarm was recently recorded. William Ambeh and Lloyd Lynch have been dispatched from UWI to confirm the activity. They will prepare a report for the GVN Bulletin upon completion of their investigation.

Soufriere Hills volcano has grown on the N flank of the older South Soufriere Hills volcano at the S end of Montserrat Island. The summit area consists primarily of a series of lava domes emplaced along a ESE-trending zone. The youngest dome, Castle Peak, is located in English's Crater, which is breached to the E. Block-and-ash flow and surge units associated with dome growth predominate in flank deposits. The capital city of Plymouth lies on the coast, ~4 km W of the summit.

An active fumarolic area, named Galways Soufriere, is located on the S flank of Soufriere Hills. There have been no reported historical eruptions, but some undated deposits and the cone have a young appearance. A radiocarbon date of ~320 BP from a pyroclastic-flow deposit is significantly younger than other radiocarbon dates from the volcano, but could result from the latest activity of Chances Peak.

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## Chapter One - Introducing Montserrat place and Mons'rat neaga

Heat. Hot. It's damn hot. It was so hot when I went to bed last night and it's hot even now. Another morning to plug and unplug the fan as I walk around my apartment with the sweat glistening down my awkward body. It hits my skin when I disturb the lizards by winching up the shutters. They were built and bred for this place, not me. And the light needles my eyes so I have to frown at everything like a frustrated anthropologist.

But I am frustrated! 7.40 am and Ned's playing a scraping ragga version of '*Redemption Song*' down below me. He's screaming the words, macheting a carcass in his yard, pinning the meat to the wall of his little wooden house caught between the new Government Philatelic Bureau (run by the former Chief Minister) and my apartment, an appendage above the Emerald Cafe. (Both myself and the Cafe belong to Cherrie Taylor further down the street so I can't complain when Ned sets up all their metal chairs outdoors at 6am - more scraping).

Ned's wife must have already heard her Morning Service programme and left for the hospital. The children, Javan and Savan, have already been punished by their policeman father. Javan hoses himself and finishes dressing in the yard before going to school. He sends the kittens and chickens in all directions, spraying the air whilst singing and wining his hips to himself. Savan plucks strands of mango from between her teeth and throws them over the galvanise walls. There they land on no-man's land to further the battle between rubbish tip and garden allotment.

The music is loud but when I open the shutters overlooking the road, Neil Diamond's '*America*' shakes me even more awake. Prof must be on a day-off. It's his favourite song - it must be to be so loud at eight in the morning. He doesn't like Ned, a fat policeman who doesn't know how to box. Prof likes to play louder music than Ned because Ninja, Prof's dog, was poisoned by Ned. Me, I think it was the AUC students, Americans up on the hill who used to meet Ninja behind the Green Flash when the toilet was occupied. At any rate, Ned likes dogs, he has some tied up with

the goats, up above Prof's, at the abandoned hotel. You know, the one that was blasted by the hurricane.

No one minds about the music except for me. Prof's girl Shontel is a bit deaf 'cause Emilia suckled her on dance floors before she took to sitting out on the porch and watching the American doctor students drinking down the road. Emilia keeps the music on all day whilst she makes clothes. That way people know she's in and they can lime on her porch. She daren't touch the stereo without Prof's permission, and he's not going to start speaking to her.

Prof's out by the road in a shell suit and singlet and his goalkeeper's bandanna that stretches down his back to keep off the sun. He's scratching the weeds away from Ninja's memorial pile with his machete, worrying Tony's donkey, forcing the ground lizards to scuttle under his house, and throwing karate kicks at his friends driving down the hill to work. An ordinary morning. Nice to see - Prof in the garden and at last watering some of the cacti on the porch, Emilia waving to her friends walking to the market. She's got her hair, she just relaxed, wrapped in a blanket, and she's just sitting with a thin wrap around her torso. She's a butterskin as the Antiguans say, a redskin as they say here. She's an Allen from the north where they all have clear skins, and she always tells me that she's one of the Montserrat Irish. Some say Prof's lucky to live at his girlfriend's - such an attractive, light-skinned woman, especially with him being so black. Interesting that Shontel's just brown. Clifton and Lenny, Emilia's teenage sons from elsewhere and another time are more like their father, not that he acknowledges them. Sad really, Prof also has two other kids from another time. There's pictures taped onto the wall of them. They're at school now and he sometimes sees them as they walk up the hill to their grandmother's where they live.

Anyway, Emilia's shouting up to the branches of a huge breadfruit tree arching out above their house. It covers Chef Alvin's car park for the Cafe. He says he's poor and that as a whiteman I should buy him out, though he's got a Mercedes which he parks opposite the Cafe gates, at the foot of Prof's porch, rather than at his customers' car park. Tony, his odd-job man, cleans the car everyday. But, in this case, Tony's picking breadfruit out of the trees. Sometimes I wake up in the morning when he



throws breadfruit onto the galvanise outside my window. Today, his shoes are at the bottom of the tree and he's heckling the schoolgirls walking up Wapping to town.

"Wha! Gal, leh me teach you wid me tung!"

"Wotcha. 'Come betta dan dat' Kibo, ya raz-boy."

"Aiou. You a one fuking hard gal, fuking hard ya hear. Any more you mothers-cunts like she?"

Banter, but the girl has the better of Tony who doesn't like to be reminded of his dreadlocks that were shorn off when he went to jail. He was framed for raping his girlfriend who moved in with some policemen. Maybe they poisoned Prof's dog, saving their bullets whilst on the stray patrol?

Bang - Bang - Bang

The metal door reverberates. It could be anyone and I'm not ready for them yet. Prof could be angry about something from last night? Down the stairs, outside, by the side of the road, a grin and a goatee beard are pointed at me. Tony's still barefoot with a pair of trousers tied up at the waist, a torn shirt open to his navel. His hand's on his belly, stroking it in pain. He's sweating and puffing on a fag.

"Ooh. Got anything fu me stomach mon? 'E hurt bad bad. Me need someting warm."

Tony implores me, begging for a drink.

"Wha, but it's only eight o'clock. A wha' kinda t'ing is dis ya?" I practise my dialect and Tony cackles through his teeth.

"Aiou, boy, you's Mons'ratian. Jus' some rum an' ice?"

Prof must have told Tony about the new bottle of rum we started last night. But 'once in de morning' is 'once every morning' with Tony.

"Me got na rum."

"Wha, you finish de rum like dat? Wha' 'bout me, mon? Aiou!". Tony leaves for his breadfruit, knowing full well that I won't be shifted so early in the morning. We both prefer a lie to the coarse truth.

Prof sees me topless by the door and waves at me with his machete. I have to go across.

"Hey Prof, how you doing?"



"A wha you say?"

"Huh?"

"A WHA YOU SAY?"

And what do you say? I try out, "I'm fine. Me chill! You rub up?"

"A'right Jono. The boys say they like las' night. 2-Pac pissed man, pissed. He just sit dere an singing. Technikal choose 'e song. Eh, 'A News Dem A Look'!"

"Great, tell 'e 'to go and read a newspaper' then!"

We laugh at the joke from last night and I take my leave, feeling self-conscious.

"A'right Jono, me check you later."

"Yeah, yeah, yeah." I imitate Prof.

Back upstairs, I continue to prepare myself and work out a rough path for the day. Slow after last night's singing at Prof's; little news on the radio, few events this Tuesday: 2 deaths and mention of relatives mourning - 5 brothers and sisters in Britain and the US, twelve cousins including Bobby Blake over at Blake's Estate, 'Spoon', 'Tiger' Blake and Auntie Maisy from the Blakes's in the north, Josey, Axel and David, 7 grand-children and 23 great-grand-children. The funeral will be tomorrow with an island-wide half-day holiday so members of the civil service and Government, friends and relatives can attend. The north road will have police diverting traffic through Salem and Amersham Estate; 'Beep Beep' will run the bus from the north starting at St. John's and 'Taximan' Sweeney will gather those from the south starting at Sweeney's Estate. There follows a drought warning and a request by Police Commissioner Crowther for owners of livestock to tie them up, as cattle have been blocking the roads and goats have been wandering into the capital again. The news ends, closing with the jingle "Tourism is my business, your business, everybody's business", and the message - "Tourism is everybody's business".

I set straight some fieldnotes from last week, jot down events from late last night and leave for my own wanderings and wonderings around the capital.

"A'right James".

"A'right."

James is busy at the top of the street, leaning against a wall. Everyday James leans and watches down the road. Later on he'll follow the shade to the bottom of the street

where it joins the road south. There he'll spend the evening looking up Wapping. He's there everyday, wearing the same shorts and shirt. He only begged from me the first day he saw me. Thereafter we just say hellos for the first time each day and, should I pass him later in the day, he'll just pretend to be looking in the other direction. He has a war tattoo and a peace tattoo on each forearm, and he lives with his old mother. Though in his forties, his mother tends to his needs. Today, two American tourists, on their way to investigate the Emerald Cafe, or just off-track, are asking him if they've given him enough money.

At the bridge - my favourite view of the island. The bridge divides Wapping from Plymouth. Underneath the bridge runs a large river-bed, a ghaut where goats graze and rubbish is dropped. Up on the right, if you follow the ghaut, there's a green mountain shaped like an old volcano. It was a volcano, and most tourists describe the vegetation on it as 'lush'. That word now makes many Montserratians cringe. The term is appropriate, but when it appears in every description of the island - and now in all the island tourist adverts and on the lips of all the Montserratians abroad who describe the island that they belong to - it becomes worn and clichéd. The grasses are a bit dry and patchy from the unremitting sun, but there's still that emerald tint about them, the rhododendron bushes and tropical trees. 'Emerald' is another of those well-worn words. There are other hills and mountains to the north, but Chances Peak is the highest, the one with the Cable and Wireless mast, and the one everyone associates with the shape of the island.

To the left the ghaut reaches the sea, passing through some broken-up old boats, and you can just see the new jetty for cargo ships and the occasional West Indies Guardship permanently stationed in the Caribbean by the British. In front is the new Plymouth Prison, the old colonial fort. Outside, the prisoners chop wood and line up for manpower services around the island.

On the way into Plymouth centre there is the garage, Texaco - 'the Star of the Eastern Caribbean'. The Wash Bar - 'now serving goatwater, souse and conch'. The stone slabs of the market. The Pleasure Palace Bar 'in action'. The Bird's Nest Bar. Squeakies Supermarket - 'ask if we can do any better'. The Taxi-Memorial Stand and

dominoes zone. The Wharf, jetty and Seamen's Union. Liat - 'Land In Any Tree' - Airlines. The Post Office and Labidy. Wolfe's Diving Shop.

There are passing hellos, nods and papal flicks of the wrist. I disappear up past the new Bank of Montserrat, the Montserrat Chamber of Commerce, Lloyd's Shipping and Insurance, Wall Shipping and Trucking, Piper's Pharmacy, the Heliconia and Tradewinds Real Estate, to get to the Royal Bank of Canada. I have to avoid the taxi drivers who are determined to drive me up to 'the School'.

At the bank, the doorman welcomes me to his air-conditioned building where I heard that one person once had a heart attack because the temperature difference was so extreme. The line watches the doorman stop just as many West Indian visitors to the Western climate as there are Tropical customers allowed in. 'Little' Dan's there killing time selling a few lettuces from his plot. He's got about twenty people to tempt and more people arriving by the minute. There are about five active counters and two or three closed with "Please try the next wicket" signs. All the cashiers have some words with the customer before getting the money from the one dispenser. Fortunately, their queue's shorter than ours, but there's still time to look around at the builders, Cable & Wireless personnel, the man who deposits all the Texaco cash throughout the day, some old ladies with brown bags of old notes and a few taxi drivers. Dey say Mons'rat taximen so fas', dey make money 'fore dey learn fu sign fu um.

After my withdrawal, on the way out I pass Prof sitting in the shade of the bank where the buses pick up for the south of the island. He was just sitting with a Carib, just watching the streetlife. He just stared at me without any recognition. I smiled and waved to him, but people are just like that sometimes. Emilia tells me that he's often like that. Moody. He hasn't spoken to her for two weeks now. But there's no reason. Friends, girls, children come and go, only his poetry stays with him. Dare say I'll be one of them going someday. Technikal's scared of him and his strength. Only Tony and 'Eyes' have known him from school when they used to throw stones at each other. They're all from East, Harris village, 'the wise men of the East' people call themselves from there. Emilia, she's from the city, never been to some of the villages

in the East, up in the Soufriere Hills below Chances Peak. The squats - where Tony's built a shack without water and electricity - are too wild for her. No sir, she never go country.

Up opposite the old Court and Parliament Building, the Montserrat National Trust. The MNT has a new building. It used to be the old land surveying office and a colonial residence way before that. Dark pink with traditional wooden walls, roof and shutters, it's just like the front of Ned and Prof's houses, though far more elaborate and stable. The national flag waves from the entrance - a blue base, a Union Jack in one of the corners and a picture of a Mermaid curved around an anchor in the centre. She's Erin and she lives in a pool at the top of Chances Peak. You have to steal her comb and reach the sea before her for some reason, or so the legend goes - for the tourists that is. I need no photocopying or use of their reference collection today, so I move along to the library to pay my respects there.

On the way, passing the Evergreen is like running the gauntlet. A large tree - blown over in the hurricane, now growing sideways - marks a junction for cars, a shaded circle for pedestrians, an arena of observation. Tony's washing a car outside the Evergreen Bar, next to the MNT and some of the firemen are sitting on a wall, focusing upon Caribs and country-girls visiting the town. Everyone's gaze follows a white-person and I don't always recognise the faces I know amongst the squatting, drinking men with gold chains, rings, studs and teeth. If I miss someone, they could come after me to know why me dis dem. If I stare too hard or too long then I could feel the wrath of a vocal Rasta.

Above the East Indian Supermarket, the Library's been temporarily located since the hurricane and until the new British development building. There're already fears that no black consciousness books will be bought by Britain - the donor of books and building. What would Cheltenham's Women's Guild be doing with second hand jumble sale copies of Black Power Movement literature?

The front room librarians are flicking their nails and flicking through copies of *Ebony* and *Essence*. There's no one else in the library at the moment - school children will be

in the temporary corrugated classrooms which were erected four years ago after hurricane Hugo, nicknamed 'the furnaces from Britain'. This place is often used as the courting house for the older students on special projects, but they only come in after 2pm when school finishes due to the heat again.

I return some Len Deighton - second hand copies donated to the library by expat residents - and some Walcott poetry - Caribbean literature bought by the library. Grace is engrossed in conversation in the back chambers with Ruth and Jane. She's talking about the Governor, a ceremony ...?

"... services they wanted. This is exactly ..."

"Hullo, Jonathan, h-how you been man?" Jane diplomatically interrupts Grace.

"Good morning ladies," I address the three spinster librarians.

"T'ought you bin an' gone off island dere." Ruth joins in.

"Wha. Dis boy travels far an' wide through the islands. We were just making plans for the handing over ceremony your friend the Governor insists on." She giggles.

"No friend of mine thank you very much," I rejoin.

Grace kicks me from her chair by the door, "So is what about those breakfasts on the veranda. La-de-dah, tea and civil service development planning?"

"Yeah, and don't forget the swimming we do in the pool each morning. He floats and I pull him."

"Aiou! Jonathan, what a cheek 'e got on 'im, Ruth," gasps Jane.

"So tell me why your Governor has to have a big ceremony every time he does something, or the Red Cross, or Police Commissioner. Why don't they just do what we do; do the job and get on."

"Grace, my we look so busy. Is that *Good Housekeeping* there? It's good public relations of course."

"Humpf. Dependency colonialism if you ask me."

"Did I?"

As with Cherrie, Prof and others on Montserrat, when we meet, Grace and I have established a pattern to our verbal relationship. She plays the ignorant informant and casts me as the complicit coloniser. At the end of each week of these exchanges, we then we go to shows together and she insists that the coloniser pays for her - she does



drive us though. We're very close: I helped her with archives and projects and she lets me tape interviews, deliberately contradicting her stories and beliefs that I've come to know from her. This is all part of our relationship with each other, one characterised by affection and exasperation.

As for Jane, I'd love to interview her. A published writer and poet, she organises the Writers' Maroon meetings for Dr. Fergus, she edits all manuscripts with keen eyes and ears and was forced - so she tells me - to buy her British Dependent Territory (BDT) Nationality when Thatcher introduced the new laws. She's always worked on Montserrat, but her family comes from Dominica and Antigua so she lost her British passport along with everyone else in the colonies with the House of Commons Nationality Act 1982. Only she had no automatic right to a new passport. It's probably for this reason that she's so anti-nationalities. She refuses to tell me 'who she is' or 'where she belongs' or 'if she's Montserratian'. "What is dis 'Montserratian'? I'm me. I'm not a geography." She goes on (and I agree with her though I don't want to influence her comments by saying so), "but what is it to be British?". Identity's as awkward to identify as ethnicity, and here people seem to be twisted and hijacked by semantic pirates. There's little use in this but for knowing how 'Montserratians' discriminate and reify distinctions. The others in the library are proud 'to be Montserratian' where they were born amongst extensive family networks, where they were taught and learned together, and where they will be buried where their ancestors toiled and died and were killed.

Grace mentions a Voices concert at the Vue Point Hotel - \$20, the same routines as other concerts, so it's obviously a fund-raiser targeted at the "snowbirds" here for Christmas and the new season. I slip away with a reminder that I'm one of the judges for the school's story-telling competition.

Lunch is a roti - a kind of chicken piece wrapped in a pancake made with soaked peas - at a fast-food by the Evergreen. There are lots of pictures of foods to look at, but none of them are ever offered; pizza, roti, chips, rice, Johnny cakes and chicken are the mainstay. Rounds of courtship continue at the Evergreen with school kids, road workers and office workers all eyeing, judging and rating. It feels like first-year



university in the Students Union, but here, with no university and no public funding, there is no 'student' category, except for that closed medical community on the hill.

'Radio' creeps past the outside tables. No one speaks to him but everyone looks. One of the best calypsonians on the island, notorious for his veiled criticisms of society. He stares ahead of himself, sits mumbling in corners and is oblivious to the world he once portrayed and characterised so eloquently. His dreads are a shock, a mane growing out and upwards en masse. The Rasta-ruffians can no longer understand him, but anyone can recall some of his lyrics.

Walking towards the Evergreen is Chedmond Browne on his way home; clear, grey-bearded, shirt, jeans and working boots, carrying copies of his news-sheets rolled up in his hand. A few men stop him and argue. He starts slapping his *Pan-Afrikan Liberator* into his palm, the baton of a riot police officer. They stop talking when I draw near. He greets me with a curt nod, gives me a copy of the paper and waits for the money. I ask for two, one for me and one for Cherrie. He doesn't believe that the second copy's for a Montserratian, telling me that it's for my friend the Governor, or for some of the expats to read and burn. I think he's joking as he refuses to sell his copies to any white people on the island. He knows that some of the expats' black friends buy copies on their behalf and that a copy of each edition, along with all local newspapers, is sent back in the diplomatic bags to be read and analysed at the Foreign & Commonwealth West Indies British Dependent Territories Desk. That's why some of the comments are extreme or confusing - they're written not for other Montserratians but to create an impression in the mind of the Foreign & Commonwealth analyst who informs the Minister who informs the Prime Minister who informs the Governor who informs the local Government who informs the Montserrat people and newspaper writers. Thus, an open letter to John Major titled 'The Black Condition of White Colonialism', or 'Governor's policies rely upon dependency' are more than frustrated criticisms, they can be massively calculated long-term strategies pitted against those of the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (rather than some short-term recommendations to an incumbent Government).

Swiftly, I ask him a question, "Can I drop by and return some of those books some time?"

He shrugs, "Anytime, you know where I am."

Cheddy seldom sleeps, plays 20 consecutive games of chess against a computer each night to improve his powers of concentration and reads late unto the morning to improve his mind so that he can teach others about the oppression suffered by 'Afrikans' on Montserrat and around the world. He's the head of the Seamen's Union which the Governor has decided to break. He represents several hundred illiterate workers; that's why he's always out on the streets talking about his news-sheet outside bars, on street corners and at the Evergreen.

"Okay, thanks then." I leave, working out a night when I can listen to his 5 hour soliloquies without losing or forgetting any of his words. Maybe I can tape him and we can go through the theories and perspectives which he used to broadcast on the radio (until the Governor censored him under an Act of Sedition, one usually used against Germans in times of war)? Not tonight though, there's a Maroon on which I can't miss.

Jane told me back at the library about the meeting tonight, so I'll skip some work on local calypso up at ZJB Radio, check the post, get some exercise.

Labidy is at the Post Office, on the corner of the Memorial Square, holding out a hand for change, tugging at the shirts of tourists and Montserrattians. He doesn't speak unless he's swearing or chasing women. He's a lot smaller and older than them, slow, drunk and simple. His face is all curled and his portrait can be bought on a postcard by tourists - once home, they can reminisce as to how they ignored the native hassling and hussling throughout their holiday. I search my landlady's mailbox behind the cannons which face out to sea. It remains empty.

Down in Wapping, past James, Ned's now silent house, the flock of chickens which live, feed and are killed on the Wapping Road, the car park with the Governor's white de luxe Range Rover and chauffeur - or is this one his wife's? - and the same tape

coming from Emilia' house, I wait for the traffic to die down to open my door and climb above the Cafe. I fail to escape it's own piped luncheon music which recycles throughout the day: customers enjoy a few tunes and leave when the cycle restarts; waitresses, cooks and the tenant above are less fortunate.

There's been no time for exercise this past week and the weekends are my most busy time when people and friends are not working 9 to 5 at their jobs. I take off up the hill for a brisk run in the afternoon. James follows me with his eyes, confused; Tony shouts some encouragement about catching some girls I'm chasing in front of me. I leave behind the fictions and confusions of life and climb the left-side of the road, passing some British road signs, the Hotel which Ned uses, and other derelict house boxes.

I reveal my idiosyncratic body to Montserrat; brown calves, starched thighs, peeling forehead, blinding white shoulders. I glisten past the huge, new Pentecostal Church with three hour services, a bridge with a graffiti name leading to 'This Holy Mount Zion', the sentry at Government House, up to the AUC Campus for University Americans in the Caribbean - medics in condos around the island dissecting imported cadavers. There I get a few cautious waves from white North Americans who misplace my name but recognise my colour as belonging to some other class cohort - waspishly suffering along with them the waspish disadvantages of affirmative action.

Down the other side of Amersham Estate, past the back of the school, another granite-built windmill resisting the end of slavery, another plantation house, some new houses with goats on the lawns and dogs in the driveways, satellite dishes 4m in circumference. Steep, steep roads above Plymouth and a pale sea. No other islands visible today.

Over-grown car-wrecks litter the sides of roads. They remind me of the artificial reef the Governor built offshore by dumping over 100 cars in a line. Mothers sit with children on their porches as I run down to Kinsale sea shore. A village a mile south of Wapping, named as a reminder of an Irish home the inhabitants once possessed; here too, the site of Fort Barrington marks the Anglo-Irish troubles and the problems with

European integration which are played out along the keen edges of Empire. Niggy's is a jazz bar: Niggy, married to a whiteman, sings along to backing tapes. Moose's is a sea-food bar and restaurant on a wooden jetty, an evening retreat for tourists and expats and AUC students and businessmen, but not for anthropologists who run and ride bikes around the island.

Back to Wapping up the southern island road, sea to the left and a beach shelf of black sand. Past the bus shelter which bounds the two areas, the old Yacht Club opposite the Inn; I've arrived at Sugar Bay; the fork to Captain Weekes's and the town docks, and the other to the bottom of Wapping - the Governor's cliff, Zacky's Hangout Bar, a collection of houses receding into the cliff-side, the old Pentecostal Church which used to lock the congregation in, the Oasis outside restaurant, Irish's Funeral Home, White's Pest Control. And then the one-way Wapping road between stone houses; Cherrie's long house, the Cafe and apartment, Ned's and the Philatelic Bureau on the left (before the bridge), one of the Jeffers's old family homes, now leased to Michelle's (expat) hair salon and the Green Flash, with two North Americans in their twenties - Jeff and Jen - with matching his and hers nose-studs, and Jamaal Jeffers's new-found mosque above. An empty plot of land, Emilia's house, a small deserted concrete office and Chef's car park.

Wapping is a telephone region with Wapping numbers. Wapping is a named area on agricultural maps and Government records of Montserrat. Wapping used to run up the hill as far as Government House, drop down the cliffs to the Yacht Club and back to the ghaut by the prison. The Governor no longer lives in Wapping. He hasn't moved, but he now lives on the hill road. The repair garage on the same road as Government House and Midge Ure's pink house and the politicians' houses is before the 'Zion Hill' bridge and advertises itself as Wapping, with a Wapping number. But I feel it's broken from the Wapping 'conurbation' where I live.

Wapping is south of Plymouth which ends with the sudden ghaut. Wapping could be a part of the Plymouth urban sprawl. Wapping used to be incorporated into Amersham cotton Estate which used to extend down to the sea where Cherrie's father lived below the cotton Estate he managed for offshore investors and owners.

Some say Marine Drive is Wapping and some say Capt. Weekes's is not on Wapping. The reclaimed land around the jetty and Capt. Weekes's on Marine Drive is all flat; the ghaut now just seeps into the sea and the road continues without a break. For sure, Capt. Weekes's is on Marine Drive and my apartment is slap in the middle of Wapping. But south of the fork in the road, or south of the join in the road winding to Kinsale and St. Patrick's in the south, is that Wapping or Sugar Bay (which extends to the bus shelter along the coast road)?

The sea looked so cool and inviting and I'm so hot and sweaty that I decide to take Beau, Cherrie's black stray dog, 'a thoroughbred Montserratian dog', for a sea-bath.

Tap - Tap. I enter the house. Polished floors, antler coat-racks, French prints, Laine struggling to lift herself from a wooden bench by the yard window.

"What you make me move for? Why you knock and get me up each time?" She curses me.

"Oops, sorry Laine, I'm just used to knocking."

"I see ... said the blind man."

Laine resettles herself in the gloom and wafts away mosquitoes, real and imaginary.

"Cherrie's upstairs, sleeping probably. Would you just look at that kitchen. I try my best but I can't follow after her with my hip the way it is."

"I think I'll just leave her then. Is she okay now after I forgot to put Beau back on the chain?" I hadn't forgotten. 'Pee-Pee' Beau needs at least an hour a day off his metre long chain, if only to wash his semi-circle.

"It's a state in the kitchen and you can smell him on the chain outside. Put him in the garage at night and he makes a mess outside my window, leave the garage empty and the Green Flash people make a mess in the gutter and leave their filth everywhere. I don't know."

Last night must have been annoying for the two of them. Cherrie sleeps during the day to make up for the noise during the night. Laine maintains the hours she kept as a seamstress - early to bed, working by 6am, resting for breakfast and lunch and mid-afternoon and working into the evening. Late into her eighties, Laine no longer has any clients or apprentices to sew for.



I take the dog down to the Yacht Club beach where some boys are jumping into the surf after a hot day at school (many islanders fear the sea and cannot swim, paddling in the surf). The dog can swim but I have to haul him into the breakers, dousing him with salt-water to cure his scabs and bites. In a few minutes, Beau is joined by another scrabbling dog, and a man struggling with a concrete mule.

Beau lunges at Zacky's customers and passing cars as we head back up, into Wapping. Drivers have a sport - chasing dogs, running down the packs, saving the police their bullets. I chain him up and trail sand and drip water through the house. Cherrie gives me five minutes to change and to meet her for one of her periodic spins in the car.

Tony, Emilia and Shontel, James and Chef Alvin, all talking around Prof's porch, watch me return to my apartment.

I wave to Shontel who doesn't always recognise me. She pokes her tongue out at me and twists her body from side to side.

"A'right, Jonathan," calls Emilia.

Tony, faces me and salutes me with a tumbler full of rum and coke.

"Jonathan, whiteman, times is trouble see, look at dis empty place. When you going to buy it from me?"

"Chef, me got nut'ing, nut one damn t'ing ya hear." And I disappear behind my door, faster than Shontel can check the road and come across to play.

Ten minutes later I reappear, but this time I am only subjected to inquisitive stares. The gates are open to let the burgundy banger go. I guide Cherrie in her exit onto the one-way lane, facing the entrance of the Green Flash. We motor down to the junction, cut across some earthy no-man's land, bang the exhaust and pull over so that Beau can catch up with us.

"Get off! Get back, I swear ... 'Pee-Pee' Beau, me loves you but if you don't return to the house this instant me tan you hide wid me boot, so help me I will." Cherrie slips into dialect when provoked or when joking. She kicks the dust near the dog. Beau backs off, waving his tail at this attention he's getting. I hang the exhaust back onto it's coat-hanger ledge under the tail of the car. We motor off, chased by an excited



dog, watched by an inscrutable James.

Cherrie hits the gas and we soon leave the dog behind us.

“Jonathan, check fu see dat dog out de way.”

“He’s standing in the middle of the road, panting an’ watching us.”

“Good. He’ll not need to walk then!”

“Since when have you taken him for a walk?”

“Tchups! Watch you’ rent boy, it doubles when it’s overdue.”

It’s a shame I don’t have it with me to throw down on the dashboard.

During all this, we pass familiar sites - the back of the prison, the jetty, War Memorial, Evergreen turning, Ram’s huge supermarket, another Texaco, the place where buses start to drive to the north and the old Anglican church and beach cemetery on the road out of town; past school, the sports grounds, Shell station and industrial complex of Lover’s Lane, the MNT Museum, onto the runway.

“So, where are we going then?” I ask, at a later stage in the proceedings than usual. But, as a friend, companion, gate-keeper, landlady and aunt, I’ve come to accept these things from Cherrie, to expect and to let these things happen to me. I must be a much nicer person - for all this acceptance - than before.

“The Montserrat runway. You know why it’s called that?”

I do: for the sake of an ethnographic answer, and for your sake, I could say I don’t, but that would be untrue; Cherrie could remember her telling me how the runway got its name when we were last on it; and it doesn’t make the slightest bit of difference what I do or don’t know when it comes to Cherrie deciding to explain or show something to me.

“Something to do with Liat suddenly dropping out of the sky, running out of petrol during the ten minute flight from Antigua, or maybe something to do with a motorway development project assigned by the Foreign Office to make Montserrat like Guadeloupe,” I reply cleverly.

Cherrie snorts. We swerve. Our speed settles on a jerky 30 mph after the earlier burst.

Cherrie wags a finger in the air: “You young t’ing, you t’ink you white people can come and tell us what we want. Us dat live here. On my Montserrat. Baah! Look,

look, see dat junction we passed, up to the museum. There's been some nasty accidents there in my time."

Is this a non-sequitur I've come to expect from Cherrie? Is she continuing her stream of opinion? Is this a veiled warning to me, to the expatriates? Is there going to be another St. Patrick's Day rebellion?

We both start laughing. Cherrie tells me about some accidents she's been in, how her father always rode a horse around the cotton estates on the island, and that the car needs its exercise in fourth gear, or else serious problems can develop.

"The only straight road on the island. You can let her rip. But why didn't Britain put in any pavements?"

"No idea," I shrug awkwardly in the car - but I'm happy with my interpretation of Cherrie's accident descriptions.

"Anywhere else and it wouldn't have been allowed. Standards you see, standards. Britain would not build a road like this, especially if people need to walk along it to get to town. It would be illegal. So, Jonathan, why build it here?"

As white token - representative coloniser - I have no idea. I'm concentrating upon seeing the one legged man who rides his donkey along the road each day, and the field with grazing donkeys which distracted another villager who couldn't control his passions. These were the stories related to me by an expatriate couple who regularly wrote home to their children about life and retirement on Montserrat.

Long after the turning off to Foxes Bay, the road rises to the Cork Hill junction. I've only ever turned left here, to continue on the road to the north of the island. We do that and follow a winding descent into Belham Valley. There's a view of the centre of the island on the right, green hills all covered in thick vegetation of young trees (the old ones were thrown down in the last hurricane). There's a plantation house on the rise of a hill with a vista of the valley and the sea. The Hollander's own Waterworks - one of the last of the estates in the Caribbean to retain family control since colonisation of the island in the seventeenth century. They show tourists around, explain the sugar process, serve lunch to the tourists and let them admire the views and location of Air

Studios where the Rolling Stones, Sting, Stevie Wonder, Paul McCartney and others used to record their albums in splendid isolation, on an island where bodyguards become obsolete; where Elton John and Boy George become the exotic attractions for the locals and where Midge Ure can visit a bar for a quiet drink with the regulars. Each Montserratian has their super-star story, most of them describing the casualness of relations which they detail to excitable foreign fans.

Another story goes that the Hollanders own land from one side of the island to the other. Montserrat may be only just over seven by eleven miles, but there are over 100 miles of roads covering only some of the pear-shaped 120 miles of surface area. Steep, mountainous, rugged, barren, lush, tropical, are all characteristics of the island which can take several hours to drive around on the main ring road. The Hollanders have over 2,000 acres surrounding Waterworks, and expat houses are leased on other areas of this small island which they have always owned. The golf course used to be their land, but expat developers bought and developed it and neighbouring lands to build upon, sell and live upon themselves. Above the golf course is the main congregation of expatriate villas and luxury condominiums with pools and verandas, American and Canadian flagpoles, and self-labelled houses: Crowe Hall, Dutcher Studio, ASDIP (A Splendid Day in Paradise), Stern Villa, and a few pseudo-Irish/West Indian names - Killarney, Finnegan's Wake (a writer's residence), Ras Retreat, Pippilo Condo. These last few names don't go down well with the Montserradians, many of whom have equally luxurious mansions but which don't rival the Mars Bar family's summer retreat, or the 7UP family holiday home.

"Jonathan, you na piss wid me? You wid me or you asleep?" I stop gazing around the island and turn and look at Cherrie.

I think about cracking the joke from the television, 'no, I'm with the Woolwich', but there are no Building Societies on Montserrat and no such commercial in the people's consciousness.

We turn left at Belham Valley Bridge where the island roads meet. The centre of the western side of Montserrat? The approach to the north? Salem City lies stretching out on the other side of the valley. It grows to incorporate the expat ghetto as well as

local areas, Lower and Upper Frith's. The few areas which are mixed are when a wealthy Montserratian moves to the coastal villas built for expats and the AUC students rent cheap housing in the middle-income belt of houses.

We pass along-side the golf-course on the left and on the right I spy Mrs. Weekes's home. Living under a white shadow, Mrs. Weekes has a three-room, prefabricated wooden shack planted down next to the golf-course, like an illegally parked trailer-home. She lost everything in the last hurricane.

*I was cycling past her house about three months ago and a Rasta was giving her some ripe mango. She insisted that he also give me some. He wandered off and she beckoned me into her house. She tied back the dog which had begun lungeing after me. Through the front door, next to the yard garden - unfenced - she guided me. Three box rooms, each 6m square, a kitchen room, a living room, a bedroom.*

*"Mistoo. Mistoo. Coom ya please, coom ya." A finger curls me through the kitchen, pointing me to a sack of rice next to a gas cylinder.*

*"This is your kitchen?" I ask for the sake of conversation.*

*"Me no eat wha wrang na goah".*

*My question is turned into a ridiculous statement. She mentioned food and something to do with commonsense in her reply. I know that I'm not sure I understand what she's saying. But I'm not sure if she doesn't understand what I'm saying; or if she understands perfectly well, and she's making fun of me?*

*The table has an old plastic covering, a few eggs in the middle, a bag of onions behind it, a cabinet behind that with crockery on display celebrating the marriage of Prince Charles and Diana (a calendar from the 1980s above carries a larger picture of them), and there are various unknown bottles and jugs and objects scattered in the cabinet and around the floor.*

*"Coom ya, me no baan backwards. Me na do nutten. Me no baan behin' Gad back." She beckons me deeper into her house and I feel that I'm being guided like a sheepdog on 'One Man and His Dog' - 'coom 'ere, coom 'ere Shep'.*

*"This is a nice living room, and you've got two fridges in it," I attempt.*

*She opens both fridge doors to make the point that there has been no electricity for several months. She can't afford the bills and so uses the fridges for storing water, keeping papers and valuables. She's had the water cut off and relies upon friends of the family to bring her jugs, vegetables and some occasional meat. There is no income though she worked as a secretary at the London School of Medicine, before her husband give she bloaz lek peas an' she coom Mons'rat. She na bang water, she Mons'ratian.*

*She lost her pension, still suffers from the cold, even on Montserrat, and is known about the island for her curly black wig, curled back and petticoats. Even the expats will ease their consciences and give her a lift to and from town if she stops them.*

*The room's dim as she's stuck orange paper over the window. There are religious crosses and pictures of Jesus lying on the table and pinned to the walls; more memorabilia from the Royal Wedding, and rancid stains on the carpet.*

*"Me broaks," she tells me with an open palm - more gesture for my comprehension than request for money.*

*"Tourist?" she asks me as we both stand in her living room. The seats are full of newspaper scraps.*

*"I live here actually."*

*"Student."*

*"Well, actually, yes, but not up at AUC ..."*

*"Doctor."*

*"I'm studying the ..."*

*"Me wuk wid de London doctor. Big whiteman, e a wan brians, na fat broogoozoo. E boany, you fat as oo mud."*

*"Thank you? You, you look very fit."*

*She stops thumping her breast with a finger and starts rubbing her belly.*

*"No tek me bang no bush! Arrh-ha-ha-ha!" she laughs, rubbing her belly more vigorously. "Me owl but me no cowl."*

*She sees no recognition in my face and tries another expression: "Oely boed pick up oely woem?"*



*I start nodding. Recognition - communication.*

*She slaps me on the shoulder, starts poking her belly now and says, "Me gat na boan foo pick wid you. Me boany, me wias me money, me na put up subben foo de rainy day, so me gan dung to oo shadda."*

*"Fus rat go a hoal, e hide e tial," she warns me enigmatically.*

*Catching on fast I try out - "Strap cut style!"*

*She cackles and we both smile and laugh. She asks me where I live and when I mention Wapping she asks who a light me lamp, wanting to know the girl who attracted an AUC student away from the campus and white areas on the island.*

*"You naida fish neh fowl!" And she offers to find me a place at the nearby hotel.*

*I decline and start to depart: "me no baan backwoods. Me coo fedda me oan nes' tank you very much."*

*Mary holds back the dog so I can get out of the house. She waves me onto my bike and she waves me away. I never saw her again.*

"Look up dere Jonathan, dis is where Paul Hollander gave some land to his Montserratian solicitor. The expat next-door sold his restaurant so he didn't have to live next to a black family," Cherrie tells me indignantly. We've begun passing the expat houses, climbing the hill and moving towards the coast right on the west.

It is unlikely that a white man moved to a black island to retire, and sold his business just to remain aloof from the locals. But this is how actions are interpreted on Montserrat. Rumours are born this way and are carried through the long grass like the dengue.

I myself fell victim to disease, rumour, stereotype, expectation and envy.

At the top of the hill, we pass lots of land barely developed, standing vacant next to villas which have been occupied for years. Here lives the Police Commissioner sent by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, the other Technical Co-operation Officers (TCOs), the seasonal "snowbirds" migrating from Canada to pass their winter. The former Governor's widow, and other past Administrators' descendants all maintain a residence on the island here; they are respected throughout the community, and find it

so difficult breaking away from such situations.

The luxurious villas suddenly change into prosperous residences and into cheaper houses. We motor down through Salem conurbation, home to the Killer Bees female cricket champions, past Desert Storm - the roadside bar, and back down into Belham Valley, past Buffonge the dentist/Government Health worker's mansion next to the Hollander's secluded turning, past the up-market restaurant Ziggy's, and back up the hill to Cork Hill. Past Woodsville apartments - 'condos with class', up past the churches - 'think salvation', the 'Keep Montserrat Clean' painting on the road-siding, the Rotary sign - 'Don't Ask Why', and the Montserrat Water Authority billboards - 'It is illegal to make unauthorised connections to water pipes', and - 'It is illegal to fell trees within 30m of a water source'.

"Next time, Jonathan, when you more awake boy, me show you up Isles Bay, those houses are mmsstt," she smacks her lips and performs a slow U-turn across the track. "An' de drug barons. Expats doan like house bigger dan dey!"

Wapping is the same as when we left it, but each time I leave it mammoth changes in my experiences and knowledge of Montserrat occur. I want the neighbours to share this.

We reverse and turn at great speed into the garage.

The dog is back on the chain, but Laine has moved from the bench to the kitchen. She has done Cherrie's washing up and is reheating a thick stew - a broth of the sharp, boany goat meat, plantain and pumpkin. The sauces are delicious and it makes a change from tuna pasta or beef hoof or souse (pig's tail). Any thicker and it would almost pass for traditional goatwater.

I ask if there's to be a wedding for this goatwater.

Laine chuckles and Cherrie leaves for TV and solitaire upstairs. I daren't play a quick game of Scrabble with Laine without Cherrie: Laine takes so long figuring out her moves that she forgets that it's her turn. Either that, or she can't read the letters and

uses the wrong letters which she thinks she sees.

Cherrie's started making a habit of eating upstairs at a later time so she doesn't miss the OJ trial updates, or the live Crossfire discussions from Washington on Channel 13. She'll probably use her kitchen for the evening until she's forgotten that she forced Laine to do her washing up. Laine mentions all this to me whilst asking about what I saw and did with her younger sister. She's almost housebound except for some slow wandering up the middle of Wapping road with her walking frame and when Cherrie feels like driving her about the island.

"I don't like it. I'm not hanging my washing out for everyone to hear if you know what I mean. This goes no further. But I'm not happy with this constant clearing up behind her. She can manage the stairs, so let her use her own kitchen. But don't come leave everyt'ing down here."

"I know, I'll get the plates. Here, let me help."

Laine continues admonishing Cherrie through me and after a few sentences I'm not sure if she's mistaking me for her dear sister. "I don't know. I'm still new to the place. Cherrie moved me upstairs to have my floor varnished. She never moved me back. I had to creep me t'ings down, bit by bit."

"Oh dear."

"I never grew up here. One night when I was a young girl I visited my grandparents, up in Dagenham. It was separate from Plymouth then. I fell asleep and spent the night there. I stayed and they looked after me and brought me up. So I've always been a visitor here, you see."

"How many were there in the family at that time?"

"Well, there were nine of us in all. I had five brothers. You know Blue from Trinidad ..."

"Oh yes, the one that visited and fought the Germans."

"That's right. And there's Cyril up the hill. You know him."

"He's got the dogs? Drives real slowly."

"Yes siree. We were a big family with our parents, the Estates to manage and the maids looking after us. There was always somebody cooking and somebody washing for the family. There simply had to be. Everyone was out working and in those days it wasn't like now. None of that's left anymore. In those days people weren't scruffy.

You couldn't be. Blue dressed for work in a suit, starched collar, ties, waistcoat, a proper jacket and hat. Everyone tipped their hats in those days. If schoolkids didn't they'd get respect beaten into them. None of this cheek nowadays. No sir. Ssttsstt. Look at that Shontel girl: brought up backward like her. Can't speak nor eat. No manners. Damn cheek. Do you want some more?"

"Mmmm. That was lovely. But really, no more. Maybe later? Thanks though." I decline another helping.

"Humpf. Damn neaga food dis. Heard you next door last night. The noise was so bad I went to the bedroom upstairs and came down at three. They'd quietened down then but one awful smell of drink on the road. Saw your light on earlier when I couldn't sleep."

"Laine. I was not at the Flash last night and you didn't hear me. I was over at Prof's, that was why it was so late."

I try my best to dissociate myself from an aspect of Wapping life which plagues the Taylor household. I find myself observed at all times; put into groups; interpreted by people; deliberately cross-examined and riled to have my reactions weighed and tested. Diplomatic truth is the only way forward. People know other people all too well, despite miscommunications. Kindly picking me up at the airport on the other side of the island when I first arrived, Cherrie went on to pick me apart on the drive to Plymouth: she bargained with me over rent; she refixed prices and tested my determination before accepting my genuine interests, my anthropological and literary studies, my sympathies and concerns with local people. And then Cherrie held dinner parties to introduce me to her friends, oriented me around the streets of Plymouth, filled me in on the unofficial histories of the island, the gossip, the cuisine, the class-race-colour divisions; and she refused to be interviewed but insisted on telling me her stories, everyday: about her youth, the coming of the white residents, the end of the cotton days, the labour unions, adult suffrage - the horrific tail-end of slavery - her work for the West Indian Commission, the racism she experienced during her visits to Canada and Great Britain ('when it *was* Great'), her love of royalty and British administration ('when it *was* administration'), the all-night picnics on a beach, and all her rosy-coloured memories of an island-life coming to a vigorous close.

I became her irksome son, her secret confidant, her brother in the extended family, her companion, her lodging guest, her very own savant. I brought her all the gossip from the streets; the expat intrigues, *faux pas* and stupidities that were only guessed at by Montserratians, guessing through a veil drawn between public interactions and private personas. And I fell in love with her, a mentor through Montserrat, an impossible subject, a mother, a sister, a critic and a special friend who let me be all my relations with her and gave me others besides.

Laine is full of reminiscences tonight, so I do the dishes and spare ten minutes for some dominoes before the Maroon at half-seven.

Laine continues to talk through me. Swatting at mosquitoes, "if I had only been brought up here, then I wouldn't feel such a stranger." She finishes by smoothing her skirt and examining her domino pieces.

"Why don't you just tell her, speak to her about her mess you have to clear up?" I ask, indignant on her behalf.

"I know. I know. But the Bible says that you should do all that you can to keep the peace of the house."

"Are you at peace?"

"Ttchhaa!"

"Well then. Not doing anything doesn't give the house peace. You live here too." These are old discussions so I feel free to give advice. "How long have you been here then?"

Laine sighs. "I don't know. Forty years I suppose."

Laine shrugs and sits in her wrinkles of skin. Concentrating on this action, she misses my recoil. Forty years she's lived here. I wasn't expecting such an answer. Four years. Six years at most. But forty! I can't comprehend this length of time. She's lived in Wapping almost twice the number of years that I've lived my life, and she still feels that she doesn't belong. If she's a visitor, then where does this put me, or Jeff and Jen above the Flash? Jen announces herself as a Montserratian because she was born here, but she's transitory - from Canada. Do you have to lead all your life almost exclusively in one place to be at home? Montserratians move around the island, but



they retain family areas: Tony moved back to Tuitt's where he grew up; back to where his cousins and brothers and sisters and girlfriends and children all live. His girlfriend and children live with his brother and brother's girlfriend and brother's children. That's belonging. Me, I must be just an inquisitive interloper.

All this races through my head from a chance discussion and complaint about the dishes. I beat Laine at dominoes.

"Lucky neaga-man," mutters Laine.

Feeling flattered by a back-handed jab, I excuse myself, pass a deserted Cafe and porch, return to the apartment, pick up some poetry I've just come across and a poem I've written myself. I leave Wapping for the Library again, leaving Versil to open the Flash and set the music rolling for her expatriate managers.

From what I remember, the Maroon itself, that night, went on for a few hours. It had finished with one poem from Dr. Fergus. Afterwards, Chadd - who works in airport customs almost alongside Prof - criticised me in public for not interviewing him as a performance poet. I mentioned that last week had been busy for me, what with all the steel pan bands and cultural events going on around the island.

Chadd made the most of this: "Jonathan, you'd be at the War Memorial if there was a pan beating there."

Chadd raised some smiles from his audience and his target: "A sardine pan!"

We departed in laughter, Chadd bent low, his body shaking and his throat cackling at me.

The rest of the evening in Wapping was busy and noisy: that night, Josephine beat Javan around the head with her saucepan; Emilia watched taxis dropping the AUC students off outside the Green Flash, and kept an eye on her Shontel and Chef's Ounica until the restaurant closed at twelve-thirty am. I was kept awake by the students chanting 'Bye, Bye, Miss American Pie' and 'He is a penis, he is a horse's penis, he - is - a - hor-se's - penis' in between refrains from Grease, Queen's Greatest Hits and a mix of Asian-American rave: all favourite imported CD's the students bring down from their dormitory rooms.

The local Montserratians stood at the doorway, watching, looking in on the Americans. On Friday nights the back of the Flash is turned into a barbecue and reggae, limbo and wining, joint. There, tourists, locals, Americans and Rastas can all rub, wine, grind and jam for as long as they like. For those tired of the alien music and dance, the American tracks play at the same volume in the front bar, a doorway away. If there aren't enough students to keep their music running, they can stand in the street outside Laine's bedroom window.

Twenty dined at Alvin's till eleven o'clock. By midnight the students, and drunk tourists, dominated the Flash: thirty dancing, drinking and playing dice with some expat residents; forty outside, north of the Bar, facing twenty Montserratians sitting and standing, spectating and encouraging inter-ethnic brawling between Asian-Italian-Jewish Americans. After an exam, the entire AUC cohort stays down on the street till 3am when Cherrie finally persuades the police to turn the music down, or for the groups to split between the Yacht club and the Green Flash. If there is no exam, the students are gone by half-twelve and the locals take over. That's what happened last night until the Flash closed at two in the morning and individuals dispersed by about three.

A typical Tuesday for Wapping, Cherrie, an anthropologist, the Maroons creative writing group, Emilia, the students, Tony and James.

# CaribTalk

## *The on-line beach bar*

2nd Edition July 22nd, 1995

2nd Revision July 28th

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### Montserrat

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**Subject:** "Volcano Update for 7/26/95"

**From:** John C.V. Ferguson

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This update is current up to 7/26/95 and is based on newswire reports from Reuters on 7/25 and the Associated Press on 7/26.

The full reports can be read on the clarinet newsgroup:

news:clari.world.americas.caribbean

Reuters reported Tuesday that Governor Frank Savage made a radio address urging residents to remain on alert. Seismologists reported "four small earthquakes and three small eruptions Monday night" in the Soufriere Hills where 3000 foot Chances Peak is located.

AP reported that local banks ran out of US dollars and the passport office ran out of passports Wednesday. Montserrat Aviation Services manager Sarah Silcott said LIAT ran eight chartered flights Tuesday and Wednesday in addition to four daily flights to Antigua. Montserrat Airways said it is booked up for the next two weeks. Several businesses were closed Wednesday in Plymouth, the capital.

Scientists, seismologists, volcanologists, and geologists from the UWI in Trinidad, the US Geological Survey, France and other countries, are responding to a call by local officials to come to the Caribbean island to monitor the situation and advise accordingly.

It was also reported today that "in view of scientific reports evacuation of the population at risk is being considered."

The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA) was reportedly co-ordinating with regional security system for mass transportation of civilians and with international donor agencies, if needed.

Neighbouring governments in Antigua & Barbuda and St. Kitts & Nevis were contacted and identified as possible hosts for potential evacuees.

The situation in Montserrat is indeed tense.

John

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## **Chapter Two - "Barbarian" Montserrat: expressive poetry from Howard Fergus and his Maroons**

In this chapter I will make an examination of Howard Fergus's role as a "barbarian" poet on Montserrat. I will explain why I consider Fergus's poetry barbarian poetry, and I will explore his means of expressing himself, his reality. Rather than examine the performative or lyrical nature of poetry, I am interested in the poet's recourse to poetry to express and evoke feelings, to make sense of situations - sometimes chaotic, and issues - often confusing, all pertaining to Montserrat place, Mons'rat neaga, and the non-belongers on Montserrat. Montserrat is a small island, so small that I suggest that poetry is used as a powerful expressive medium, one with which poets can be critical without being criticised, and influence society without being socially compromised. First, however, let me expand upon the Maroons meeting, after which I will give a brief commentary upon my token Tuesday on Montserrat.

### **A token Maroon**

*The streets are quiet except for the bars and their clients who line the roads and congregate about the Royal Bank. The MNT windows are black. The East Indian-run supermarket is still open and busy. Upstairs, the library doors are open and the lights are on. Dr. Fergus must be on island - without him, there are no meetings.*

*The library tables have been pushed together. Dr. Fergus sits comfortably at their head in an open African top. You know, the ones without collars, buttons only down to the chest. This top and his sandals are a contrasting sight with the usual suit and tie he wears at his University of the West Indies (UWI) School for Continuing Education where he teaches history and represents the University and the arts on the island. Other times, as Speaker for the House of Parliament and as Deputy Governor when the British Governor is off-island, Dr. Fergus is dressed so formally. Dr. Fergus is with his long-standing, literary friend and editor, Jane.*

*"Haahaarr! Jonathan. You early mon." Jane greets me.*

*Dr. Fergus turns to see who enters the library, sees it's me, nods and turns back to Jane.*

*"Well I believe he don' it mon. Easy. Why 'e run down de motorway den, eh Dr. Fergus?" Jane continues her conversation with Dr. Fergus.*

*"Well, everyone I hear this story from, they all say that it's a conspiracy. First Michael, then Tyson and now OJ."*

*"Right. Soon dere no black stars 't-all."*

*I pick up that this must be the OJ case in Los Angeles again, avidly watched on Montserrat, debated, picked apart, advertised on T-shirts, polarising black-white differences.*

*Devilishly, "What about you Jonathan, as our token spokesperson, what do you think?" Dr. Fergus asks me.*

*"Me? I don't know this person. Never heard of him. Is he important? I mean, it's just one case."*

*"Hhmm." Dr. Fergus gives nothing away.*

*'Black but comely', Dr. Fergus describes himself in one of his poems about himself, and others have described him as having a velvety skin, Nubian black, close-cropped hair, a strong chin, handsome and smooth. I'm in the middle of interviewing him, where he reads his poems and talks me through them. We've known each other for a while but each time we meet, the ice needs to be reheated before he opens up to me, speaks freely and reveals his poetic loves.*

*Maurice wanders in. We greet him and he mumbles, "Irie", shyly at the concentration of attention.*

*Maurice sits at the opposite end of the table, well away from us, and brings out one of his many notebooks he's always filling with Rasta verse. Better than Radio at the moment, but worse than other Rastas, Maurice Cabey often mutters and mumbles unintelligibly to himself and others. You can figure out the words he says, but the order and the meaning are obscure, often to do with Them, and America, the Victorians and volleyball - he's the caretaker at the new sports complex though most people consider one of the changing rooms to be where he lives, cooks and sleeps.*



*Lean, as all Rastas are, in a tracksuit, a bandanna curled around his neck and another with his dreaded stars and stripes around his forehead to keep his dreads out de way. A toothless grin; a constant smoker; a drinking Rasta who often just stands in the corner of the Flash waiting patiently. Many Montserratians seem to be waiting around for something.*

*"A'right daddy," I get from him.*

*"How's things?" I follow up, so everyone listens in.*

*Nervous again: "Oh, you know, tings is not too bad you know. Saw you in town, Skinner. Wa me wan fu say ... power in de place ... America is de land fu dis you know."*

*He's lost our attention so Dr. Fergus continues his open conversation with Jane: "So I'll miss the next developments whilst I'm away."*

*Jane marks down the dates that he'll be off island.*

*Chadd enters: a lively customs inspector at the airport, in his twenties, a performing poet and costume designer for clothing and festivals.*

*"Good evening."*

*We all greet him. Although dark outside, it is only now that he takes off his shades.*

*"Thought you were going to ring me!" He complains in my direction.*

*I give him no reply bar an eye-brow flash which is returned.*

*Dr. Fergus convenes the meeting and asks Maurice if he has anything. We all know that he writes poetry throughout the day, but seldom does anyone hear or read any.*

*He gets coerced into a reading and stumbles over his lines: "Dis one is 'Care', 'No Care'."*

*Jane recognises the poem as she keeps his filled notebooks for him. She interrupts, "Aahh. Dis one's 'No Care'. Okay Maurice."*

*"Let's hear it then," requests Dr. Fergus firmly.*

*'No Care'*

*Man dem a run*

*dem a run*

man dem a run  
 dem a run  
 soldier a come  
 dem a come

*Maurice stops to look around.*

*"Come on then. Is there more?" Dr. Fergus asks curtly.*

ono a stan before dem  
 now dey reach  
 before de feast  
  
 no mercy  
 no mercy  
 mankind ina fear  
 cause dem a rip and tear  
  
 dem have no care  
 cause security no sincere  
 no recovery  
 no mercy  
 no mercy

*Maurice finishes his reading. We're not sure of all the words. Chadd is smiling. Jane is encouraging him. Barbara arrives quietly and sits down. Dr. Fergus lays his hands on the table before him and asks for an explanation. Maurice shrugs and looks down at his bum-bag around his waist. Dr. Fergus is annoyed that Maurice is so unforthcoming.*

*Jane lightens the situation: "Dere was dis rhythm to de firs' stanza - 'dem a run, dem a run'. Boy, dat really come through man." She adjusts her head-tie and sits back. "But he can't explain any of it," says Dr. Fergus. "Maurice, it needs some more reworking on it. Right." Maurice's piece is dismissed. "Chadd?"*

A broad smile, "Sorry I'm late, I'm on the last flight shift at the airport. I came as soon as I could. I didn't have time to bring anything. I've only got these squiggles." He holds up a notebook open to a page of female figures draped in evening-wear designs.

"Barbara?"

"I've only just come tonight, we're planning our trip through Asia. We leave in a few days."

Chadd and Jane exchange 'how lucky' glances.

"Jonathan?"

"Well, I've got two things."

"Good. Let's hear them then."

"I came across 'The Star-Apple Kingdom' by Derek Walcott. Um, there's a line here that's really caught my attention and reminds me of what we were talking about last time. It goes like this: 'I had no nation but the imagination'. It's from a long poem that's, well, all about a West Indian sailing between the islands, kind'a like a modern Odyssey."

"Yes, that's what 'Omeros' is about. Go on."

"Well, he brings up many issues in a clever way and sets you thinking about them. This line really sums up what we were saying about what poetry is, you know, when you mentioned how creative it is, expression, looking at things in an intriguing way, sort of..."

*I'm a student back in a tutorial I have everybody's attention so I continue. I long ago gave up the distant observer role-play; whatever I said and the conversation would go in that direction; if I said nothing then the conversation was finished; almost religiously, give, and you will receive: take and your grabs will be at straw men. You cannot attend and hold back in a small group and expect acceptance and co-operation without receiving suspicion and mistrust. People know these things, and they don't mind if I open to them, and we exchange, and connect, and argue, and disagree; but if they feel a distance, a dis-respect, an arrogant reticence, then the shutters are wound down and the self becomes the hurricane shelter of identity.*

*I get caught up in myself: "There's this wonderful bit about the revolutions around the islands, the importance of history:*

She was as beautiful as a stone in the sunrise,  
 her voice had the gutturals of machine guns  
 across khaki deserts where the cactus flower  
 detonates like grenades, her sex was the slit throat  
 of an Indian, her hair had the blue-black sheen of the crow.  
 She was a black umbrella blown inside out  
 by the wind of revolution, La Madre Dolorosa,  
 a black rose of sorrow, a black mine of silence,  
 raped wife, empty mother, Aztec virgin  
 transfixed by arrows from a thousand guitars.

*"Oh wow, let me see that! I love the power of the machine gun gutturals." a-dZiko had slipped into a seat without my noticing her.*

*"Just wait till you get to her caesarean 'stitched by the teeth of the machine guns'!" I reply, giving her my photocopy of the poem.*

*Whilst a-dZiko sits chewing over the images, Dr. Fergus distributes copies of one of his poems which come out of his 'in progress' file.*

*"As you know, I like to get up at 4 am to start my writing for the day," Dr. Fergus informs us. "Well, we've got the new national song and we're renaming the airport to W.H. Bramble in honour of our first Chief Minister, that great man. Now, all will take place on National Achievers Day which will no longer be called August Monday: you will all - except Jonathan who is new to us - know the significance of the Emancipation commemoration throughout the Caribbean. We will all be marking this, our present Chief Minister has decreed, in a number and variety of ways. One of them, The Reporter mentioned, will be marking his State grave with the island's official emblem. Now, with a day of local celebrations, ceremony and Montserratian awards, everyone singing our new National Anthem, I find it particularly ironic that the headstone will have the symbols of an Irish harp and a mermaid engraved upon it*

..."

"Does that mean we won't sing 'God Save Their Queen' no more?" asks Chadd in mock confusion.

"Quite. It depends upon the sense of occasion. You know that I don't like publishing in the paper - they always make mistakes and never send back the proofs - well, this time the disease overran my body ..."

Chadd chuckles and looks for support at the long-standing joke about the poet's affliction.

"... and I penned this piece. Could you tell me what you think of it? You all know the headline from The Reporter, even Jonathan.

'A Question of Emblems'

'The Lady and the Harp for Bramble'

The Reporter said

an old custom heroes having

Sparkling maidens as their medals,

resurrected for the dead

But why a white ghost weeded green

for Bramble scourge of the great House

who broke slave middens down?

Planters black and white

made a better choice in a broad field

day or night black things were nice

has their uses slaking thirst

So a local bird for Bramble

mango bosom heliconia lips or oriole

the companion of our hero

must be unrepentantly creole.

There."

## My token Tuesday - a commentary

Social anthropology is not, and should not aim to be, a 'science' in the natural science sense. If anything it is a form of art.

Edmund Leach<sup>1</sup>

In this section I shall make some comments about how I cope with the indeterminate nature of writing and reading the previous chapter. Here, I explain why my introduction attends to my literate impressions of Montserrat rather than an historical, political, comparative, or economic review of the island. I consider, further, the writing of Montserrat when I continue this section with an introduction to Howard Fergus and his work/world. My intention, then, is to build Montserrat from a diversity of impressions, an experience-near, 'thick' account,<sup>2</sup> reflective and humanistic (emic), just what David Riches advocates when introducing nomadic hunter-gatherers of the north to his readers.<sup>3</sup> In this thesis, first impressions of Montserrat are filtered through my own approximations of Montserrat. Other chapters seek other people's approximations of Montserrat. The first chapter of this thesis - one Tuesday on Montserrat - is from my perspective: a partial point-of-view, position, experience, reality of the anthropologist; just one such example of a version of reality which I have lived by.<sup>4</sup> It is written as my introduction to Montserrat the place - Montserrat the island, and to the people of Montserrat, locally known as Mons'rat neaga. I have tried to bring the immediacy of the fieldwork experience to the reader of this text, yet at the same time, I hope that my impressions of Montserrat, and the way that I present other people's impressions in this thesis, are read with authority but not authoritativeness. In my Preface, I argued that anthropology is an uncertain and uncomfortable discipline, akin to this, the anthropologist's ethnography should be 'emergent and intermediary',<sup>5</sup> retaining some of the ethnographer's diffidence and confusion in the field.

The reading of this thesis is of equal importance to its writing. Its reading should be evocative and constructive: evocative in the personality and the writing of the text, and



the demands it places upon the reader to engage with the narrator - the close proximity of life through the narrator's words; constructive, as this engagement of the reader with the text builds - and constructs in the reader's mind - a portrait of a Montserrat, a Wapping, an anthropologist, a landlady. This portrait is individual to the reader who is forced to flesh out the sketches visible on this textual canvas. This direct and indeterminate connection - of my understandings, my expectations and my realisations, partial, fleeting, fragmentary; my idiomatic dialect and idiosyncratic predilections - is an account and a coming-to-terms with my un-formed/fixed/moulded sojourn on Montserrat. The previous chapter is a partial glimpse of a day of fieldwork by an anthropologist, collecting and connecting and writing up what Geertz considers to be 'constructions of other people's constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to',<sup>6</sup> what I consider to be diverse realities.

As Marilyn Strathern would describe it - my connections are only 'Partial Connections',<sup>7</sup> and as Nigel Rapport would have it - these connections are multiple and multifarious, each individual 'muddling-through' their social life.<sup>8</sup> However, neither writer is implying that context is paramount, that context conditions identity. Rather, they suggest that identity is fluid and changing to suit the appropriateness of the moment, a diverse attribute of our own construction. For me, isolating, capturing and delimiting identity is like cupping a soap bubble between two hands - it is the wrong approach to adopt when scrutinising and observing an Arielesque subject which adapts and changes both shape and form. The mode of investigation has to cater for the investigated: all too human characters, inconstant individuals with fickle personalities and inconsistent practices, have to be respected and carefully sculpted in the text. Impressions; impressions have to be created and fashioned, not carved and stamped through the text. Why? Because people defy the scientific and rational delimitations dictated by personages of the ironically named 'Enlightenment'; figures who are joined by the likes of Noam Chomsky,<sup>9</sup> Jean Piaget<sup>10</sup> and Claude Levi-Strauss.<sup>11</sup> People are unreasoning and unreasonable; people are religious and superstitious; people's lives are a muddling through; people's actions are a muddle of inarticulate habit and convention; people's minds are distinctly non-rational. This 'nonrational', Richard Shweder characterises as a central tenet of anthropology's romantic rebellion - 'that ideas and practices have their foundation in neither logic nor

empirical science, that ideas and practices fall beyond the scope of deductive and inductive reason';<sup>12</sup> Clifford Geertz, David Schneider, James Fernandez, Sir Edmund Leach, are (and were) just a few of the practitioners.

Unbounded individuals, open communities, interpretive-processual cultures - these are the constituents represented by Shweder's romantic anthropology, and my impressionistic anthropology. Impressionistic anthropology is characterised by an absence of knowledge-bytes in the text. This is not done to complicate the presentation of experience, it is done in recognition of the rise of the story and the fall of the fact in anthro-biography, Fernandez's 'an-trope-ology',<sup>13</sup> Geertz's 'indisciplined discipline', his personalised genre; anthropology:<sup>14</sup> a discipline mythically conceived, then conscripted by Bronislaw Malinowski,<sup>15</sup> and finally come of age in this post-modern - post-structuralist stage with blurred boundaries and back-drops.<sup>16</sup> Geertz's interpretive ethnographic descriptions begin with Berber banditry in Morocco, and end with an anti-conceptual, if blurred, conceptualisation: culture as semiotic system, human behaviour as symbolic action; culture as spider webs of significance, humans as spiders suspended in the webs; world interned upon the back of an elephant, in turn resting upon the backs of numberless turtles.<sup>17</sup> Yet, as I demonstrated in my Preface, his theory does not fit well with his Balinese ethnography.

For Fernandez, meanwhile, 'culture' is inchoate; unlabelled and unlabellable, it is symbolised as 'the dark at the bottom of the stairs':<sup>18</sup> metaphorically tropiant in dinner-table discourse, interpretively open-ended when considering the house wine.<sup>19</sup> The inchoate is 'the underlying (psychophysical) and overlying (sociocultural) sense of entity (entirety of being or wholeness) which we seek to express (by predication) and act out (by performance) but can never grasp'.<sup>20</sup> It is symbolic anthropology *sans* structuralist strategy.<sup>21</sup> It is multiple meaning; meaning without ordering, reifying and solidifying. It is figuring speech through resemblances (metaphors): figures of speech as trope. More sophisticated than Geertz, we have returned to sensitive interpretations resting upon the backs of numerous interpretations.

Fernandez's inchoate culture also differs from Schneider's culture 'as a system of symbols and meanings' - culture determining social action: that which anthropologists

make their subject as well as try to understand.<sup>22</sup> This conceptualisation of culture as an 'independent system', as 'a coherent system of symbols and meanings' was originally exemplified in Schneider's systematic study of kinship in America, but dramatically revised in his updated conclusion which acknowledges that culture is symbolic, but culture is not '*sui generis*, a thing in and of itself, or that it has any existence outside the construction of the anthropologist who builds the structure of abstractions'.<sup>23</sup> With Fernandez, anthropology re-turns full circle: culture theory revolves around problems of meaning, yes, but we must also note the inchoate-ness of meanings guessed and interpreted - interpretations grasped or forever unfathomed.<sup>24</sup>

At the start of this chapter, Sir Edmund Leach describes social anthropology as an art. This is because his objective as a social anthropologist is, 'to gain insight into other people's behaviour'.<sup>25</sup> He assesses the discipline and theory of culture, differently; Leach wants to make the strange familiar. Difference, exoticism, the Other - these are all the subject of the anthropological enterprise, they are the attractions that the ethnographer decides to experience and to make the topic of investigations and presentation to the anthropologist audience. In doing this, the business of anthropology - trying to make the strange familiar - often inverts itself - the familiar is made strange; lectures become side-shows of native rituals, beliefs, customs, and behaviours. The textual stalls and booths are all academically masked and veiled, but constitute a side-show nevertheless. Horace Miner brought this problem to many anthropologists' attention, in 1956, with his article 'Body ritual among the Nacirema'.<sup>26</sup> In this article, Miner deliberately masks and alienates his ethnographic descriptions of American daily body-ritual, to show that many ethnographies accidentally or purposely fail to familiarise the strange. The ritual brushing of one's teeth is turned into a revolting native rite which 'consists of inserting a small bundle of hog hairs into the mouth, along with certain magical powders, and then moving the bundle in a highly formalised series of gestures'.<sup>27</sup> Miner throws caution into the way that we take and frame our ritual observations, perceptions and reactions. Even Noam Chomsky felt it necessary to pay attention to the way that we treat phenomena, to the way that some artists (and anthropologists?) make the familiar strange.<sup>28</sup>

Theoretical considerations of culture, concerns with the nature of anthropology and representation, all feature within my ethnographic impressions, my vignettes, feelings, emotions, relationships and memories. Such factors all infringe and impinge upon the presentation of experience, making ethnographic description so difficult to read as a distant, remote ethnography. But my token Tuesday is more than a series of daily impressionistic excerpts. It is - to appropriate and colonise Rapport's text - a muddling through Montserrat; it is a narrative slice and cross-section, both synchronic and diachronic in time, as processual as Fredrik Barth's understanding and treatment of culture.<sup>29</sup> What I have done is present an introduction to a place with some of the people passing-through; scenes, a variety of events of interaction from life's insouciant *je-ne-sais-quoi*.

The first chapter, as ethnography, is a personal narrative of experience, a narrative which is preceded by a lengthy preface (pre-text) without mention of Montserrat, a table of contents, and a brief report extracted from the Internet. Likewise, this chapter is preceded by a volcano update received on the CaribTalk Newsgroup of the World-Wide Web which I subscribe to through this computer. The abstract, table of contents, and Preface, prepare the reader for the ensuing text, but the two chapter-prefaces do not. They are not junctures but dissonant spots, akin to my recent reference to the computer I'm writing my text upon. These moments of discord jar with the immediacy of the text, confusing even more the reader's reading reality. Each chapter is preceded by such a rupture. They are reports taken from the period of writing this text, reminding the reader that this is a retrospective text; that it is being written from the safety of the university home.<sup>30</sup> Explained further in the penultimate chapter, these chapter-prefaces rationalise my departure and evacuation from the island. They form a narrative within a narrative: they are a post-fieldwork narrative within a text which constructs and analyses 'the field' location.

This chapter, too, begins with the anthropologist's tail-end impressions related from a token Tuesday, an expansion upon the Maroons meeting which Fergus uses for inspiration, and as a workshop for his poetry. This written reality finishes off the day and links the two chapters. Neat. "A bit too neat," as Vincent Crapanzano's voice would 'immediately' tell you.<sup>31</sup> And what about the rest of the text you have just read

and paused over? In sympathy with Roland Barthes: 'a text is made of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering mutual relations of dialogue, parody, contestation'.<sup>32</sup> And, deliberately, the text of the first chapter is the reader's first acquaintance with Montserrat (the place), Montserratians (Mons'rat neaga), and myself (the anthropologist) - not the Preface. It jumps right into a day from the anthropologist's perspective - hot, noisy, frustrating. The anthropologist is in the midst of social relations with people on the island - Prof - Cherrie - Alvin - Shontel - Mrs. Weekes; and the many interactions and conversations from the past - with Cherrie, a 'sacred geography' of Montserrat;<sup>33</sup> with the librarians, banter and 'colonial discourse'<sup>34</sup> - all inform the ethnographic present, the reader's diffuse realities of Chapter One.

The limitations of the text, in its evocation of daily affairs, are ironically apparent in a form of loss: the loss of rhythm in the American students' songs is a small loss, but the tone of all conversations are lost and only grasped at by the anthropologist with his partial understanding and limited recall; Maurice's Rasta accent cannot do justice to 'No Care'; the winks and twitches and non-verbal communications and long-standing relations between writers at the Maroon, who have longer and deeper relations between each other than with the brief short-standing encounter with a white anthropologist, can only be guessed at. This, however, is not necessarily a problem for the imaginative reader. For the reader there is no accuracy in the descriptions of people and places. There is an indeterminate space between the reader's and the writer's realities. Any suggestions of accuracy would be disputed and viewed differently by different people; I the author, with my authorial eye, creator of text and Montserrat, both command and am commanded by the nature of the writing-reading enterprise.

I, the native writer, can only ask for the reader to read the dialect, mistakes, miscommunications, the unknown and unexplained - as deliberate (for instance Mrs. Weekes's dialect and my adoption of the undefined term 'neaga'); deliberate in accordance with my view of a representation of the work and life of an anthropologist on a tear-shaped, pear-shaped island - named 'Alliouagana' by extinct Amerindians, named 'Santa Maria de Montserrate' by Christopher Columbus, named 'Montserrat'



by British settlers, named 'Colony of Montserrat' by estate agents, 'Emerald Isle' by travel-writers, 'British Colony' by tourists, 'British Dependent Territory' (BDT) by Margaret Thatcher, 'British Overseas Territory' by Robin Cook.

From an eye-witness narrative - '*right there*' - during which the reader is not acknowledged, there are subtle time and narration shifts, such as the memory of my visit with Mrs. Weekes, and the expansion of a Montserrat Writers' Maroon; there are the mental rationalisations as to the naming of the 'Montserrat Runway', explained for your sake - roti and souse dishes can also be included here. These shifts and ruptures in the textual fabric of time and space can be handled by the reader whose response to a text is highly creative and flexible. Similarly, there are moments in the text where dialect creeps from the speech of my friends to my own introduction of Montserrat (take for example my untranslated, almost parable-like, use of Montserratian dialect to comment upon the taximen: '*Dey say Mons'rat taximen so fas*', *dey make money 'fore dey learn fu sign for um*') - and even some attributed insight as to Emilia's distaste for the wilds of the country. If the anthropologist is lost and confused, muddling through, then so too should the reader - hence then, both the reader and the anthropologist's question, 'what exactly is 'broogazoo'?', a question which some - but not all - Montserradians would not need to raise.

Again, the act of writing, setting and ordering down on paper (and screen), reifying personal memories, loses the sense of play in the quips shot between characters: the calypso song expression used to put down Tony, the slight intonation differences around Montserrat. Are the 'road signs' really British or is the author just commenting upon the likeness? And the 'concrete mule', is that referring to a pillar or a stubborn animal? Ethnographic realism: local words lie read but undefined, they are treated as comprehensible, just as the anthropologist finds them. Some are treated *au naturel* as I burst upon them in my postmodern, un-rouge-d - untranslated - unanalysed text; a creole narrative where the context of use gives the meaning and builds the understanding: the anthropologist picks out the sense of words, translates them, tries out expressions and familiarises himself with etiquette and the situations for using dialect until the cultural mantle, a Montserratian scaffold, becomes a (second) coat of skin. With my desired acceptance into Montserratian society, an invisible tar-brush



colours my white skin.

As a racial zebra, as Edward Bruner's 'Arab Jew' ethnographer,<sup>35</sup> accepted by both blacks and whites, a token for both, Laine includes me as a 'lucky neaga' in a game of dominoes. Elsewhere, group conversations include me against the non-belongers, and white racisms grow to slight me. Through long-term, intensive fieldwork, signs, signifieds and identifiers become confused, imposing identifications, orders and hierarchies, which are overt, covert and subvert. Colours and races become no longer suitable or applicable. But once back home, nobody else sees the sense of the dialect joke, the sacred significance of land features on Montserrat, or the alter-ego perspective; back home, the small 'g' in 'great Britain' is unheard of, and the resilient reclaiming of the 'k' in 'Afrikan' is foolish and incomprehensible, and deliberate typographical errors such as the practise and portrayal of nation-language become the errors of the colon:ised.<sup>36</sup>

Back home, the issue becomes the extent of the comparative possibilities of 'a depiction of ethnography as evocation', to re-introduce Strathern to the fray once more.<sup>37</sup> Leach shunned comparison; Strathern, however, seizes and presses this problem - anthropology's methodological boil - in her Partial Connections narrative 'in response to a narrative problem'; an illusionary journey 'through various "positions" that have recently marked changing anthropological approaches to writing and representation in ethnography'.<sup>38</sup> The journey is illusionary - the arguments, positions and counter positions regarding the writing of ethnography ('each juxtaposition [...] generated out of thoughts left over from a previous position') construct an 'illusory sense of artifice': a path to guide the reader retards the reader as he fails to see the overlapping and repeating arguments, attitudes and struggles.<sup>39</sup> If the nature of anthropology is comparison, or generalisation, and ethnography is treated as a collection of evocative moments rather than as the representations of facts and knowledge, then Strathern, paying a personal debt to Rapport, acknowledges that evocations can be compared 'for their resonances and effects [...] for their aesthetic impact'.<sup>40</sup> Rather than discredit anthropology and fieldwork entirely, Strathern points out that what is discredited is 'the elision between fieldworker, writer and author'.<sup>41</sup> Acceptance of this brings to social anthropology a fresh wind to stale reeds, reads, and

readers.

And the results of all this mental activity on Montserrat? Instead of a traditionally constructed ethnography, Chapter One, which could have begun with a description of the island - Montserrat: 39 square miles in the Eastern Caribbean where 10,000 people live on a pear-shaped island - we have the impressionistic gaze of the narrator evoking a living there, a working text based upon his cognized impressions of Montserrat. A map of the pear-shaped island is expected, with crosses marking the airport, Plymouth town, and the anthropologist's Wapping. But visualising this, presenting an image rather than evoking an image, is to constrain the freedom of the text, dominating, framing and forever freezing the island's outline as a part of the reader's reality.<sup>42</sup>

My strategy is necessary, because, to paraphrase Barthes, 'the text is open to infinity', there are multiple readings, meanings and interpretations possible: this 'plurality of the text', this 'opening of its "significance"', means that all the reader can do is locate some of the ethereal 'avenues of meaning'.<sup>43</sup> Whether reading for character, reading for location, reading for escapism, reading for theory ... Chapter One and all subsequent chapters have been created with such beliefs in mind. Interpretation; cultural meaning; the inchoate; non-rational man with his quest for order; the anthropologist with his experiences and fragments of in-sight all knitted and narrated together; reading; writing; ethnography: all are subject to Barthes's pronouncement that, 'no reader, no subject, no science can arrest the text'.<sup>44</sup> Thus, all we can do when reading and writing is to look to 'the forms and codes according to which meanings are possible',<sup>45</sup> which - for me, once learned in a rudimentary fashion, become personal, experiential and subjective. They share reader response correspondences just like the constellations of impressions which I consider in the next chapter; diverse 'interpretive impressions', to rework Stanley Fish's notion of an 'interpretive community' whereby the interpretation of a text lies with the individual or group deploying similar or different understandings underlying their reading and writing.<sup>46</sup> Hence, the construction of Chapter One, full of immediate impressions and vignettes encouraging a sense-itive type of reading. The chapter can be read as a story, a tale, with characters drawn, outlined, and left to be fleshed out by the reader. The chapter can be read as an anthropologist's impressionistic experiences. Unfortunately, the chapter can also be read and mined for

concrete pointers, demography, geography, history. Yet, if I did succumb to write that the population of Montserrat is 10,000, then the reader would be tempted into treating this information as a factual statistic, a faceless byte of information, a synchronic snapshot of an island from a reified text. For me, this would be an ill-fated consequence of a particular reading of the chapter.

The fact, the location, the statistic - "how long has man been on Montserrat?", "where is Wapping?", "how many people are there on Montserrat?" - such questions are all the same. The similarity lies in the desire for fixed, knowable knowledge; the similarity lies with the questioner revealing their attitude towards truth. But we have heard and seen the difficulty in the location of Wapping; is this not the same as the location of Montserrat, a more fixed question, but in what time-scale? And in what time-scale must we answer the question of man's colonisation of Montserrat. Now that we accept the indigenous Amerindian and the indigenous African as fully on a par with the indigenous European, on which time-scale should we answer these questions? I have the same problem as Deleuze had with his historical battle. Montserrat was deserted by the Amerindian before the arrival of the European and the imprisoning of the African. Should we look to the continuous inhabitation up to the written present? The population of Montserrat can include the aged and the young, the resident African descendent - since voting was granted in the 1950s - and some European descendants have made Montserrat their residence, but others are seasonal every year and others are temporary guests and one-off visitors. Government popularises the 1990 census of 10,000 BDT citizens (but the Government has its own rhymes and reasons), Cherrie's Montserrat contains, at a guess, 7-8,000 residents and a society population (those she knows) of 5-6,000 if families are taken together. Tony and Prof no doubt know fewer people, but different people, and the anthropologist knows far less than the population who knows and assists him. In this respect, however, our realities are ever-changing.

As we see, the claiming, ordering, 'factoring', event-making, tailoring of process; the analysing, figuring and re-figuring, claiming and colonising of experience and interaction are all problems associated with reading, writing and representing. We constitute events and facts, but much of this meaning-making is implicitly colonial; a structuralist's search for the Grail; an anthropologist's tilting at windmills. Structures

and events, comparisons and generalisations, interpretations, culture theory and textual study, are but relative positions, partial connections, the soiled muddling though under a skein of discipline. My approach to Chapter One, an impressionistic, ethnographic day, has been my attempt to re-consider Young's dilemma and Dwyer's problem that '[t]he anthropologist, in the very act of singling out events for attention and asking questions about them, cannot avoid defining topics in ways that reflect the concerns and style of his own society'.<sup>47</sup>

The rest of this chapter takes a poetic turn with an examination of "barbarian" poets and their barbed poetry, with particular respect to Howard Fergus, Maroon poet leader (Chapter Two). In Chapter Three, I juxtapose similar Montserratian voices with those of some of the expats on the island. Expatriate development work on Montserrat is praised at an expatriate dinner party, but criticised by Montserratians at a Montserratian dinner party. That chapter shows how some impressions are formed and how they become ever dominant inter-subjective constellations; the chapter also ties together Fish's reader response theory - mentioned in this chapter, with my use of Shweder and attention to inter-subjectivity in a postmodern world in the Preface. In Chapter Four, I, go on to present some creative and individual impressions of Montserrat in the form of calypso, a social commentary whether as a public or a private performance. Continuing the theme of individual impressions of Montserrat, in Chapter Five, I consider the work of Chedmond Browne who has been denied his Pan-African vision for Montserrat. Then, in Chapter Six, we find that some of the themes recurrent in this thesis - initially traced out in the Preface, and touched upon in the succeeding chapters - are shaded in as they come together in a discussion of a collective celebration, St. Patrick's Day on the Emerald Isle. From this point in the thesis, the ethnographic immediacy of Montserrat slowly fades away. My final representations - more attempted representations of Montserrat than evocations - come, in Chapter Seven, from foreign travel writers who encourage visitors to the island. I began with a Preface, so my last words finish with a Conclusion which takes stock and concludes the thesis - reiterating my postmodern impressionistic anthropology, ending my blurring rebuttal against those anthropological positivists who fail to take on board any ontologies and epistemologies other than their own. These impressions of Montserrat, including my own, are arbitrary in the sense that they

come from myself and my work with various groups and individuals on Montserrat - the calypsonians, poets, development workers and trade unions. They may just as well have been impressions gleaned ethnographically from the politicians, economists, farmers and unmarried mothers on Montserrat. In all, the various impressions of Montserrat privilege, I hope, the literary, the learned labouring, the musical, the vocal labouring, the local, and the foreign. Here, let me complete Chapter Two with some more of the literary.

### **Howard Fergus: in the company of 'Barbarians'**

Through my written impressions of Montserrat, we have already heard some of Fergus's poetry and the social and colonial context of its creation. At this point, though, I begin my exploration of Fergus's barbarian poetry by juxtaposing Montserratian Maroon cries of freedom with Scottish literary cries for devolution and independence, and by locating Fergus's poetry alongside Nigerian chants for mental decolonisation. I wish to identify 'barbarian' poetic features, before going on to show why it is possible to situate Howard Fergus in barbarian company. This involves identifying with literary chronicles of the genre as I give examples of English, Scottish, and Commonwealth barbarian poetry. Once I have identified the themes associated with such poetry, I fit Fergus's work into the genre. The 'barbarian' term possibly comes from the title of a volume of poetry published by the Scottish poet Douglas Dunn in 1979.<sup>48</sup> In *Verse*, a poetry journal, Dunn defined his use of the word, referring to 'barbarians' as 'people who contest the Establishment and the degeneration of the State'.<sup>49</sup> Images of Empire and the colonial condition abound in Barbarians, with references to the now 'dead imperia', and 'drowned Britannias' which harnessed the Scot in the aggrandising enterprise for Queen and Britain, but has now left the Scots as *teuchters*, England's colony in the north, just as Montserrat, Gibraltar and the Falklands are England's colonies in the south:



They ruined us. They conquered continents.  
 We filled their uniforms. We cruised the seas.  
 We worked their mines and made their histories.  
*You work, we rule*, they said. We worked; they ruled.<sup>50</sup>

Robert Crawford points out that in Dunn's *Barbarians*, he 'advocates a barbarian literary attack' against the men at the centre of English cultural power,<sup>51</sup> against 'the Legislators, the white southern anglos of then and now' as Glyn Maxwell would describe them.<sup>52</sup> Crawford also recognises that Dunn's literary attack is 'one which appropriates the weapons of the dominant culture',<sup>53</sup> an attack aimed at subverting '[a] culture of connivance'.<sup>54</sup>

The attack by the provinces, a foreign - alien and alienated - tribe of barbarians, brings together the poets and critics and leaders from the margins. Barbarian poets: Tony Harrison, Derek Walcott, Edward Brathwaite, Seamus Heaney all unite against what Dunn ironically describes as the '[b]lack traffic of Oxbridge'.<sup>55</sup> A "black" West Indian, educated amongst the white southern anglos, Brathwaite poignantly describes himself as 'a potential Afro-Saxon': a student with the same Anglo-Saxon education and learning as his contemporaries, but with a different skin colour and socio-cultural upbringing to them.<sup>56</sup> For Brathwaite, his barbarian background was asserted by others who stereotyped him according to superficial appearances. For Tony Harrison however, - a working class Leeds Grammar School scholar - his barbarian exile, his outsider status, lies with his broad Yorkshire accent. Harrison's dialect poem 'Them & [uz]' records with comic melancholy the moment at school when a teacher called him a barbarian and refused him a major character part in *Macbeth*: his labouring accent was such an aural offence that he was restricted to only the comic parts.<sup>57</sup>

I played the Drunken porter in *Macbeth*.  
 'Poetry's the speech of kings. You're one of those  
 Shakespeare gives the comic bits to: prose! ...'<sup>58</sup>

Formative memories of events such as this stay with people in much the same way that African writers, brought up in former British colonies, are faced with the decision of



whether or not to write and publish successfully in the language of the mother-country - the coloniser's English - or to write in the language or dialect of their mother-tongue. The Kenyan writer Ngúgí wa Thiong'o, to give a graphic example from a barbarian writer, was beaten and ridiculed at school for speaking his native Gikuyu instead of English, and was punished and detained without trial in 1978 for attempting to establish an African theatre in colonial Kenya.<sup>59</sup> His stance towards the English language is very different to that of the Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe who finds that not being a native English speaker has allowed him greater flexibility and creativity with his use of language.<sup>60</sup> Yet, in this way, Dunn's 'barbarian' term may be appropriated to refer to literature and not just poetry, as writers debate the inclusion or exclusion in the category of African literature, the English language texts situated in Africa, or writings about Africa by English-born expatriates residing in Africa. It is just the same with the definition of the Caribbean literature's subject area by East Indian writers such as David Dabydeen and V.S. Naipaul (1993 winner of the first David Cohen British Literature Award)<sup>61</sup> who live and work from their historical metropole - Britain. They consider themselves writers in exile. Both write about their memories from visits to the West Indies and their childhood experiences growing up in Guyana and Trinidad respectively. As East Indians, do they share an empathetic unity of marginalisation and 'barbarianism' with (other) black writers of the Diaspora?

The black and British-born Rastafarian poet Benjamin Zephaniah (who was recently shortlisted for a fellowship at Cambridge University and later for Oxford Professor of Poetry) identifies - like Harrison - with *the other*: however, unlike Harrison, he identifies with an African other rather than with a working-class circle. In 'As A African' Zephaniah describes himself: marginalised - 'As a African I was a woman in a man's world', 'A Rastafarian diplomat', 'a red hot Eskimo', 'A city dwelling peasant', 'a Arawak', 'a African';<sup>62</sup> Zephaniah is indeed presenting himself as A Other, one of Dunn's marginalised 'barbarians'.

Like Harrison, Zephaniah has a poem about the identification and inclusion of people and the exclusion of others. 'Us & Dem' is a creole play upon themes with formal rhymes:

Know yu enemy from yu fren now  
 Face de facts, yu can't pretend now,  
 I write dis poem fe more dan Art  
 I live a struggle, de poem plays a part,<sup>63</sup>

'Us & Dem' is a West Indian version of 'Them & [uz]', about 'de Efnick Minority'<sup>64</sup> as opposed to the cultural power-brokers whom Harrison impersonates and satirises in his poem 'The Rhubarbarians' - those vultures of culture who attend high cultural opera performances to escape the Rabelaisian formula of birth, fornication, and death:

Crotchets and quavers, rhubarb silhouettes,  
 dark-sky sea-horse heads through waves of dung!  
 Rhubarb Arias, duets, quartets  
 soar to precision from our common tongue.<sup>65</sup>

A music hall culture of pastiche and parody, of convention and subversion, of belonging and feeling is expressed in these barbarian writings. Take, for instance, another poem by Zephaniah where his feelings fluctuate with the British weather, dryly observed in 'The Cold War':

When me fingers not dere  
 An me Dreadlocks feel like hair  
 I tell meself dat Englan's not fe me, ...  
 Cum frosty time I want to emigrate,  
 I am trying to fit in  
 When you see me icy grin.<sup>66</sup>

Zephaniah tries to fix his identity as permanently as his colour - just as in 'As a African' - but substitute 'class' for 'Cold' in the title and the poem is a clever analogy between English cold weather and the frigidity of the English class system.<sup>67</sup>

Feelings akin to Benjamin Zephaniah are shared by the poet and writer Fred D'Aguiar who was born in Britain, brought up in Guyana, and considers home 'always

elsewhere'.<sup>68</sup> His volume British Subjects, focuses upon Britain: being and feeling British, feeling at home but not being made to feel at home.<sup>69</sup> In his poem 'Home', the poet is confronted by the customs men at Heathrow airport:

my passport photo's too open-faced  
 haircut wrong (an afro) for the decade;  
 the stamp, British Citizen not bold enough  
 for my liking and too much for theirs.<sup>70</sup>

D'Aguiar now oscillates between work and life in America and Britain. He has become another barbarian commuter, following examples set by West Indian island-boy Derek Walcott (St. Lucia and Boston), northern-lad Tony Harrison (Nigeria and Florida), and Ulsterman Seamus Heaney (Nobel laureate 1995, Professor of Poetry at Oxford and Harvard). Provincial and wryly humorous, even Heaney is especially conscious of his language and position within Ireland. Straddling north and south, Heaney relishes local guttural Irish in his place-name and pronunciation poem 'Broagh'; distinctively Irish and difficult to pronounce for 'strangers', the last verse ends with that

*gh* the strangers found  
 difficult to manage.<sup>71</sup>

The strangers could very well be the British who cannot pronounce the name of the territory, let alone patrol and govern Broagh with impunity and safety. Along with the other poets and writers (Douglas Dunn - Professor of English at St. Andrews, Gayatri Spivak - Andrew Mellon Professor of English at Pittsburgh, and Edward Said - Old Dominion Foundation Professor in the Humanities at Columbia) these international pariahs maximise their margins and play C.L.R. James's symbolic cricket boundaries.

Barbarian poetry can be identified for its marginal and colonial or neo-colonial characteristics whether real or imagined; dialect rather than standard language; a celebration of parochialism; a literary resistance to the dominance of the metropole; a retaliation against imposed standards as, in effect, 'The Empire Writes Back',<sup>72</sup>

'challenging the world-view that can polarise centre and periphery in the first place.'<sup>73</sup> As a barbarian writer, Thiong'o found, the only acceptable language in Kenya is English - even following Kenya's independence in 1963. The English language had become such a potent form of neo-colonialism that Thiong'o declared Decolonising the Mind his last work in English.<sup>74</sup> Typically resilient to such extreme resistance strategies, in the same calculated breath, Thiong'o hopes that his subsequent work in Gikuyu will be translated for his international audience.<sup>75</sup> All these barbarian writers and poets from the Caribbean womb, the African birth-mother and the European dominatrix are barbarian, either by birth, breeding or both. Whether or not these writers are true 'barbarians', Howard Fergus, according to Dunn's definition - and my use - of the term, fits into the same expressive and evocative genre.

#### **Caliban's colony - Howard Fergus's "Barbarian" poetry on Montserrat**

Take it easy, stranger man  
In your imperious drive  
To build an ivory wall  
In my black sand<sup>76</sup>

Whether barbarian poets face a real or perceived marginality, they have a variety of writing strategies to choose from. They can identify and conform with the dominant 'colonial' discourse defining and representing them from the metropole, or they can resist the centre. This can be done, according to Michel Pêcheux's theory of discourse, either by opting to turn their backs on the dominant ideology by resisting, by reversing, by counter-identifying; or by rejecting ideological subjection, by dis-identifying, by 'working "on and against" prevailing practices of ideological subjection.'<sup>77</sup> Walcott's epic Nobel prize-winning verse 'Omeros' - a version of Homer's travels set amongst the Caribbean islands - is a good example of counter-identification.<sup>78</sup> Other examples include Caribbean and Latin American reworkings of Shakespeare's The Tempest,<sup>79</sup> such as José Rodó's allegoric Ariel which brings about

the dénouement of Caliban.<sup>80</sup> The case of Thiong'o refusing to write in English anymore is the extreme example of disidentification - doing something different to the existing frame of discourse. Dunn's response to the 'Black traffic of Oxbridge' is to use his native cunning and connivance, to surreptitiously climb through the narrow college gates, to deafen them '[w]ith the dull staccato of our typewriters':<sup>81</sup>

Drink ale if you must still,  
 But learn to tell one good wine from another -  
 Our honesty is cunning.  
 We will beat them with decorum, with manners,  
 As sly as language is.  
 Take tea with the king's son at the seminars -  
 He won't know what's happening.  
 Carry your learning as does the mimic his face.<sup>82</sup>

These savant skills of concealment and patience, mimicry,<sup>83</sup> 'sly civility', and masked realities, occur in contradictory colonial situations, forcing an ambiguous relationship between the colonised, and the coloniser - who is simultaneously father and oppressor, figure of authority and target of resistance.<sup>84</sup> The remaining question Henry Louis Gates raises is, whether or not the former colonies achieve the economic, psychological, and cultural independence of the post-colonial?<sup>85</sup> An answer to this question lies with the native point of view of Montserratians, one of which is articulated and expressed in the poetry and writings of Howard Fergus, colonised barbarian, social poet, political animal and island historian. Here I shall explore these varied aspects of Howard Fergus's life and works.

Montserrat - an island within the same Scottish and Commonwealth barbarian maelstrom, held back from independence by economic doldrums - is Howard Fergus's home and literary staple. Montserrat's principal historian and poet, Dr. Fergus is also Senior Lecturer - indeed, sole lecturer - in the University of the West Indies at Montserrat's Centre for Continuing Studies. Formally, Dr. Fergus is known as The Honourable Dr. Howard Fergus, OBE, BA, MEd, PhD; and in the 1995 New Year's Honours List Queen Elizabeth II made him a Commander of the Order of the British



### Empire (CBE):

in recognition of his outstanding service to Montserrat as the Speaker of the Legislative Council for 20 years, the longest serving Speaker in the Commonwealth, and as Acting Governor for 19 years.

Dr. Fergus was a member of the West Indian Commission (1990-92) and was appointed by the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs as one of the three Commissioners for the recent British Virgin Island Constitution Review (1993).<sup>86</sup>

As an island official - Speaker of Montserrat's Legislative Council, Dr. Fergus maintains a strict impartiality towards local political concerns; his is the neutral voice presiding over Government debates. In addition, as the appointed Acting Governor of Montserrat when the British Governor is technically off-island, Dr. Fergus moves from his academic office in the UWI centre to take over the diplomatic office at Government House - the Governor's official residence with an Administrative wing staffed by Montserratian and Foreign & Commonwealth aides. There, he changes from critical academic - or neutral Government Speaker - to Queen's representative in the colonies, a position which he uses to the advantage of local Montserratian British Dependent Territory Citizens (BDTCs).<sup>87</sup>

Several evenings a week Dr. Fergus serves as a Pentecostal Church Elder. Whilst other afternoons or evenings may be spent at official functions as Government representative (Montserratian or British), as University academic, or as Montserratian dignitary. Only very early in the early morning does Dr. Fergus find time to write his poetry. And on Tuesday evenings, particularly during the winter season, Dr. Fergus calls a Writers' Maroon. This term, 'Maroon', is historically understood throughout the Caribbean to refer to a runaway slave; 'maroonage' referring to communities of runaway slaves.<sup>88</sup> On Montserrat, however, a maroon is a local affair at which a person - such as a future tenant seeking help in the construction of their house - will seek labour from friends and neighbours, repaying them by way of food and drink, and goat-water.<sup>89</sup> This Montserratian 'maroon' appears to be akin to observations made by the anthropologist Donald Donham's amongst the Malle of Ethiopia where a

communal approach is sought to solve the problems of rural living.<sup>90</sup> This value-laden, ambiguous title for the creative writing group is known and shared by all, and reflects the social engagement of the work of the poets and writers. Previously, the group was known as the Alliouagana Commune, referring to the Amerindian name for the island, and to a solidarity of purpose.

At the age of 59; known throughout the Caribbean; often published in the University of the Virgin Islands's journal Caribbean Writer (St. Croix) - Dr. Fergus is now breaking into the international anthologies with the selection of his poems 'Forecast', 'Ethnocide' and 'Lament for Maurice Bishop' for the Literary Tradition section of Paula Burnett's edited The Penguin Book of Caribbean Verse in English<sup>91</sup> and the poem 'Ultimate' in the Caribbean Examinations Council anthology A World of Poetry for CXC.<sup>92</sup> He has published numerous volumes of his own poetry himself,<sup>93</sup> and he has edited several volumes containing poetry written by himself and other Maroons,<sup>94</sup> nearly all of them published through his Extra-Mural Department on Montserrat. Fergus holds an interesting poetic monopoly on Montserrat: his prolific publishing profile - recycling poems in the papers into collections and then into single volumes - is a practice which over the last twenty years has resulted in a distinctive island record on a par with his historical pamphlets and books.<sup>95</sup>

Capturing personal experiences, Fergus utilises the strengths of poetic expression and his own early memories to represent a history that is both literal and literary. Here is a literary portrait of a Montserratian figure, Bruk-Up:<sup>96</sup>

Ripe men call him 'Bruk-Up'  
 Cause his walk was like the canter  
 Of a lame and skittish horse  
 But young ones loved to watch  
 The rhythm of his body  
 Moving like a concertina<sup>97</sup>

Along with other members of the Maroon who are writing poetry, Fergus is writing about life, people, social experiences, memories and situated observations. Bruk-Up is

a Montserratian figure whom Fergus captures and tends, nurturing and teasing out his impressionistic life-thread:

Ripe men said his tongue was nasty  
 Cause he spat out scalding curses  
 Like a sailor's drunken yarn  
 But young ears pricked to hear him  
 Shuttle words and spin them  
 Into strong and colourful lines<sup>98</sup>

A profile, a miniature, a literary composition, all are contained within Fergus's poetry. And we can read and use his poetry to build an humanistic and anthropological understanding of the island since Fergus and the other writers on the island have continued to write through, and about, the end of the cotton industry; the struggle for adult suffrage in the 1940s and early 1950s; the struggles for independence, and the devastation of recent natural disasters (hurricane and volcano).<sup>99</sup>

Fergus's maroon poetry is barbarian poetry as well as a literary history. His poems are chronicles, his recording and shaping of the island's social history and the historical memory on Montserrat - conspicuous literary commemorations, reconciled histories. In March 1995, for example, the High Court was opened for its new legal year, for the first time, with a church service. In full court regalia, Justice Neville Smith, court officials, and advocates marched from the Court House to an Anglican Church, escorted by a guard of honour contingent from the Royal Montserrat Police Force. After prayers and blessings, the administrators of justice were escorted back to court where legal proceedings began.<sup>100</sup>

The following week, Howard Fergus published his poem, 'When Justice Came To Church', poetically prying into the affair, punning with legal terms, probing at the religious and secular tension on Montserrat.<sup>101</sup>

Justice went to church on Monday  
 in rank order on me Lord's day  
 robed in solemn splendour  
 black-skirted caps off white [...]  
 The message from the cloth was pre-  
 meditated but no crime. The law  
 was put on trial for mugging  
 mercy, no bail for the innocent  
 The rector made no altar call  
 And none come to the bar unbidden  
 A man of great faith he hoped  
 they settle out of court with heaven<sup>102</sup>

Fully aware of his ambiguous position on the island as poet and academic observer and commentator, but also dignitary and distinguished guest and participant, Fergus concludes on a reflexive note:

I hope his Lordship does not indict me  
 for contempt. I will plead innocence  
 and retain a Queen's big wig to cite  
 poetic licence, licence to indite<sup>103</sup>

Similarly, in 1995, when Easter arrived on Montserrat, it was marked by a poem - 'Easter' - by Fergus, front cover of *The Montserrat News*.<sup>104</sup> In a muted society, Fergus's most candid voice can only be channelled through poetry. In addition to these poetic expressions, in June 1995, *The Montserrat Reporter* headlined an article about the renaming of Blackburne Airport as W.H. Bramble Airport.<sup>105</sup> 'Lady & the Harp for Bramble', was a report on a decision by the Government's Executive Council to mark the grave of the late Chief Minister W.H. Bramble (1955-1970) with the island's official emblem - the Irish Lady Erin and her Harp. The article also announced the outcome of a national song competition with the song 'Montserrat - My Country' which 'is expected to replace the British National Anthem at appropriate occasions and events.'<sup>106</sup> It was this article's headline and contents which inspired Fergus's maroon

poem 'A Question of Emblems' which was subsequently published in *The Montserrat News*.<sup>107</sup> It is the intention of the rest of this chapter to show this creative process in Fergus's poetry, from social occasion or political event, to poetic topic, to maroon workshop, to newspaper response, and then anthology publication.

Other poems collected in Fergus's anthologies refer more to attitudes and feelings on Montserrat. 'Footprints' is one such poem which can be read as an account of the influx of peoples onto Montserrat, an excursion into the social world of Fergus's Montserrat in the late 1970s - the outsider/belonger tensions leading to a colonised schizophrenia of imperial patriotism and troubling allegiances:

Planted in these Montserrat sands  
 Are footprints many nations beat  
 My blood burns but I know not where  
 To plant my schizophrenic feet.<sup>108</sup>

This torn and troubled identity is apparent in some of Fergus's most personal and auto-reflective poetry. His feet, and others, may be shackled and yoked and split apart, but so too is his mind by the colonial education he received. Dealt mental blows by 'Teachers yoked / in whitewashed collars / choking minds of ebony',<sup>109</sup> Fergus endures his education so that he might use it for his own purposes at a later date. A five-year-old, a darker black than most, he is described as 'cool and comely', and so describes himself as 'a cultured curio', as though Fergus were associating himself with Caliban when Caliban tells colonial educator Prospero what he has gained by his education: 'You taught me language; and my profit on 't / Is, I know how to curse'.<sup>110</sup>

Fergus admits to his hijacked 'barbarian' mind - one which accepts the Queen's Honours, but when in London declines to attend the ceremony; one which teaches Caribbean history but sprinkles the lessons with Latin phrases from when he taught Latin on the island; one which relishes dances to local tunes but hums English nursery rhymes. Captured when young, as he expresses it himself, a black child colonially taught and trained and developed as a Christian of civilisation, Fergus can do little but live his part, though he is fully aware that he has been made 'as white as snow / by

faith and fantasy’.

Shod in Shakespeare’s socks  
 I echoed lines  
 in the ‘cloud-capped towers’ of learning  
 earning ironic accolades  
 prized and pacified  
 a cultured curio of the tribe<sup>111</sup>

Fergus reacts to his colonial personal history, not by agitating on the streets, but by expressing himself, and Montserrat’s colonial condition, through his poetry, in an attempt to change Montserrat’s possible colonial future. This is a successful technique on a small island, living in a muted society where you repeatedly interact with the same people year after year and so have to guard your words carefully. Though some Montserratians are suspicious of their man of letters, Fergus’s writings have brought him respect, and symbolic capital. He skilfully maintains his variety of positions, offices, and uniforms. Whilst Cheddy and his *Pan-Afrikan Liberator* make enemies, confronting rivals on the streets and readers in their homes, Dr. Fergus’s diplomacy and recourse to the media have at least established his reputation. Foresighted rather than forthright, Dr. Fergus has influenced many and, in so doing, he has alienated few. Should Montserrat achieve independence, then Dr. Fergus is also likely to become the Governor-General of the island, leaving his literary campaign to history.

“Dr. Fergus” - as he is known on the island - became Resident Tutor at the Montserrat University Centre after his position with the Government as Chief Education Officer. He took over from his colleague, and friend, George Irish in 1973. Whereas Irish had promoted social, cultural and national awareness through drama, journalism and the labour unions,<sup>112</sup> Fergus concentrated upon (his) writing - his-story. Following on from Irish’s *Alliouagana Voices* in 1972,<sup>113</sup> Dr. Fergus began by publishing *History of Alliouagana: A Short History of Montserrat*<sup>114</sup>. This account of Montserrat’s history opens with an historical poem, a “Dedication” for Heroes of St. Patrick’s Day (1768)<sup>115</sup> - the ‘martyrs’ of a failed creole insurrection which was due to take place whilst the Irish planters celebrated St. Patrick’s Day (see Chapter Six):<sup>116</sup>



To heroes  
 Who conspired to squeeze  
 The juice that sate  
 Thy fatsome enemy  
 You were betrayed by brothers black  
 But you escaped  
 Your slavery.<sup>117</sup>

Beginning with Columbus's naming of the island after the monastery, Santa Maria de Monserrate, near Barcelona, Fergus gives a brief overview of the island's history from its colonisation up to its status as 'The Anglo-Irish Colony' in the 1970s.<sup>118</sup> By the 1620s there were English colonies on the islands St. Kitts and Nevis, founded by Thomas Warner. The Protestant settlers, Warner and his men, were continually under threat from Indian attacks. They were not sympathetic to the Irish Roman Catholics on St. Kitts and so encouraged them to migrate and settle on Montserrat. Following the removal of the Irish Catholics to Montserrat, around 1634, Montserrat became an asylum for politico-religious refugees fleeing Oliver Cromwell's subjugation of Ireland and the New World colonies.

Fergus continues the pamphlet with an account of the rise and fall of the sugar and tobacco industry, and its replacement in the nineteenth century by the production of lime juice and cotton. By the twentieth century, both industries were in decline. They collapsed after the Second World War, mainly due to the actions of the newly formed Montserrat Trades and Labour Union (1946). This success led to universal adult suffrage in 1951, and a Montserratian, William Bramble's election to the Legislative Council. Fergus concludes the political and historical pamphlet with the poem 'Epilogue' which contrasts with the formal and traditional opening 'Dedication' in its use of dialect, Montserratian expressions, images, and Rastafarian references to Jerusalem, Babylon and a change in the world order:

Cut down cow-itch, nettle and 'cassia tree  
 Spray modern massa mangy sheep

Kill pink ball worm  
 Mek new Jerusabylon  
 De First, third, world.<sup>119</sup>

The union history of Montserrat takes place between the 'Dedication' and this 'Epilogue'. For Fergus, Zephaniah and Brathwaite and Harrison, their common mother-tongue is not received pronunciation English, but the multiplicity of dialects, creoles and pidgins; 'Dialects as Malts', as impure and finely blended as the poet Robert Crawford's Glaswegian 'wurd's'.<sup>120</sup>

Fergus, the political animal and social poet, followed up this pamphlet with Montserrat: The LAST ENGLISH COLONY? Prospects for Independence - Two Essays on Montserrat a few years later.<sup>121</sup> Dedicated '[t]o the Montserratian proletariat',<sup>122</sup> it first elaborates upon the United Nations Colonialism Committee and the United Nations Decolonisation Mission which investigates continuing colonies to see if their mother country is encouraging or enabling them to gain their independence. Its background history recognises the first political leader to emerge in Montserrat, William H. Bramble, who challenged the plantocracy - the planter-merchant oligarchy - through his Montserrat Trades and Labour Union. Bramble led Montserrat for eighteen years, from 1952 to 1970, becoming the first Chief Minister in 1961. When Britain offered him associated statehood for the island in 1967 he rejected any move towards independence, regarding 'the English budgetary dole as being indispensable to his island's economic survival'.<sup>123</sup> Such attitudes and arguments persist to this day in many sectors of Montserratian society, so the essay explains. The argument is part psychological, a fear for independence's implications - self-government will lead to tyranny and anarchy because only the mother country is able to guarantee law and order. Self-criticism, lack of confidence and, in Irish's eyes, such 'an open admission of ineptitude', does little to loosen the donor-donnée relationship.<sup>124</sup>

The political tension is between the British appointed Administrator (now referred to as 'His Excellency The Governor') and the locally elected Chief Minister who serves an equal term of office. The political extremes are between dependency and decolonisation, both of which affect the economic and cultural well-being of

Montserrat, not just her history. An independent Montserrat would put her alongside the majority of Caribbean islands. But to remain one of the few colonies in the Caribbean, Fergus observes, can also be an independent - if financially motivated - move:

‘[s]ome leading members of the business community make capital out of the colonial status. They highlight it as a guarantee of a stable socio-political climate in order to encourage business. The implication here is that a government which derives its authority from Westminster is superior and more acceptable than black indigenous rule. This is another version of the self-distrust and dependency syndrome which is endemic to the colonial condition.’<sup>125</sup>

Fergus proposes change. For him, independence would release the creative drive and confidence locked up within Montserratians. Fergus bides his time, agitating by educating, writing his history of Montserrat to right his children’s future. To give an example, in 1983, Dr. Fergus published the pamphlet WILLIAM HENRY BRAMBLE: HIS LIFE AND TIMES.<sup>126</sup> The pamphlet traced the rise and fall of the working-class of Montserrat - led by Willie Bramble. In his introduction, Fergus articulates his reasons for writing the pamphlet:

Caribbean children of Bramble’s day and after, sang the glories of Hawkins, Rodney, Nelson, and Napoleon. With the advent of the statehood era in the 1960s, Caribbean man has attempted to identify national heroes as part of his search for meaningful independence. This is reflected *inter alia* in the renaming of airports after local figures and the building of heroes’ parks and monuments. Montserrat’s airport still carries the name of a colonial British Governor, Sir Kenneth Blackburne, but then, Montserrat is still a British colony. It has not, however escaped the new national pride which is surging through the Caribbean. Its outstanding figures must therefore be researched and studied. This essay is a contribution to that research. It is ultimately a part of the process of moulding the Montserrat national *persona*.<sup>127</sup>

Fergus was heavily influenced by Bramble, a mentor, whom Fergus continually deifies as a national martyr. For the Appendix, Fergus wrote a lyrical poem, 'A Song for Willie Bramble' (18 verses, 74 lines).<sup>128</sup> In the third section of the song, verses 7, 8 and 9, Fergus places Bramble alongside Nincom Riley, a literate slave who read the emancipation proclamation to his fellows, and came to be immortalised in a song about August 1st 1833 - now celebrated as a Caribbean holiday, August Monday/Emancipation Day. He wants to place Bramble in the same category for they were both exploited men working for white masters.

Hurrah for learned Riley!  
 He read our parchment liberty  
 But lowly Willy Bramble toiled  
 To wreck the yoke of slavery.  
 No hurrahs for Willie B  
 No pen and paper freedom traced  
 He stripped the legal subterfuge  
 From slavery's chameleon face.<sup>129</sup>

'A Song For Willie Bramble' next appeared in the anthology, Stop the Carnival (1980),<sup>130</sup> along with 'Alliouagana Lament'<sup>131</sup> - an historical lyric about the 'land of the aloe tree' where 'Caliban gurgled Alliouagana' but 'Columbus chanted Montserrat'; Alliouagana the 'nameless land / Nameless as your bards and heroes / Speechless history in your sand' where Fergus wants to 'Rear a throne for Caliban'.<sup>132</sup> These appeared alongside a central core of verse about national heroes and the 'Heroes of St. Patrick's Day (1768)'.<sup>133</sup> Elsewhere resistance is apparent with 'Irish names on African faces', 'African names on Carib faces',<sup>134</sup> and a celebration of cricket hitting political boundaries with the West Indies's victories in 1986 in Fergus's anthology Politics as Sport.<sup>135</sup>

We played in gullies mountain climes  
 brandishing cedars imaging willow

trained coconut leaves for guerrilla combat  
 or pitched battles  
 on placid English fields  
*children of the empire*  
 we did not dream to capture lords<sup>136</sup>

Fergus's other recent publications are international in scope and in press. For the Macmillan Press, Fergus wrote a brief guidebook for tourists to the island in 1983 in which he considered the debate surrounding 'The Irish Legacy' on Montserrat.<sup>137</sup> There, as island historian, Fergus contested the anthropologist John Messenger's claims that there are 'Irish retentions' such as 'linguistic patterns, systems of values, codes of etiquette, musical styles, smuggling and an Irish recipe for stew'.<sup>138</sup> For Fergus, Montserrat's distinctive goat water stew and other traditions are 'cultural retentions', 'Afro-Irish combines [...] with a "New World" interpretation'.<sup>139</sup>

Montserrat - History of a Caribbean Colony (1994) was a culmination of this tourist publication with Macmillan, his historical pamphlets, and radio broadcasts. This scholarly book brings together in one the history of Montserrat: from Alliouagana Amerindian settlement to British slave colony; the years of Irish and African emancipation; the twentieth century struggles for trade unions, universal adult suffrage and education for all. Given Fergus's barbarian bent, attention is paid to the independence issue, some constitutional changes imposed upon Montserrat by Britain in 1989, recent natural disasters and their socio-political affects, and the role that culture and the arts have to play in developing Montserrat's cultural and national identity.

A review of Fergus's book by Chedmond Browne in his *Pan-Afrikan Liberator* quotes many sections in pursuit of his 'independent-Montserrat' platform. Fergus has unearthed the tormented legacy of slavery and colonialism so that it may be confronted and finally laid to rest. This is because, in Browne's words, '[w]e will not begin to make a sensible approach to solving our current problems if we have no foundation knowledge of their causes';<sup>140</sup> Browne continues:

[d]espite attempts by the established institutions to distort the reality of the true image of Montserratians, one can clearly perceive from this book that the true and real inheritors of the island are Afrikans who were brought in chains to labour for nothing so that another ethnic group could live like kings.<sup>141</sup>

Such antagonisms persist in the latter half of the twentieth century and are chronicled in the poetry of Fergus and others as well as local calypso singers such as Alphonsus 'Arrow' Cassell. When Bramble was encouraging real estate development and residential tourism as an antidote to the decline in agricultural production, Arrow was singing about local concerns for the expatriate future of Montserrat:

Hold on to your property I am warning you my friend  
Hold on to your property and will it to your children.<sup>142</sup>

Fergus felt the same about the foreign influx of wealthy, white retirees who lived in palatial ghettos, integrating only through their service clubs. He approved of their help in the establishment of the National Museum, but attacked them in verse for 'an attempt to form a cinema club in Montserrat's only cinema to show "quality" films during the normal working hours. Karate genre pictures were to be reserved for the evenings and the plebeians'.<sup>143</sup> Citing Caliban's territorial sentiments, 'This island's mine by Sycorax my mother',<sup>144</sup> at the start of his poem 'This Land is Mine', Fergus cautions the new golf-playing 'locals':

Take it easy, stranger man  
In your imperious drive  
To build an ivory wall  
In my black sand<sup>145</sup>

These assumed belongers have their own views on how Montserrat should be, preferring - and actively backing - dependence, threatening to leave and take their 'fists of velvet dollar notes'<sup>146</sup> with them should Montserrat agitate for a constitutional plebiscite. Fergus correctly describes independence, then, as 'a serpent in their



paradise'.<sup>147</sup>

The poem was printed in the local *Montserrat Mirror* and caused a commotion,<sup>148</sup> particularly amongst the expatriates and those with a vested interest in the expatriates' well-being. More than fifteen years later and the expatriate-Montserratian tension endures, animosity and mis-communication continue, the same issues and prejudices remain. Contemporary conversations with patriotic, World War Two Veteran expatriates revealed indignant perceptions of Dr. Fergus as a racist; and interviews with Dr. Fergus divulged his agenda for an independent Montserratian mentality, one evolving through education in Montserratian history, Montserratian culture and Montserratian nationhood. In particular, Dr. Fergus is addressing an American expatriate, Sam McChesney who devoted much of his retiring energies into the establishment of The Montserrat National Museum which subsequently became an attraction for the tourists and a folly of colonial history for the locals.<sup>149</sup>

Do not cuff me  
 Cagey man  
 with fists of velvet dollar notes  
 I still can feel your might  
 And will retaliate  
 For I prefer my plight  
 If your gracious hand must choke  
 The freedom in my throat.<sup>150</sup>

Fergus is thus preaching a resistance to external dependence. His poetry promotes and agitates - on the campus or in the newspaper - for independent thought, self-respect and the collective Montserratian realisation that it should not be expatriates, 'outsiders', debating the issue of dependency for Montserratian 'belongers'. To return to the tempest of subjugation, it is the expatriate who fears the future, spreading a fear amongst the local community, deepening and reinforcing colonial dependency until the local community itself reiterates those expatriate fears. Speaking of the expatriates, Fergus writes:

[t]oo much development and modernisation scare them, since they threaten the “unspoilt” and idyllic haven they dream of. They are unwilling to trust the peace to any indigenous leader, for in their minds a British governor (whose role many North Americans confuse with a state governor) guarantees that subordination and control of native peoples so necessary for paradise. Prospero, not Caliban alone must be in command.<sup>151</sup>

This means that the Montserratian people should work slowly and surely towards independence; to decolonise the mind through education and self-reliance; to resist constitutional changes in the Governor’s power;<sup>152</sup> to ride through the hurricanes and natural disasters and to not be swayed and stripped of their independent resolve and resilience; to continue ‘the journey from slavery to emancipation’ by consciously preparing the populace for constitutional and psychological independence.<sup>153</sup> Such enactments are routed by creating ‘national songs, national heroes and national place names’ - the political manifesto of the ruling National Progressive Party (1991),<sup>154</sup> and the literary manifesto of Dr. Howard Fergus who composed a Montserratian anthem ‘*Motherland*’ for the competition cause, and has consistently crusaded for the Blackburne Airport to be renamed Bramble Airport.<sup>155</sup>

Fergus’s Montserrat - History of a Caribbean Colony ends with the note that ‘Montserrat can be colonial in constitution, if it thinks it has to be, without being crassly colonial in identity and mentality’.<sup>156</sup> For Fergus, his poetry is one key part in the agitation for nationhood, a literary version of a process which includes a national holiday - St. Patrick’s Day (established on 17<sup>th</sup> March 1985), a national hero - Willy Bramble - commemorated on National Heroes Day (to be established on August Monday), a national site - Bramble Airport (changed in August 1995), and a national song - ‘*Montserrat - My Country*’ (announced in June 1995).<sup>157</sup> Just as Fergus is able to write his history of Montserrat, he is able to write the future of Montserrat. He includes himself in both his poetry of Montserrat, and his history of Montserrat; but he excludes aspects of his life history with Montserrat such as his powerfully anti-colonial poem ‘Ruler and Compass’<sup>158</sup> from his comprehensive anthology Calabash of Gold (1993).<sup>159</sup> Barbarian poetry baring its teeth, ‘Ruler and Compass’ is a mocking rhyme

about imperialism: it is the coloniser who lacks an independence of thought:

[...] Britain rule the waves  
and baa baa black sheep  
have you any news  
yes yes H.E. but no views<sup>160</sup>

Britain rules the high seas, but not the thought waves. Sly civility strikes back at the '[c]ivilised servants' of Westminster and their 'Oxford smile' as they 'divide and rule / this said island / "possessed by savage and heathen / people"; / with ruler and compasses only'.<sup>161</sup> For Fergus, '[t]he points of the compass / are daggers at my brain'.<sup>162</sup>

Most recently, the last of the natural disaster anthologies records the ongoing slow eruption of Chances Peak which started in July 1995. In Eruption - Ten Volcano Poems,<sup>163</sup> Dr. Fergus describes the scenes of evacuation to the north of the island, the waiting for the volcanic eruption, the work of the volcanologists, the fears and prayers for the future, and strangely, how similar the situation is to other past calamities. As '[c]hoppers paddle / through our skies cutting through the Queen's / peace and tourist paradise',<sup>164</sup> and Montserratians evacuate to the north of the Belham Valley safety line, Fergus belittles his Government and the Governor's invocation of colonial emergency powers during natural disasters.

We have come by faith just beyond Belham river  
in obedience to God, Government  
and the Governor's emergency powers  
which do not govern earthquakes and volcanoes<sup>165</sup>

Perhaps there are parallels to the hurricane Hugo natural disaster in 1989 which set back the independence movement, and left the elected Chief Minister of Montserrat coping with the morale of the islanders. Optimistically, though, no one can govern the natural weathers which buffet the island, not even His Excellency Prospero, and neither can hurricane nor volcano stop barbarian Caliban from writing and righting his

Montserrat.<sup>166</sup> I shall return to some of these aspects of Dr. Fergus's work, his historical, social, and political impressions of Montserrat, in other chapters.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> This is the one of Leach's personal tenets for anthropology (1986: 52).

<sup>2</sup> Geertz has appropriated Gilbert Ryle's term 'thick description' which concerns the communication, mis-communication and problem with the discrimination of winks from twitches, and the problem of interpreting the communicative code and meaning behind the wink, or the parody of the twitch. Herein lies the root of Geertz's Interpretive Theory of Culture (see 'Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture', Geertz 1993[a]: 3-33).

<sup>3</sup> (Riches 1982: 2-3). I would admit, however, that my approach is more experimental, subjective, and impressionistic than Riches's reflections upon actor's 'cognized models' (1982: 224).

<sup>4</sup> Here I am paraphrasing and personalising the following statement by Shweder (1986: 191):

[d]espite the fact that they may seem alien, strange, or irrational to outsiders, the cultures studied by anthropologists are, with some few exceptions, examples of versions of reality that one can live by.

<sup>5</sup> (Fernandez, *Semiotica*, 1983: 325).

<sup>6</sup> (Geertz 1993[a]: 9).

<sup>7</sup> In Partial Connections, Strathern uses her intimate 'knowledges' of Melanesia to reassess 'the writing of anthropology and the representation of societies where all lives seem complex' (1991: back cover). I will elaborate upon Partial Connections in the next section of this chapter.

<sup>8</sup> I would concur with Rapport's model of a social system as 'a muddling through, based on possibly discordant variety. It is not final, but dependent on the continual meeting of individuals through common forms.' This model derives from Rapport's initial period of fieldwork in Wanet, a village in Cumbria (1993: ix, 191). A later period of fieldwork in St. John's, Newfoundland, explores 'individual constructions of meaning and the meeting of these in conversation' (1987: 143), arguing that 'voices in situational agreements and oppositions, overlapping, colliding and contradicting' constitute a society of agreement and disagreement; that his examination of 'talking violence' reveals 'the institution of language as 'a vehicle for the creation of diverse meanings and identities' (1987: 140).

<sup>9</sup> (Chomsky 1972). Despite recognising 'the shallowness of explanations' inherent in structuralist and behaviourist approaches, Chomsky persists with the thesis that there are underlying mental mechanisms and systems for knowledge acquisition, 'deep structures' (Chomsky 1972: 25-27).

<sup>10</sup> (Piaget 1970).

<sup>11</sup> (Levi-Strauss 1962).

<sup>12</sup> (Shweder 1984: 28).

<sup>13</sup> (Fernandez 1986: xv).

<sup>14</sup> (Geertz 1995: 98, 166-168). Geertz writes about autobiography and anthropology, a retrospective shoulder-view based upon Kierkegaard's maxim that "'Life is lived forward but it is understood backward'" (Geertz 1995: 166).

<sup>15</sup> Draft-dodging anthropologist, hero of participant-observation, author of Argonauts of the Western Pacific - an account of native enterprise and adventure in the archipelagoes of Melanesia New Guinea (Malinowski 1978).

<sup>16</sup> Consider Richard Nixon - subject in midwestern murder novels, theoretical treatise as travelogue (Levi-Strauss 1973), who, for Geertz, is part of a grander example that social thought is being refigured, and genres are being blurred ('Blurred Genres: The Refiguration of Social Thought', Geertz 1993[b]: 19-35; see especially 19-20, 34):

The refiguration of social theory represents, or will if it continues, a sea changes in our notion not so much of what knowledge is but of what it is we want to know. Social events do have causes and social institutions effects; but it just may be that the road to discovering what we assert in asserting this lies through postulating forces and measuring them than through noting expressions and inspecting them.

<sup>17</sup> Note Geertz's use of imagery and metaphor which is both alliterative with his allusions to Max Weber, and highly memorable for citation and reference (Geertz 1993[a]: 5, 7, 24, 20, 17, 10, 27-28, 5). After the Fact, Geertz's anthropological and autobiographical retrospective text leaves the reader with a final image of ethnographic anthropology: 'trying to reconstruct elusive, rather ethereal, and by now wholly departed elephants from the footprints they have left on my mind' (Geertz 1995: 167).

<sup>18</sup> See 'The Dark at the Bottom of the Stairs: The Inchoate in Inquiry and Some Strategies for Coping With It' (Fernandez 1986: 214-238, 17).



<sup>19</sup> Fernandez exemplifies and invokes the inchoate and use of metaphor when tasting wine (public lecture, Department of Social Anthropology, St. Andrews University, 1990).

<sup>20</sup> (Fernandez 1986: 235).

<sup>21</sup> Fernandez 1986: 225-226). This is in the sense that structuralism seeks to essentialise, to drain symbols of their content in favour of the over-arching unconscious.

<sup>22</sup> (Schneider 1976: 197). Schneider distinguishes between cultural norms which are descriptions (1976: 203):-

patterns for action, whereas culture constitutes a body of definitions, premises, statements, postulates, presumptions, propositions, and perceptions about the nature of the universe and man's place in it. Where norms tell the actor how to play the scene, culture tells the actor how to behave in the presence of ghosts, gods, and human beings, culture tells the actors what ghosts, gods, and human beings are and what they are all about.

<sup>23</sup> (Schneider 1980: 8, 128).

<sup>24</sup> (Geertz 1993[a]: 20, 24). This begs the question of the comparative nature of anthropology if ethnography and cultural analysis are both interpretively configured and figured out from the vantage point of the anthropologist's 'home culture'.

<sup>25</sup> (Leach 1986: 52).

<sup>26</sup> (Miner, *American Anthropologist*, June 1956).

<sup>27</sup> (Miner, *American Anthropologist*, June 1956: 504).

<sup>28</sup> Chomsky is concerned with phenomena, perception and the engaging role of the artist (Chomsky 1972: 24-25; see also Shklovsky 1988; Wittgenstein 1978; Rapport 1987: 170-177; Nietzsche 1990: 33):

[p]henomena can be so familiar that we really do not see them at all, a matter that has been discussed by literary theorists and philosophers. For example, Viktor Shklovskij in the early 1920's developed the idea that the function of poetic art is that of 'making strange the object depicted'. People living at the seashore grow so accustomed to the murmur of the waves that they never hear it. By the same token, we scarcely ever hear the words which we utter [...] We look at each other, but we do not see each other any more. Our perception of the world has withered away; what has remained is mere recognition. Thus, the goal of the artist is to transfer what is depicted to the 'sphere of new perception'; as an example, Shklovsky cites a story by Tolstoy in which social customs and institutions are 'made strange' by the device of presenting them from the viewpoint of a narrator who happens to be a dog.

Such Russian Formalism is echoed in Edwin Morgan's 'Marsian Poetry' where he views the appearance and function of everyday objects from the standpoint of an alien from Mars (1985).

<sup>29</sup> Culture is continually conceived, maintained, and generated by individuals and ethnic groups such that it is the boundary which defines the groups, not the 'cultural stuff that it encloses' (Barth 1969: 15).

<sup>30</sup> Dwyer has duly criticised Geertz for restricting 'the active role of the anthropologist to the moment of writing, denying an active role to the anthropologist in the direct encounter with the Other', whilst simultaneously considering fieldwork 'the crucial moment in the research process and in the anthropological career' (Dwyer 1982: 263). However, Dwyer is also noting that a dialogue between text and experience is lost, in his opinion by Geertzians who consider the Other and the experience of the Other as literary text; Dwyer notes that Geertzians write texts in university locations removed from ethnographic engagement: '[t]he dialectical confrontation, for Geertz, does not take place during the field encounter with the Other, but is restricted to the privacy of the anthropologist's study' (Dwyer 1982: 265). Sensitive to this problem, Dwyer attempts to overcome this with a dialogic anthropology; an engaging, conversational and confrontational anthropology which is transcribed and presented thus.

<sup>31</sup> See Crapanzano's anthropological and textual analysis (1992: 60-69) of 'The Raid' section and the ethnographic blurring of the I-You relationship in the narration of 'Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight' (Geertz 1993[a]: 412-455).

<sup>32</sup> (Barthes [a] 1988: 171).

<sup>33</sup> (Rapport 1990: 147-153). The Páez link their memory of events in the past and in the present by referring to the local topography, Tierradentro (Columbia) in their case.



<sup>34</sup> Here, 'colonial discourse' refers to the conversation about living under British colonialism. A more catholic and literary definition could be, 'the variety of textual forms in which the West produced and codified knowledge about non-metropolitan areas and cultures' (Williams & Chrisman 1993: 5). This thesis is a colonial discourse not just because Montserrat is a present-day colony, but also because of the production of the knowledge in this thesis, the nature of fieldwork anthropology, and the relationship between the anthropologist, Montserrat and the mother-country. Nevertheless, this issue was discussed with Montserratians who preferred a text written by a sympathetic anthropologist rather than some other person, and, I feel, that all relationships lack equality, not just anthropological relationships with natives.

<sup>35</sup> (Bruner 1993: 7). Here Bruner discusses Smadar Lavie's description of the ethnographer, 'a Jew of both European and Arab descent' (Lavie 1990: 288), part Self and part Other, part subject and part object.

<sup>36</sup> (Williams & Chrisman 1993).

<sup>37</sup> (Strathern 1991: p.xxiv).

<sup>38</sup> (Strathern 1991: xiii).

<sup>39</sup> (Strathern 1991: xxiv, xxv).

<sup>40</sup> (Strathern 1991: 8).

<sup>41</sup> (Strathern 1991: 9).

<sup>42</sup> In 'The reading process: a phenomenological approach' (1988: 219), Wolfgang Iser makes a similar point when comparing an indeterminate text - which allows the reader's imagination to rove, and an image - which narrows and constrains the reader's imagination (though not completely, I might add).

<sup>43</sup> (Barthes [b] 1988: 173).

<sup>44</sup> (Barthes [b] 1988: 173).

<sup>45</sup> (Barthes [b] 1988: 173).

<sup>46</sup> (Fish 1988: 327).

<sup>47</sup> (Dwyer 1982: 284).

<sup>48</sup> (Dunn 1979).

<sup>49</sup> (Smith 1992: 85).

<sup>50</sup> 'Empires' (Dunn 1986: 109, 1.16).

<sup>51</sup> (Crawford 1992: 281).

<sup>52</sup> (Maxwell 1992: 61).

<sup>53</sup> (Crawford 1992: 281).

<sup>54</sup> 'The Come-on' (Dunn 1986: 99, 1.26).

<sup>55</sup> 'The Come-on' (Dunn 1986: 99, 1.22).

<sup>56</sup> (Brathwaite, *Savacou*, 1970: 37).

<sup>57</sup> See Burton for references to Tony Harrison as a barbarian (1991: 17). See also 'Scholarship Boy' by Ken Worpole for a commentary upon Harrison's use of dialect (Worpole 1991: 66-67).

<sup>58</sup> 'Them & [uz]' (Harrison 1984: 122-123).

<sup>59</sup> (Ngúgí wa Thiong'o 1993: 438; see also Skinner, *Cascando*, Autumn 1994: 74).

<sup>60</sup> (Achebe 1993: 429).

<sup>61</sup> This is an award in recognition of a 'lifetime's achievement by a living British writer' (Naipaul 1971: inside cover).

<sup>62</sup> 'As a African' (Zephaniah 1992: 28, 1.15, 1.18, 1.20, 1.23, 1.24, 1.28).

<sup>63</sup> 'Us & Dem' (Zephaniah 1992: 44-45, 1.27-30).

<sup>64</sup> 'Us & Dem' (Zephaniah 1992: 44, 1.2).

<sup>65</sup> 'The Rhubarbarians' (Harrison 1984: 114, 1.16-20; see also Harrison 1985).

<sup>66</sup> 'Us & Dem' (Zephaniah 1992, 44-45, 1.1-3, 43-45).

<sup>67</sup> (Zephaniah 1992: 44-45, 1.28).

<sup>68</sup> 'Home' (D'Aguiar 1993: 14, 1.10).

<sup>69</sup> (D'Aguiar 1993).

<sup>70</sup> 'Home' (D'Aguiar 1993: 14, 1.13-16).

<sup>71</sup> (Heaney 1990: 14, 1.13-16).

<sup>72</sup> (Ashcroft & Griffiths & Tiffin 1989).

<sup>73</sup> (Ashcroft & Griffiths & Tiffin 1989: 33).

<sup>74</sup> (Thiong'o 1991: xiv).

<sup>75</sup> (Thiong'o 1991: xiv).

<sup>76</sup> 'This Land is Mine' (Fergus 1978[a]: 23, 1.1-4). The preface quotation which sets the poem reads, "This island's mine by Sycorax my mother" (Caliban in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, 1984: 37, Act I, Scene II, 1.333). Though aware of the poetry, literary criticism, story- and play- writing of other Maroons members, Montserratians and people connected with Montserrat (David Edgecombe, Archie Markham, Vincent Browne, George Irish, Lowell Lewis, G. Thomas, Dorcas White, Ruel White and Edgar White for instance), there is not the space here to do justice to their work. Below, however, is a complete version of the poem (Fergus 1978[a]: 23).

### THIS LAND IS MINE

"This island's mine by Sycorax my mother"  
(Caliban in Shakespeare's *Tempest*)

Take it easy, stranger man  
In your imperious drive  
To build an ivory wall  
In my black sand

Brake and cool it, danger man  
We know your bent  
We read it blazoned in the ruins  
Of Zimbabwe, we smell  
The festering wounds of racial hate  
In my blood I hear echoes  
The anguished cries of children  
Dispossessed.  
So please cool it, stranger man  
Abandon your malevolent intent

This land has its rangers  
Brazen man  
This bag of coals contains  
Much more than dust  
And is even now ready to rain  
Fossilized energy  
That will burn and purge  
This isle of vermin  
If it must

So back off, scornful  
Scurvy man  
These black spades contain  
Much more than rust  
They have keen edges that will dig  
And shovel dust to dust.

You may use your money  
Dollar man  
To buy esteem and build monuments  
But by my life, this land must ever be  
A wilderness of freedom  
For Quamina and Quasbie

Do not cuff me  
Cagey man  
With fists of velvet dollar notes  
I still can feel your might

---

And will retaliate  
For I prefer my plight  
If your gracious hand must choke  
The freedom in my throat.

<sup>77</sup> (Macdonell 1991: 39-40). Macdonell is citing from Language, Semantics and Ideology: Stating the Obvious by Michel Pêcheux (1982: 156-7, 159, 215).

<sup>78</sup> (Walcott 1990).

<sup>79</sup> (Shakespeare 1984).

<sup>80</sup> (Brotherston 1967; see also Retamar 1989; Mannoni 1990; Bloch 1990; Fanon 1991; Bhabha 1991). The characters of The Tempest (Shakespeare 1984) are appropriated as universal symbols such that Caliban and Ariel feature in political tracts - Caliban and Ariel come from the same social background but Ariel is turned into a metaphor for the intellectual people, and Caliban is the simile for the brute, barbarian masses. Even Fidel Castro's speeches tackle the colonial condition and the struggle for the post-colonial utopia, expressing their goals by reference to Prospero's violent demise at the hands of his independent servants.

<sup>81</sup> 'The Come-on' (Dunn 1986: 99-100, 1.22, 1.33, 1.38-39).

<sup>82</sup> 'The Come-on' (Dunn 1986: 100, 1.42-49).

<sup>83</sup> Mimicry is a strategy of the colonised well used in The Mimic Men by V.S. Naipaul (1969).

<sup>84</sup> See Chapter Five, 'Sly Civility' in The Location of Culture by Homi Bhabha (1994: 93-101, especially 96). My suspicion of colonial and post-colonial literary theorists, in some way, led me to Montserrat where I could verify, or reject, their prolific colonial and post-colonial discourses which are generally written from a European or North American university position. Writing from Montserrat, Dr. Fergus's work legitimises these discourses. Furthermore, just as Daniel Miller found in Trinidad, my ethnographic approach answers cultural studies issues and questions, and reasserts anthropology and its participant-observation methodology in the social sciences (Miller 1994: 1).

<sup>85</sup> (Gates, *Critical Inquiry*, Spring 1991: 470).

<sup>86</sup> (Government House Press Release, *The Montserrat News*, 6th January 1995: 7).

<sup>87</sup> A point made in an interview between Jonathan Skinner and Dr. Howard Fergus at the UWI Adult Education Centre, 4th July 1995. Fergus also commented that sovereign status, self-determination and social development are all to be weighed up against the militating psychology of dependence bred by a life-time of political, social and economic colonialism, and the blackened, silent history of slavery. For Fergus, economic independence is not a pre-condition for political independence, Associate Statehood is the first diffident step towards full local control. The cultural activities held at the University Centre encourage local artists and scholars to share insights and to promote learning around the island to achieve just such an end.

<sup>88</sup> (Mullin 1992: 44).

<sup>89</sup> (Fergus 1992: 57).

<sup>90</sup> (Donham, *Man*, 1981: 515-541).

<sup>91</sup> (Burnett 1986: 276-277).

<sup>92</sup> (McWatt & Simmons-McDonald 1994: 103).

<sup>93</sup> Cotton Rhymes (Fergus 1976); Green Innocence (Fergus 1978[a]); Stop the Carnival (Fergus 1980); Politics as Sport (Fergus 1987); From Hugo With Love - Poems (Fergus 1989); Calabash of Gold - Selected Poems (Fergus 1993[a]); Eruption - Ten Volcano Poems (Fergus 1995[a]).

<sup>94</sup> Flowers Blooming Late (Fergus 1984); Hugo Versus Montserrat (Fergus & Markham 1989); Horrors of a Hurricane - Poems (Fergus 1990); Dark Against the Sky - An Anthology of Poems and Short Stories from Montserrat (Fergus & Rowden 1990).

<sup>95</sup> Although he holds a PhD in Education from the University of the West Indies, Dr. Fergus considers himself primarily an historian with a strong interest in education and a passion - what Fergus would refer to as 'a disease' - for writing and reciting poetry. Dr. Fergus writes and broadcasts his own history programme, 'Tours through Montserrat's History', and he has published the following books and pamphlets about the history of Montserrat: History of Alliouagana: A Short History of Montserrat (1975); Montserrat: The LAST ENGLISH COLONY? Prospects for Independence - Two Essays on Montserrat ([b] 1978); WILLIAM HENRY BRAMBLE: HIS LIFE AND TIMES (1983); Montserrat - Emerald Isle of the Caribbean (1992); RULE BRITANNIA - Politics in British Montserrat (1985); Montserrat: History of a Caribbean Colony (1994).

- <sup>96</sup> 'Bruk-up' (Fergus 1978[a]: 28-29).
- <sup>97</sup> 'Bruk-up' (Fergus 1978[a]: 28, 1.1-6).
- <sup>98</sup> 'Bruk-up' (Fergus 1978[a]: 28, 1.7-12).
- <sup>99</sup> (Fergus 1989; Fergus & Markham 1989; Fergus 1990; Fergus 1995[a]).
- <sup>100</sup> (Anon., *The Montserrat Reporter*, 10th March 1995: front cover, no other references available).
- <sup>101</sup> 'When Justice Came To Church' (Fergus, *The Montserrat Reporter*, 17th March 1995: 8).
- <sup>102</sup> 'When Justice Came To Church' (Fergus, *The Montserrat Reporter*, 17th March 1995: 8, 1.1-4, 9-16).
- <sup>103</sup> 'When Justice Came To Church' (Fergus, *The Montserrat Reporter*, 17th March 1995: 8, 1.25-28).
- <sup>104</sup> 'Easter' (Fergus, *The Montserrat News*, 13th April 1995: front cover).
- <sup>105</sup> (Fergus, *The Montserrat Reporter*, 30th June 1995: front cover and back cover).
- <sup>106</sup> (Fergus, *The Montserrat Reporter*, 30th June 1995: front cover). The National Song Search Committee had narrowed the selection down to four by April 1994 (see the monthly press release pamphlet *Government In Action*, April 1994: 6-7).
- <sup>107</sup> 'A Question of Emblems' (Fergus, *The Montserrat News*, 7th July 1995: 13).
- <sup>108</sup> 'Footprints' (Fergus 1978[a]: 41, 1.17-20).
- <sup>109</sup> 'Blessed' (Fergus 1978[a]: 46, 1.5-7).
- <sup>110</sup> (Shakespeare 1984: 39, Act II, Scene I, 1.365-366).
- <sup>111</sup> 'Blessed' (Fergus 1978[a]: 46, 1.23-28). Fergus does not use Dunn's term in his writings though he does exhibit 'barbarian' qualities.
- <sup>112</sup> As Director of the Caribbean Research Center, Medgar Evans College (CUNY), New York, Irish has been able to use this outlet to publish many of his union histories and newspaper articles previously written in Montserratian newspapers: Perspectives for Alliouagana - Reflections on Life in Montserrat (1990); Life in a Colonial Crucible - Labor & Social Change in Montserrat, 1946 - Present (1991); Further Perspectives for Alliouagana - Journalism and Change (1993).
- <sup>113</sup> (Irish 1972). It is alleged that the word 'Alliouagana' is the Amerindian name for Montserrat. The word was found in a dictionary made by a Dominican Friar Father Breton, following his involvement with the local Caribs on a Caribbean island. Although deserted when settled by Europeans, the Carib term for Montserrat was rediscovered in the early 1970s, and promoted by Dr. Irish and Dr. Fergus as part of their work in the Centre for Adult Education (Irish 1972: 14).
- <sup>114</sup> (Fergus 1975).
- <sup>115</sup> "'Dedication" for Heroes of St. Patrick's Day (1768)' (Fergus 1975: 1).
- <sup>116</sup> This rediscovered event has been much publicised by Dr. Fergus in his history pamphlets and poetry pamphlets. It will be considered in detail in Chapter Six where I will include a contemporary St. Patrick's Day ethnography, as well as detailed historical accounts of the St. Patrick's Day rebellion (1768) by Michael Mullin (1992: 219-221).
- <sup>117</sup> "'Dedication" for Heroes of St. Patrick's Day (1768)' (Fergus 1975: 1, 1.18-24).
- <sup>118</sup> (Fergus 1975: 3, 7).
- <sup>119</sup> 'Epilogue' (Fergus 1975: 66, 1.22-26).
- <sup>120</sup> Television interview concerning Crawford's visions and 'wurds' for Scotland (1993; see also Crawford 1990).
- <sup>121</sup> (Fergus 1978[b]). The pamphlet is composed of two essays, 'Montserrat - The Last English Colony?: Prospects for Independence' (Fergus 1978[b]: 4-16), and 'Cultural activities In Montserrat In the Seventies' (Fergus 1978[b]: 17-23). The former was an article reprinted from the *Bulletin of Eastern Caribbean Affairs*, Volume 4, Number 3, 1978. The latter was a conference paper.
- <sup>122</sup> (Fergus [b]: inside cover).
- <sup>123</sup> (Fergus 1978[b]: 5).
- <sup>124</sup> (Fergus 1978[b]: 6).
- <sup>125</sup> (Fergus 1978[b]: 7).
- <sup>126</sup> (Fergus 1983).
- <sup>127</sup> (Fergus 1983: 4).
- <sup>128</sup> 'A Song for Willie Bramble' (Fergus 1983: 50-52).
- <sup>129</sup> 'A Song for Willie Bramble' (Fergus 1983: 51, 1.28-39).
- <sup>130</sup> 'A Song for Willie Bramble' (Fergus 1980: 32-35). The anthology is named after the poem 'Stop the Carnival' (Fergus 1980: 14).
- <sup>131</sup> 'Alliouagana Lament' (Fergus 1980: 7-9).
- <sup>132</sup> 'Alliouagana Lament' (Fergus 1980: 7-9, 1.1, 1.4, 1.5, 1.53-55, 1.57).

- <sup>133</sup> See the middle section of poems in this anthology (Fergus 1980: 25-34): 'Heroes I' (Fergus 1980: 25-26), 'Heroes II' (Fergus 1980: 27-29), 'Heroes of St. Patrick's Day (1768)' (Fergus 1980: 30-31), and 'A Song For Willie Bramble' (Fergus 1980: 32-34).
- <sup>134</sup> 'Manifesto' (Fergus 1987: 12-14, 1.50, 1.53).
- <sup>135</sup> (Fergus 1987).
- <sup>136</sup> 'Conquest '86' (Fergus 1987: 8-9, 1.22-28, author's emphasis). Perhaps the verse should read 'imagining willow' (Fergus 1987: 8, 1.22)?
- <sup>137</sup> 'The Irish Legacy', Chapter Three of Fergus (1992: 14-17).
- <sup>138</sup> (Fergus 1992: 14).
- <sup>139</sup> (Fergus 1992: 14).
- <sup>140</sup> (Browne, *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*, October 1994: 8).
- <sup>141</sup> (Browne, *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*, October 1994: 7).
- <sup>142</sup> (Fergus 1994: 164). See also the calypso song 'Hold on to your Property' from Arrow on Target by Arrow (1991).
- <sup>143</sup> (Fergus 1994: 166).
- <sup>144</sup> (Shakespeare 1984: 37, Act I, Scene II, 1.331).
- <sup>145</sup> 'This Land is Mine' (Fergus 1978[a]: 23, 1.1-4; see also Fergus 1994: 166).
- <sup>146</sup> 'This Land is Mine' (Fergus 1978[a]: 24, 1.38).
- <sup>147</sup> (Fergus 1994: 213).
- <sup>148</sup> 'This Land Is Mine' (Fergus, *The Montserrat Mirror*, 2nd July 1976: 4).
- <sup>149</sup> Interview of Dr. Fergus by Jonathan Skinner, 4th May 1995.
- <sup>150</sup> 'This Land Is Mine' (Fergus 1978[a]: 24, 1.36-43).
- <sup>151</sup> (Fergus 1994: 213-214).
- <sup>152</sup> In December 1989, several months after Hurricane Hugo (16-17th October 1989) devastated Montserrat (98% of the island was severely damaged), a new Constitution Order was brought into effect by British Minister Timothy Sainsbury which - following the results of many off-shore banking scandals - transferred all financial matters into the Governor's hands.. The Act also gave the Governor power to delegate activities to island Ministers at his discretion (Fergus 1994: 208-209).
- <sup>153</sup> Fergus 1994: 217).
- <sup>154</sup> (Fergus 1994: 216).
- <sup>155</sup> (Fergus 1985: 64; see also Fergus 1994: 266).
- <sup>156</sup> (Fergus 1994: 266).
- <sup>157</sup> 'Montserrat - My Country' (Edgecombe, *The Montserrat Reporter*, 30th June 1995: front cover).
- <sup>158</sup> 'Ruler and Compass' (Fergus 1989: 17-18).
- <sup>159</sup> (Fergus [a], 1993).
- <sup>160</sup> 'Ruler and Compass' (Fergus 1989: 17, 1.24-27). 'H.E.' presumably refers a common abbreviation of the expression 'His Excellency ... The Governor'.
- <sup>161</sup> 'Ruler and Compass' (Fergus 1989: 18, 1.32, 1.35, 1.45-49).
- <sup>162</sup> 'Ruler and Compass' (Fergus 1989: 18, 1.50-51).
- <sup>163</sup> (Fergus 1995[a]).
- <sup>164</sup> 'Volcano Watch' (Fergus 1995[a]: 11, 1.63-65).
- <sup>165</sup> 'Volcano Watch' (Fergus 1995[a]: 9, 1.11-14).
- <sup>166</sup> Lara Rains and Colonial Rites by Howard Fergus (forthcoming [a]); Gallery of Montserrat: Prominent People in Montserrat's History by Howard Fergus (forthcoming [b]). 'Montserrat Versus Volcano' could be a forthcoming publication similar to the fund-raising Hugo Versus Montserrat (Fergus & Markham 1989).



## Volcano island call

A DUNDEE couple living on a Caribbean island hit by fears of an impending volcanic eruption have managed to contact their daughter in Dundee to tell her they are safe and well.

Bill and Marjory Thom have lived on Montserrat, where Bill is employed in the Overseas Development Administration, for a year and a half.

Over the last few days they have transformed their home in the north of the Montserrat into a temporary refugee camp and feeding and watering station to help hundreds of people fleeing the Chances Peak volcano, which experts fear may be about to erupt.

The mountain, whose last major eruption was over 100 years ago, has been spewing dust and debris for about a month, forcing many of the island's 11,000 inhabitants to seek sanctuary in the north.

The Thom's daughter Fiona, Strathmartine Road, was understandably concerned until her parents telephoned on Thursday night to reassure her.

"Mum and Dad say they've turned their house into a refugee camp," said Fiona yesterday.

"The situation doesn't seem to be too bad at the moment, although Dad said that in the main town of Plymouth the ash was so bad you could hardly see six feet in front of you.

"They don't believe they are in any danger, and plan to stay on the island until the worst is over."

(Anon., *The Courier and Advertiser*, 26th August 1995: 13, no other references available)



### **Chapter Three - Conversing Montserrat: two place-settings evoking two constellations of realities on development and dependence<sup>1</sup>**

The intention of this chapter is to demonstrate the inter-subjective possibilities of the postmodern impressionistic anthropological analysis which I briefly mentioned in the Preface and Chapter Two. I do this by evoking two place-settings - two dinner parties at which the guests discuss their differing world-views on the development of Montserrat. I juxtapose narrative conversations from development workers at one dinner party, and from Montserratian British Dependent Territory Citizens at another, to show the diverse realities which people inhabit and the various Montserrats they evoke. Sometimes these worlds and Montserrats collide against each other and sometimes they merge together just as some calypsonians comment about the same social issues, and some comment about others. The various convers(at)ions about Montserrat - dinner-party commentaries about Montserrat - are the focus of this chapter, the aim being to reveal two loose constellations, one orienting itself around the development workers on Montserrat, and the other orienting itself around the Montserratians themselves. Both constellations are composed of personal positions: an indeterminate Shwederian extension of Stanley Fish's 'interpretive [reading] communities',<sup>2</sup> and Nigel Rapport's loops of thought - 'world-views',<sup>3</sup> diverse, multiple, and partial. Simultaneously, in this chapter, I extrapolate from these two groups of conversations the anthropological argument that in order to enable effective development work it is important to be aware of indigenous world-views, indigenous responses to development, what the indigenous people consider requires development, and how the development work might best suit the needs of the indigenous. Thus, this chapter concludes that development work is intrinsically linked with the anthropological enterprise, an enterprise which seeks to uncover - in this case - both individual and group convergent and divergent world-views.

Such personal positions and diverse world-views are particularly identifiable on small islands where even the opposing 'belonger' and 'bang water' constellations are clearly visible. These are enclosed microcosms of life, where interactions are multiplied as the

same faces are met throughout the working day and relaxing evening; where the clefts and divisions running through society polarise social relations between 'networks', to borrow an expression from Jeremy Boissevain.<sup>4</sup> Thus, it is in a village in the Yorkshire Dales, or on a small island in the Eastern Caribbean, that actions can be observed to have consequences which ripple through the community and, in this case, development projects can be observed to have wide-ranging consequences - reactions and responses to them which are often not predicted or considered. Particularly critical of the merits of development work, Mark Hobart writes:

[g]ranted the vast sums invested in trying to find a solution to what is described as the problem of underdevelopment, by the criteria of the development planners matters should be getting better rather than worse. Instead it would seem that development projects often contribute to the deterioration.<sup>5</sup>

This is Hobart's conclusion following an assessment of the impact of technological expertise used by development workers in underdeveloped countries: an assessment of how the global, 'world-ordering' knowledge from the over-developed, ignorantly rides rough-shod over the local, context of development. His anthropological approach varies with Rapport's theorisations upon the cognitive world which we, as individuals, inhabit; world-views which are the results of interpreting behaviour, constructing meaning; world-views, perspectives and positions created, adopted, sometimes forced upon people and sometimes collectively shared. The strength of a particular constellation comes from its Weberian power to carry sway over other constellations or individual positions; the development worker's views as opposed to the indigenous, for instance.<sup>6</sup>

Implicit in this chapter, then, is the opinion that development and aid projects are complicated and complicating activities. Explicit in this chapter are the attitudes, perspectives and world-views of development workers towards their development projects, their Montserratian co-workers, and their view of Montserrat from the villa balcony. Explicit also are some Montserratian responses and reactions to the development projects, the project workers themselves, and the Montserrat to which

they belong. The purpose of these constellations which I juxtapose is not to polarise or further any animosity between the communities, but to reveal contrasting realities, to promote increased awareness and consideration of activities - their consequences and possible responses, and above all, to further evoke some impressions of Montserrat. Nevertheless, '[p]art of the task of anthropological writing is to retell stories in a fashion that will provoke a meaningful experiential response and understanding in the reader':<sup>7</sup> I too share Bryon Good's evocative mission. An introduction to the projects and communities on Montserrat is followed by the two conversation-narratives with development workers and Montserratians. These two constellations - development worker and Montserratian - are finally commented upon as I utilise Rapport's anthropological approach to attend to some of development work's failings which Hobart mentions.

### **The politics of development on Montserrat**

Attracted to research on Montserrat - the Emerald Isle of the Eastern Caribbean; the 39-square-mile, pear-shaped British colony, marketed by the Montserrat Tourist Board as 'The Way the Caribbean Used To Be'<sup>8</sup> - the anthropologist soon found himself adopted by Montserratians as well as the working expatriate population of development workers. The indigenous population of Montserratians far exceed the several hundred North Americans and British who have retired to Montserrat or maintain holiday homes on the island. Some of these homes are let to the 30 to 40 development workers with their families, the 'professional expatriates' as they like to call themselves. These workers are contracted by the Overseas Development Agency (ODA) to work for between one and four years on island development projects.

It is the Foreign & Commonwealth Office which tends to British interests abroad from the United Kingdom, often under the name of the Overseas Development Administration (ODA) - a wing of the Foreign & Commonwealth Office which runs Britain's programme of aid to developing countries. Many ODA workers are Technical Co-operation Officers (TCOs). Employed and salaried by the ODA, the

TCO works on loan to the overseas Government. With the co-operation of the Government of Montserrat and the ODA, TCOs receive perks such as a luxurious house with pool, a car, generous wages above local rates, tax concessions, free shipping and flights to and from the United Kingdom. In addition to this, on Montserrat the TCO grouping is the most affluent and influential grouping on the island, consisting of the British Governor of the island at the head, the British Police Commissioner as his second, and thereafter follows a rigid hierarchy of TCO positions who are all above the site overseers and foremen from the international construction companies.

Ever keen to join in, interact, and possibly glean some insight, the anthropologist welcomes evening social events where people relax, drop their guard and speak their mind. Around Christmas time and New Year's, the anthropologist made himself very busy and very available, particularly with this year's festival celebrations. Moving on from Fergus's local poetry commentaries of Montserrat in the last chapter, in this chapter there follow two conversational narratives conversing Montserrat. These individual world-views, and alien and local impressions of Montserrat, are then briefly commented upon in line with development from a native point of view.

### **Developing Montserrat the ODA way**

The anthropologist, in his twenties and from a Scottish university, is adopted as a surrogate son and a surrogate Scot by the Thoms. Bill Thom is a skilled architect now reaching his mid-fifties, very lively and very Scottish; when Bill was laid off from Dundee Town Council, he pulled some old contacts in the Foreign & Commonwealth Office made when working in the Seychelles and Fiji some twenty years ago. Bill tendered and won a two year contract as Government Architect of Development Projects on Montserrat. As a wealthy Technical Co-operation Officer (TCO) on Montserrat, living and working with the full co-operation of the Government of Montserrat and the ODA, Bill decided to bring Marjory, his wife and sometime primary school teacher, with him.

Before leaving, the Thoms attended a residential course at the International Conference Centre at Farnham in Surrey where they were given a grounding in the practicalities of living and working abroad: they were told how to deal with culture-shock, the indigenous population and their customs; the social structure of the island was explained to them; and they were given information about fellow British expatriates, the British Governor, the British Police Commissioner, and other British TCOs.

David Crowther - retired head of a Yorkshire police force, TCO Police Commissioner, number two to the TCO Governor - is holding a New Year's Party for the TCOs on the island at his mansion which he rents from Paul McCartney's sound recorder; a sound off-shore tax-free investment. Although not invited, the anthropologist has been coerced into gate-crashing the occasion as a member of the Thom's household.

A wine bottle breaks into pieces which are swept up and thrown onto the lawn.

Though his white face is familiar about town, here, the anthropologist needs introducing: this is because he lives amongst Montserratians, next to a landlady who is always complaining to the police about noise from a bar which the expatriates frequent.

"David, come and meet young Mr. Skinner; he's from St Andrews." Bill practises his golf swing which he's learning at the island's exclusive nine-hole course.

"That's good, glad to hear it." In the same breath Commissioner Crowther turns back to Bill. "Jill and I put in a full round this morning. It's the only time for some peace. They've even taken to ringing me at home when I'm off duty. They don't bother with the police desk anymore! I'm going to have to make an announcement; this can't go on."

More guests enter the house, skirting the wine on the floor. "Listen," continues Commissioner Crowther, "got to man the reception. Is that a kilt you've got on, or are you really a transvestite! Talk to you later, Bill."

The dining room's spacious, with modern chairs set around the sides of the room. People have congregated into groups - TCOs and their wives; eminent tourists visiting



the island from the US; retired expatriates, 'snowbirds', with a house in Canada and a house on the island to migrate to over the long winter; and last and lowest on the protocol list are the team of British foremen and their lively cosmopolitan girlfriends - professional expatriates, these men work for international building corporations such as Northwest Holt: each completed building marks the end of a contract and the start of a journey to another building-site around the world.

"Come on, Jonathan, let's leave Bill to his wee business meetings, eh?" And Marjory leads the young anthropologist in the direction of the drinks table. "This is just so ... so ... absolutely marvellous. How can you manage all this out here, Jill? Here's a bottle for the collection."

"Glad you could make it," Jill answers in a Yorkshire accent.

Marjory continues: "That walk you've arranged with David for the snowbirds. What a lovely idea."

Jill preens herself; "Thank you Marjory, and would you be willing to sit in for an hour or two at the Red Cross stall next week?"

"Of course, I'd be only too happy to help. There is the bridge class, so Tuesday's out, and I just lend a hand at the National Trust, Friday afternoons, you know, but any other time would be fine."

"Right then, Wednesday morning it is. Lovely." Jill pencils Marjory into her little blue notebook and the anthropologist starts to slip away to join other conversations. He turns to an interesting crowd of old, red-faced men in Hawaiian shirts, red either from the sun or from the gin and tonics at sundown.

There's a tug on his arm; Marjory: "Look over there, that's John Knibb, university student like you. He's just 'come on island'; doesn't know anyone; go and say hello."

On the far side of the room, the anthropologist introduces himself, stumbling over unrehearsed words, unaccustomed to the rituals of networking.

The reply is in similar fashion: "Oh, right. John Knibb, bio-medical engineer seconded from Lincolnshire Uni. Health Centre. Pleased to meet you. I'm at the new hospital next to the old Glendon site."

"Er, sorry, just what is bio-engineering?"



"Oh, erm, bio-medical engineering, well, you know, like, I was into cancer research, giving them radiation doses ..."

"Chemotherapy?"

"Yeah, sort of. Doing well with some patients, but they closed the wards so I applied for this - setting up, training, installing, maintaining the new hospital equipment. Lot's to do, eh."

The anthropologist starts to pick up. "So, how's it been going then?" he asks, filling a hand full of peanuts, expressing a body-language of interest.

"Nightmare, absolute nightmare mate." John runs his hand through his hair, self-conscious but glad for a sympathetic ear as the anthropologist shortly discovers:- "I just get here, right; spend a month in the only decent hotel, looking for a place to stay. Well, the buggers, they downgrade me so I don't get a car or an office, just housing allowance and a converted broom cupboard in the basement of the hospital, pipes running everywhere, leaks like nobody's business."

"Sounds pretty rough, I live in a noisy part of Plymouth myself, no hot water and stuff ..."

"Yeah, well, get a load of this: I'm in charge of a million pounds' worth of equipment in British Aid. It's going to the new hospital. I have to set it all up, get it running and do the same thing in Anguilla at the same time. My boss says to leave Anguilla for the now, they're not co-operating. But they haven't a clue here. One million pounds of equipment; that's a third of that cost every year in maintenance. I'm only here 18 months and what's going to happen after, eh?"

"Dunno. Sounds pretty expensive for here."

"Right. And I've got to train two of the locals in everything. They came from the social security office and believe me, they don't know shit. Fucking waste if you ask me!" He bristles, draws closer, and starts to confide in the anthropologist. "Racism, that's what it is, can't win you know."

The anthropologist looks confused but is still listening to him.

John explains himself, "Coz I got downgraded, they know I'm not that important. Their salaries are paid by the hospital and I can't do anything to them. Slim and Highman, biggest couple of dodgers. Turn up sometime in the morning, go away for lunch and only Slim comes back, Highman's away driving his taxi. Can't do nothing about it, you know, if I do I become the white slave master ..."

"Alright John. Arr, you must be the anthropologist whatever Marjory's raving on about." Shaking hands: "Paul; VSO; do the roads; pleased to meet you." John and the anthropologist are joined by Paul, a tanned man in his early thirties, just starting to go bald. "What's that about your hymen eh? Lost IT - oops - I mean HIM, again!" Paul's speedy comments draw chuckles so they continue - "Fucking hell! We did the road signs today. Bastards want them painted just like they take the corners. Only problem - none of them know how to drive. We just sat around with the bosses arguing. It just can't be the same with the runway next week. It just can't."

Paul pauses for some nibbles and John changes tack. "Look over there. She's alright." He gazes at the only black at the party, a young woman with long relaxed hair in a tight mini-skirt, holding onto the arm of a white man in the contractors' huddle.

"Dionne. Married to Jeremy - doing the computers at GHQ; two kids; leaving in April," Paul informs us through a mouthful of sausage rolls.

The anthropologist chips in, "Where's he going in April?"

"Back to London"

John: "Anything going?"

"Naw. Rough. Left his business to come here; the building wasn't ready. They move the computers in after 14 months in one of those Portaloos; he sets up the network and has to leave before it's running."

"Rough."

"Yeah, probably sleeping at his mother's flat again." They all look suitably downcast for a moment. "Look, I spy food, come on."

Wandering over to a large central table of chickens, pizzas, rotis, salads and samozzas, the anthropologist leaves their company as they queue ahead of him and discuss the next cycling competition on St. Vincent.

"... I think I can get the half price tickets again. Should be about thirty quid and Sonya's coming as soon as she's finished her exams ..."

With a full plate, the anthropologist sits down in another corner of the room, a room now full of about twenty couples and floating individuals. The Governor's in conversation with another career diplomat sent out to Montserrat by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office. He's expanding upon his ideas for the development of the

island, though he only has one and a half year's left out of the three to four year stint per location. Then he's rotated to another Embassy - the shrinking bastions of the British Empire.

"... Tourism. That's the ticket these days. Now when I was in West Africa supervising the VSOs out there, tourism was doing wonders to the economy. Of course, that's not your main concern is it Jim? Now if I were Reuben I'd push along with the airport extension, turn the centre of Plymouth into a tourist development area with nice little boutiques, a few cafes, restaurants and fast foods (for the less discerning Americans off the cruise ships). Oh, and with that new prison up on Amersham Estate, that'll free up the old one. The Trust can have that so long as it's a public museum ..."

"That was a lovely opening ceremony you gave at the Trust offices."

"You think so?" The Governor's pleased with this compliment. "Bit of bother with my name on the plaque - the newspapers got hold of it, colonialism and all that. Well, I think that a museum of waxworks of all the pop stars who recorded here would do the trick. There's even the old gallows, we could just leave them standing. There'd be entrance fees of course. What would Treasury coffers make of that?"

The Governor signifies that he's finished his comments, for the moment, and the man from the Treasury opens up: "Anything would do, but for the long-term we need to establish tax paying for everyone, not just the civil servants. Their 60% of the GNP is nothing compared with what those retailers, businessmen and taxi drivers should be paying; no one else quite meets the tax bracket."

"Stiff resistance I suppose. Entirely understandable of course. The trouble is that they've never had to pay anything in the past."

"So they send me out here."

"Good idea though - give the Montserratians the roads, airport, hospital, prison and Parliament. Make a fresh start after Hugo but force them to collect revenue for their upkeep. Still have to drop the civil service numbers. Can we hold off on the completion of the prison and GHQ till local Government's passed the cuts?"

"Ooh. That's going to be nasty. You could be talking about up to 10% of the population."

"Hmm. I'll get back to you on that. I'll sound that out through the usual channels."

The Governor stops discussing diplomacy and resumes practising it as the Crowthers

carry some food through from the kitchen. "Jill ... David ... an exceptionable spread. Arr, David. We were just complimenting you and your lovely ..."

"What's that Sir? Hello Jim. Yes, nice gathering."

The Governor replies, "A bit like the Club on the 'Fish & Chippy' night. Yes, lovely to get the TCOs together at the end of the year. How long left?"

"Fifty minutes by my watch." Jim is back in the conversation. "Not military time though, National Service and all that: 'synchronise watches, what'."

"David ... remember last year?"

"It's all a bit difficult."

The Governor: "Jill won't let him forget drinking 'round the world' last year?"

"I lost a few blanks that night at the Club!" Crowther has resigned himself to some teasing amongst the expatriate community.

"At least that one didn't get out. Though I suppose technically it should have been one hour of European wine, two hours of vodka through the Russian time-zone, and some saki and Jack Daniels before the count-down on rum."

Jim's confused. "No revolver tonight, eh. But that's the wrong way round the world!"

"So we go back again!" His Excellency is in good spirits.

"But do we celebrate on GMT."

"That was four hours ago!"

"You mean we've missed it?"

The anthropologist turns his attention to the other side of his plate which he's been ignoring. A slick, well-groomed man with his wife in an evening gown are picking over a vegetarian mix of samozzas and salad.

The three of them talk about the evening so far and the time zones between Montserrat and Britain. Then they get round to introductions.

"I'm sorry, I don't believe we've met before. I'm Alan Gunn-Jones, this is my wife Sasha."

"Pleased to meet you, I'm Jonathan, Jonathan Skinner." The anthropologist feels embarrassingly like he's out of a Bond movie. "I'm looking at the literature on the island and how it fits in with life on the island, sort of context."

"Hmm. We're trying to decide how they make the vegetable samozzas. Sasha wants to try them out on the children."

"Lucky them," replies the anthropologist. "Are they here for the vacation?" The anthropologist directs the question, with his eyes, to the attractive Sasha.

She's shy and giggly. "I teach them Spanish, French and Geography and we have a tutor for the Sciences."

Alan is more measured and precise with his words: "We couldn't bear to part with them for boarding school." There's a pause for observation of people and each other, and then Alan volunteers his profession. "I'm with the UNDP at the moment; a town planner by trade, I'm designing and implementing the building restrictions in Plymouth and around the island, so that, for example, no new building in Plymouth can be more than four stories in height - that's the height of Cable and Wireless - nor can it detract from the overall aesthetics of the historical core."

"You enjoy it?"

"There's a lot of satisfaction involved with preservation work though I'm meeting with a lot of resistance from the locals whose extension plans I have to sometimes turn down."

"Can't win can you Alan dear," Sasha sympathises.

"And once the legislation's in place?"

"Who knows? Maybe they'll need some qualified professional with a detailed knowledge of the building legislation to deal with the enforcement of the Bill!"

"I always tell Alan that he's writing his own job description," Sasha titters.

On the same theme Alan responds that that joke would be inappropriate in real life.

"Hardly. Well, at any rate, there's always some work to pick up, some agency with funding. That's why one needs to be a familiar face around the island and the region."

Clearly Alan and his wife are here out of duty to his job and necessity to his future activities. They do not fit in with the other guests, as though they lost tickets for their favourite opera, but were happy to settle for a popular music hall performance instead.

Bill and the Governor pass by to refill their whisky sodas.

"... understand ... hold. If they behave like that then we have to treat them like children. Free the trade through the port, break that Chedmond Browne and stop his stupid rag. The next ..."



Bill breaks off the Governor. "Jonathan. I see you've met Alan. Hello Sasha."

Alan returns, "Good evening Bill, how are you? Our frankly excellent Excellency, Frank."

"Just Frank here, please Alan. No need for formalities. Sasha."

"Frank."

They continue on their way, and on the same side of the room Mrs. Crowther begins to play old popular songs on the piano. She needs no music but a pair of bifocals to search the keyboard for notes. Commissioner Crowther lumbers over to the piano, as though trying to reduce his great height so that he doesn't stand out above the gathering crowd of male impresarios.

Alan tells me about George Goward - the man singing a version of *'The Twelve Days of Christmas'* with lines and mimes, French kisses, French maids and French birds laying all under the same pear tree - whilst everyone joins in with the chorus, and the food and table are moved into the kitchen to provide some dancing space.

Bill, Government architect and overseer of island projects, is ready with the toasts and count-down. "Five minutes to go everyone. Fill yer glasses, Sassenachs. Marjory an' I've a few wee songs for you."

On cue, Marjory appears in the circle of guests with the main lines to *'The Bonnie Banks o' Loch Lomond'* clearly written out and pinned to her front and back.

With everyone singing "An' I'll be in Scotland Afore Ye", Marjory and Bill share smiles of melancholy.

From Bill's watch, everyone chants: "Five ... Four ... Three ... Two ... One ... Happy New Year ..."

Someone yells for a toast to the Queen. There's a silence to decide who should give the toast and the Governor steps forward: "A toast, to Her Majesty the Queen. Long may she live and prosper. God Save the Queen."

"God Save the Queen," obey the loyal guests, and reluctant anthropologist.

Barry Manilow is turned back up and wives dance with husbands, lively girlfriends with lively girlfriends whilst their men lay plans to form an island seven-a-side rugby team.

"Nay fucking touch rugby, I'm no playing nowt with fucking fags," says one.



"Can any of the blacks here play rugby?" asks another.

"They all play cricket. The All Blacks! We could play the company on other islands if they can't," informs a third, just over from Barbados.

"Fit as fuck. You should see the size of some of 'em on GHQ."

"Fit to fuck - if you asks me," puns the third one.

"Aye, that's all the liming they think about too. Now, would you get a load of that!"

The first speaker pauses as he turns to the dance floor. "It looks like Bill and Jim are gonna dance in their skirts for us."

The anthropologist turns to observe a new spectacle and finds himself grabbed on the arm again, not by Marjory, but by Bill this time.

"That's it Jonathan. We'll soon show them, dinna worry you'self and nay 'how no's' about it." Bill leads him to the middle of the room, presents him with an attractive Asian girl from Nottingham, and now there's no desire to slip back into the corners of the room. The anthropologist resumes his male mantle and explains a few basic steps and spins. He suddenly enjoys the position of being 'in the know'.

Bill slips on his Scottish Country Dancing tape and leads the action. Jim Duffy, although sounding and looking Scottish has no idea how to dance, nor does that bother him in the slightest. Seeing that spinnings are involved in an Eightsome Reel, Jim twirls around, whooping, careening, a drunken dervish. After stopping and starting the Reel - for Jim to follow, and because he destroyed the dance, knocked down the Christmas tree and disturbed the departing guests - the lessons are suspended and Tom Jones takes the party into the early morning.

At the end of the party, the Thoms and the Duffys help the Crowthers to clean up. And as far as the Crowthers are concerned, the anthropologist is still not a TCO, and is only barely welcome. But what of the Duffys' status? Valerie, a Glaswegian secretary, a friendly, pragmatic blonde, aids Jill with the washing up; Bill and David rearrange the furniture; Jim and the anthropologist stand in a messy corner of the room carrying out token gestures associated with the cleaning process.

"So where'd you learn to dance all that fancy footwork?"

"At university, teaching foreign students, we always had a Ceilidh for them at the end of the course. I thought you were from Glasgow?"

"Aye, I am, but we never had no Ceilidh in the Gorbals."

"I thought all Scots knew the dances. And you've even got a kilt on!" The anthropologist teases and baits the Scot with a grin.

"I'm Scottish by birth, British by conquest, Irish by choice."

"You're more Irish than Scottish? Is that what you mean?"

"Sort of. I come from all over and shouldn't be anywhere, not even here," he replies curiously. "My grandmother left Ireland for New York. My mother migrated the other way and met my father in Glasgow, at the old yards. I've got all the passports by convenience, but as a Catholic I'm a firm Celtic fan."

"And here?"

"Shouldn't even be here. None of us should - those that work for the companies, those of us expats who aren't TCOs," Jim replies with his nose waving in the air, an unmistakable reference to arrogance and assumed class distinctions. "Val does her bit at the Red Cross, a TCO wives' club. This means that grateful people invite her and me to their parties out of gratitude, but they don't know I'm not a TCO until it's too late."

"Forget it. I'm not a TCO myself, felt a bit out of place too."

"This place's died early, most of the lads crashed here after drinking 'round the world' at the Nest. They should be at the Yacht Club by now if you want to catch them."

"Naw. I'm sleeping over at the Thoms," says the anthropologist rolling his eyeballs.

"What was the name of that dance again? The Something-Some Wheel."

"Yeah, sort of. That's what it became." The anthropologist smiles at his private joke. The joke unnoticed, Jim tells the anthropologist about Montserrat: "Fucking artificial cesspit this place is if you ask me. No one does any work: if you tell them to do anything you're a racist; they have no experience of anything other than rebuilding their house after Hugo hit, but if they're doing a big job for us and we tell them the door they've put on is askew, they say 'It works, it's better than I have at home'. I mean, what can you do with that? They try their best but they've got no education, no training, the island's too small for any big experience and the standards are so low that they just don't understand the need for quality."

"Woaw."

The diatribe continues, "All the tools go missing, even between each other - they have to hide their tools whenever they take a break or go home, and that's if they've

decided to come to work at all! So, all good experience for a builder to come and work out here for a few years, you know, to see how things are different.”

“Do you like the place or the people then?”

“Some of the people are just brilliant! Couldn’t do without them, in fact I’ll take a team of the carpenters over with me to St. Kitts when we start work on a new bank there. They’re from Trinidad, four of them; only the foreman’s Montserratian. The rest, well, pigshit. We have to employ 70% local workers, so they give us those blacks from social security who wear sun-glasses indoors, under Malcolm X baseball caps. Never trust a man who wears sun-glasses indoors. Never.”

“It is a bit strange. There’s a number of workers from Montserrat then?”

“Too bloody right. They all call themselves experts, tell me they can do everything and we end up having to sack them for incompetence - laying drains in the wrong places, up-side-down doors, side-ways switches - and then they sue us for racist dismissal. We have to payout - a cut to the lawyer and enough to get them to leave island. Once I had to get \$40,000 on a weekend. I don’t know how I did it!”

The anthropologist has difficulty keeping up with the stream of sentiments and frustrations coming out of Jim.

“It all comes from this small place. I mean, what has it got going for it? Nothing! No raw materials, no resources, no manpower, no middle class, no educated groups; corrupt politicians, grabbing, grabbing, grabbing, it’s becoming like Scotland. That’s why I left. Never been back since working in South Africa. Once voted SNP, a sort of romantic nationalism protest vote in my youth. No. We’re not helping this place, but hey, they’re paying my bills. No; you can keep a colony going in the Antarctic if you keep pumping the money in. But, as soon as it stops then it all collapses. Best thing is to scrap this island, leave it like before it was discovered, no one here then - now you know why. \$500 million on development. Do you know how much that is for less than 10,000 people, less than a town in Britain! That would cause a scandal, eh. But what do you see for it? A hospital, Government Headquarters (when that interfering prick Bill Thom will let me get on with my work and stop expecting miracles with the workforce we’ve got), a prison for the rising drug violence and maybe a runway extension.”

Nervously, the anthropologist looks around for his generous host for the rest of the night. “Watch I,.” he says as Bill’s clearing up nearby.

The ranting spell has been broken. Jim moves away, "Listen Jonathan, nice meeting you. I'm down at GHQ, drop in anytime. I've an office near the entrance - if that prick will let me keep it during the handover," he declares, pointing at Bill.

Three o'clock in the morning, Bill wants to drive home, around the corner, past all the other expat houses grouped together. Marjory wants a New Year's walk and for the sake of a New Year's breakfast by her, Bill and the anthropologist both acquiesce.

### **New Year's Day interlude**

In the afternoon (the morning was slept through), there are hangover jokes and eventually Bill decides to drive the anthropologist back to Plymouth. On the way down he talks about how difficult it is to work with the blacks, but that this island is the 'cushiest number' they've had so far, what with all the perks. "I can't understand it, it's as though they're sucking us dry now because they were slaves then. It's not as though they're not better off here than if they were back in Africa. I mean, I know the place, I've worked there, I know these things. Believe me, they're lucky they're here. Right ho; and you're here too." They pull up in Wapping. "Cheerio the now. Anytime you feel like it, dinna trouble yourself, just come by."

Bill drives off leaving the anthropologist, Jonathan, outside the road-side door of his apartment. Upstairs, above the Emerald Cafe, Jonathan sleeps until he's awoken by the sound of his name arriving through the windows.

"Jo-na-than. Jo-na-than." It's Jonathan's landlady calling from her bedroom window, inconveniently parallel with his.

Miss Cherrie Taylor - an effervescent spinster of seventy, a civil servant who gave the Government 'licks', a Sunday Methodist, a trusted member of every extended family on the island - is shouting another message over and through the heads of the guests at the Emerald Cafe. As usual she's confusing the guests.

"I'M HAV-ING A NEW YEAR PAR-TY AT SE-VEN O'-CLOCK. DON'T FORGET."

Cheekily, as befits the relationship of impudence, Jonathan calls back, imitating her staccato shouts:- "O-K! HO-W COU-LD I?"

"GO-OD. YOU WI-LL D-O THE DRINKS," she reveals with a sly twist and a sneaky smile. Once more she's sprung the trap on the innocent anthropologist - Jonathan.

Cherrie's soirees are friendly groupings of eight or so people including Laine - Cherrie's elder sister who lives on the bottom floor of their large stone house, and Jonathan - who is her endless topic of conversation to guests, purveyor of street and expat information, and source of cultural amusement with his mistakes and *faux pas*. Sometimes Jonathan spends evenings watching television on the edge of her bed whilst she reads his fortune in her worn cards, other evenings they duel over a Scrabble board, hurling lengthy expletives at each other. Tonight, Jonathan ends up buying ice at the supermarket on the seafront behind Cherrie's old yard.

### **Developing Mons'rat the Mons'ratian way**

Jonathan wrings his wet, numb hands, drops the 2lb bag of ice cubes into a cauldron on the balcony, and is introduced to several of the early guests. Once more, one of Cherrie's errands has forced Jonathan to miss the start of an event he wishes to delimit and observe from start to finish.

There's a small brown man with a beard sitting in an armchair. He has one of those recognisable faces so that Jonathan's annoyed that he's missed the general introductions with other people. Now it's too late, too rude to ask his name even of the sisters for fear of appearing to view all blacks as an amorphous and indistinguishable collection, when - so he's told - it's the white people who look all the same.

Serving out aperitifs, Jonathan meets all the guests and exchanges pleasantries with George Piper and - by intuition - his wife sitting quietly next to him; Mary the resource archivist at the Public Library where Jonathan often scans the local shelves; Laine,



sitting opposite the bearded man in aged silence; and the Kagbalas, the only black members of the party - dressed in bright African clothes they stand out amongst the local creole elite. *Though Cherrie often boasted about the free society in the West Indies, where, now, every person, no matter the colour or shade of their skin, was treated equally - I remember her telling me that thirty years ago, only light-skinned West Indians could hold bank accounts. And I could not help but notice that despite the colour equality on Montserrat, it was the more likely to be the established old family which emphasised education, and could afford to pay for off-shore university learning for their children.*

Dr. Kagbala's the island surgeon who left Nigeria with his wife, Ubike, and five children. As usual, Mary is questioning him about life in the unknown homeland that West Indians feel deprived of.

"So that's your tribe in the north. And do you have to marry out into other lineages?" she asks, with eyes fixed upon the three lines running down each cheek - scars of membership to a group, as if to the clan of the cat's whiskers.

"I'm not so sure I follow you?" Always polite, Kagbala replies with a thick accent to his English.

"Well, I mean, I read about aborigine families in Australia and I know of a book about the Nuer by an anthropologist and just wondered ..."

"... if the patterns were the same? The Nuer are far off from Nigeria, why don't you fax them and ask. You do have a fax facility with the library computer don't you?"

Mary's taken aback and silenced by the thought that the Nuer that she's read about may have changed and may easily be contacted. The excitement, mystery and mystique she's attached to the Nuer have disappeared and been replaced with a concern that the Nuer may have read ethnographies about West Indians in general and about her in particular.

Leaving the two of them to iron out their conceptions of history, development, and civilisation, Jonathan turns to Ubike; "Ubike, that's a wonderful hatwrap you have on. Did you make it?"

Smiling and full of humour, Ubike replies, "Thank you. Of course. Jonathan, you think I would advertise some other person's clothes?"



"How is the business going?" Jonathan smiles back and remembers that sometimes Laine sews for Ubike, and Jonathan's other neighbour takes measurement fittings for Authentic Africana fashions.

"Oh, still a bit slow on this island. Orders picked up after the Government House show; my designs still tumble out each day." And Ubike beams at me.

Cherrie, sporting a turquoise sarong, commandeers Jonathan to lay out the dishes: macaroni, chicken, plantains, stuffing cake, salad, garlic bread, carrots and ground coconut, Johnny cakes. Lastly, she brings in the complete corpse of a baby pig, roasted with a sugar-apple in its mouth. There are cries of praise for the delicacy.

"Look at this little piggy straight from the market!" Cherrie cries. "It had to be done up at the baker's oven it's so big."

The family and friends tuck into the meal, sitting in a circle of curious chairs. Franklin and Laine are exchanging pleasantries about St. Kitts where Laine lived with her husband for a year, conceived, and returned to Montserrat. All other conversation is addressed to the group in general.

Cherrie: "I went to the Police Station to complain about the noise down there," throwing a nod to the Green Flash bar. "Jonathan was with me, so I introduced him to the CID Officer from London as my cross." Laughter amongst the group, including Jonathan who's only recently figured out the joke.

She continues, "Of course the man didn't know what to say, and he didn't know what to think. Aiou! He just left his mouth open. So I says to him. 'Young man', I say, 'Young man, do you think I came from the sea so long before your time that you think I am so old? Well, let me tell you something," she pauses mid-stream, "I may be a Montserratian, but I evolved at the same time as you, so if you please be good enough to not think of me as a fish and to close your mouth when I'm speaking with you." More laughter and Cherrie stamps her foot several times in glee at confusing, embarrassing, criticising and silencing a policeman from London, all in one broadside.

"So you got one up on the Englishmen there. Why wasn't that the Commissioner though?" queries Mr. Piper.

"The Commissioner needs a mouthpiece to be heard," quips Cherrie.

Mary turns the topic to colonialism - "why wasn't Winston promoted to Commissioner? There have been West Indian Commissioners in the past. Why not now? Get rid of Commissioner 'Revolver' Crowther, I say."

"Arr, my dear, for that answer you must sound out and fathom Britain's 'Hidden Agenda'." Laine remains silent but Franklin answers Mary. "Who knows what the end of Hong Kong will bring. We're already being bought out by South Africans disliking the demise of apartheid."

Mr. Piper brings his experiences to bear: "I was up at Government House." The group goes silent with the invocation of the Governor's residence. Piper continues, "After the dinner we had drinks brought out to us, and the Governor and I talked about world affairs." Piper knows that he has everyone's attention so he casually stretches, elongating the moment. "I dare say, Montserrat's future was considered by both of us."

"And ..."

"Well, he asked me what I thought about the Chinese yellow people coming to the island, about how the locals would feel."

Mary sucks in her lips and utters an exclamation, "Wha!"

"I told him that WE would be gaining even greater pressure of competition with outsiders on an already small island. He said he would 'bear that observation in mind'. In mind for what I don't quite know. I was just thinking about how the Montserrattians mind the whites just as much as any other."

"Tss. I must get an audience with this new Governor. David Taylor was such a friendly soul. Did you read his letter in the paper?"

Cherrie's thoughts on the granting of a brief audience with the Governor, as she used to be a mighty civil servant, are dampened by Franklin: "Not with this one. Surrounds himself with expats from the projects. This one'll leave the island not knowing a single Montserrattian. No chance of an audience, he hasn't been here long enough to know who you are. They don't brief them like they used to."

"They don't send us the ones that they used to. No class any more. And they think we don't know it. Governor Dawkins still visits the island, sits and plays dominoes with the taxi drivers and he remembers every person's name when they say their hellos." Cherrie passes any possible criticism of herself, from the uncomfortable truth

that she is no longer granted immediate access to the Governor's ear, by unfavourably comparing the Governor with the last three or four who administered the decade.

"Well," Piper starts up again, "I saw the new swimming-pool up behind the House, next to the Administration building. It's all been nicely refurbished.

"At a price. One million pounds I hear!" Mary's educational hackles have been raised. "Why can't they spend that sort of money on the library, or education, or developing an infrastructure like the French do on Guadeloupe? There's no chance that Britain's to let us have independence if we're not even educated in the choice." She sits back in her seat, agitated.

"If they now can't swim in the sea with the rest of us, that's a political sign." Franklin ponders.

At the risk of increasing the intensity of annoyance amongst the group, Jonathan returns to the development issues, "Why isn't Britain helping with the infrastructure? There are lots of development going on all round the island."

"Exactly. Thank you; and from a white man no less." Cherrie claps her hands together.

Again, Mr. Piper, Head of the Montserrat Chamber of Commerce, gains our attention and informs the group:- "He does six laps every morning. That's what our Governor from the Foreign & Commonwealth Office does." We all start to imagine those slow, painful strokes. "Here's what happens on Montserrat, Jonathan: ..."

"Listen to this, put it in your book," interrupts Cherrie.

"Here's what happens on Montserrat, Jonathan: because Montserrat is a British colony it has a Parliamentary system modelled upon the motherland's House of 'Commoners'. You know all this: about Fergus, the Speaker; the five politicians and the constitution we just had imposed upon us by a Governor who then had to leave. Well, not only is this model of democracy ridiculous, but it doesn't work: the population's too small to have all these little political parties aligning and realigning according to family, business, and colour. It doesn't work as there are no salaries, 'so only the wealthy need apply'. And then, the Governor is like the Queen of England, he vets everything and is above the law. This system needs to change. But more importantly, WE need to effect the changes, not the Foreign & Commonwealth Office with their seminar trips all around the world for the loyal and dutiful."

"Fergus is going to Namibia to teach them Parliamentary Democracy," chips in Mary. She's greeted with shushes.

"Now, Britain says it will neither push us towards independence, nor will it stop us. If we want independence, we need a two-thirds majority on the island."

"You mean like devolution in Scotland?" compares Jonathan.

"Yes, sort of, but England doesn't want to lose Scotland and Britain doesn't want to lose her colonies, they're too important loop-holes for banking and trade outside Europe. So, Britain doesn't encourage any move to independence but shows the people how much they rely upon England, how much better they are being a dependent territory ..."

"Even though we can't go and live in the UK and they turn us away because we're black." Mary is angry with these recent changes which Thatcher imposed so that all colonial-born people are a part of the British Dependent Territories with no right of abode in Britain. "Except for the Falklands' people. They can go. 'They're our kin' Thatcher said. They're white. This is racist." Cherrie joins in with Mary.

"If you look at the levels of aid and development which come to this island, it's on the level of hundreds of millions of dollars. But what do you see for all of it with such a small population? Very little local development."

Franklin mutters: "Everything went with Hugo, everything. But Montserratians rebuilt with money sent back from families abroad. This has always happened and when a British worker arrives, they can't believe the lifestyles that the natives lead compared with their own dreary commuting job from Stroud. They don't like us blacks better off than them. We know all that. But they don't know about the separated families; the children who never even met their fathers or brothers ..."

"This aid is all bilateral;" George ignores Franklin, "Give with one hand and take with the other. The money goes from Barclays Bank in London to Barclays bank on Montserrat to pay the expat salaries who take the money back to Barclays Bank in England when they leave. None of it stays here. So with less money than you think, Britain ensures that Montserrat remains dependent."

"A British Dependency, that's 'The Hidden Agenda'," Mary concludes.

"Arr. Now I see. But what can be done about it?" asks Jonathan, the sceptical anthropologist.

‘Education. Education. Education. Educate the young to stand on their own two feet, break the colonial mentality. But the challenge is, independence first to unleash the creative forces of our abilities, self-confidence, resilience, self-sufficiency, or should those come first, then independence? That, my friend, is our scary choice. The young want the first, the old consider the second but doubt the viability of both. Look at the other independent islands, independent to beg to anyone: as a colony, at least we have stability and assurance of assistance from Britain in the case of a natural disaster like hurricane Hugo.’

Faces are radiating earnest inspiration for the long challenge ahead of them. Jonathan realises that each person is a piece on a huge checker board that the taxi drivers play on when they wait for customers: the dimensions are twenty spaces by twenty, and there are teams of counters opposing each other; once the Montserrat team can reach the other side, without giving away too many positions and pieces, then they are ‘crowned’ and their abilities magnified. In their way are the TCO pieces played by the Crown.

The plates are cleared and stacked but conversation continues unabated; dessert waits. Dr. Kagbala, a slight figure, pokes fun at his wife by comparing her fulsome girth with Mrs. Piper’s silent wispishness. “My wife, we feed her to keep her mouth full. When it is as empty as her belly never is, then she can talk the endless talk, and then I am a condemned man.” He gingerly takes her hand with affection.

But, Ubike Kagbala: “You see this figure of bones and death. You see why he is a surgeon. The only people who can stand his presence are people anaesthetised and unconscious. Listen my friend, soon I will return to Africa, leave you with the five children, and as you know, a big woman in Africa is very desirable.” She runs a finger down a scar on his cheek and finishes by poking him on the tip of his nose.

“That brought some colour to his cheek,” jokes Laine.

Franklin joins in too; “Speaking of colour, what do you think of that new building for the Government, eh?”

“Pink! Pink! What do they think it is, an iced-cake Government from a fairy tale?” says Mary.



"Shocking. They built it in an old-fashioned colonial style and paint it pink just to remind us who we are and where we are," continues Franklin.

"That's for tourism too. It's all heritage tourism for the Americans."

"Damn them." Cherrie's annoyed. "We've got no middle class because of them. Instead of growing as a group we competed to be on their invitation lists they drew up when they arrived on island. Now they feel comfortable, they don't invite us and we've no middle class that they have in Antigua and St. Kitts."

"WE are the middle class," adds Mary.

Piper continues to criticise the new Government Headquarters with Ubike and Franklin whilst Dr. Kagbala, Cherrie and Mary consider the new hospital he has to work in. Jonathan bends an ear to both conversations floating around him; Laine dozes.

"I hear that the air-conditioning is the latest technology again."

"Silly. We could have done that ourselves. There's a few qualified at that."

"Of course. Nothing but the best for Montserrat."

"So how's it going to be repaired. They going to fly down an American each time it breaks down?"

"You mean there's no air-conditioning at all. Crazy!"

"Oh, you mean every room in the building has air-conditioning. Why?"

"Their experts are their experts and aren't experts here."

"Yes, and if one person decides to stay at work for one hour then the entire building has to be on. And if there's a failure then no one can go to work at all."

"But that's ridiculous. Why don't they ask any Montserrattians about it?"

"Once I had to pull an appendix. Sweat was everywhere. The spare fan didn't work in the power cut, nor the backup generator. Luckily we were able to smash a hole in a boarded up window, sterilise everything and finish the op. outside. The patient never knew a thing of course!"

"That sounds more like it with the civil service."

"But this is the tropics. How could they do such a thing?"

"We should have been involved in the planning."

The fragmented conversations unite with George Piper's comment which becomes a conclusion: "THIS IS A FIRST WORLD SOLUTION TO A THIRD WORLD



PROBLEM.”

Jonathan takes the left-overs of the pig back into the kitchen. The dog howls outside, so when Jonathan returns he asks Cherrie, “Do you want me to give the pig’s head to the dog?” The conversation stops suddenly.

Cherrie repeats my request, this time to the guests. “Did you all hear what Jonathan asked me? He wanted to know if he should give the pig’s head to the dog!” She bends double as if in pain; she surfaces with tears on her face. She howls, holds her belly, and suddenly everyone’s laughing hysterically at Jonathan - Cherrie putting her arm around Jonathan whilst wiping the tears from her face. “Ooh. Ooh. Jonathan. I swear, you’re always doing this to me. The head’s the delicacy! Ooh dear. Let me sit down. You just bring in the fruit cocktail and the vodka sauce.”

Jonathan never saw anyone ever eat the head of a pig, but thereafter, he never asked if it was a delicacy or not.

### Commentary

John, the student medical worker is on Montserrat because he lost his job in London, his talking-point is that Montserrat is “*a nightmare*” to work on. Frank, the retired administrator and senior development worker, equates development with tourism: for him, Montserrat is a tourist development site. But for others, Montserrat is “*a fucking artificial cesspit*” (Jim) where well paid ‘professional’ expatriates work: for many TCOs Montserrat means a comfortable and high standard of living, if not a trouble-free working environment. Only Bill exhibits qualities of altruism, but these are dampened by his patronising attitude to the indigenous West Indians for whom slavery was a benefit. Can such altruism be attributed to the ODA which defines its purpose as ‘promoting the development or maintaining the economy of a country or territory outside the United Kingdom, or the welfare of its people’?<sup>9</sup> Cynics like Hobart may note that without underdevelopment ‘the West could not represent itself as developed’,<sup>10</sup> and furthermore, that without the public knowledge that Britain is aiding other countries Britain would lose her status in the international community. And, we should not forget that development projects on Montserrat are useful for the

incumbent Montserratian Government who can use the projects in their appeals to the public to be re-elected.

Though not representative of Montserratian reactions, both Mary and Franklin hold sentiments and outlooks which are shared at a certain level. Whereas John considers development to be a series of stages on an evolutionary scale for a progressing society tested by the presence and absence of Peace Corps and VSO workers,<sup>11</sup> Mary has the perspective that development is synonymous with dominance and dependency. In fact, Mary suspects that the development projects on Montserrat are part of Britain's 'hidden agenda' to maintain control of a colony with high standards of care at the hospital, but a poor island infrastructure. Here, I deliberately give space to Mary's comments; 'we should guard against becoming involved in the professional legitimisation of projects (with or without 'hidden agendas') which seem more for the benefit of the developers than for the 'underdeveloped' clients', reads Lewis's warning to other anthropologists.<sup>12</sup>

Mr. Piper has the impression that development workers are arrogant and prejudiced, impressions substantiated by Jim's diatribe. Bill's view combines development experience in Africa with an inability to empathise with a West Indian, 'black' world-view. How aware are TCOs of Montserratian perspectives and responses to the projects, responses which consider the context of the project as well as the shortcomings? Franklin makes sense of the projects out of his ambivalent point-of-view towards (neo-)colonialism and dependency theory: "*the TCO grouping is an elite within the island population which perpetuates relationships of dependency with Britain; Montserrat is an underdeveloped product of capitalist expansion and dominance,*" to paraphrase Franklin's world-view (if that is possible).

Development work on Montserrat is different to development work in many other regions around the world. Developing hospitals, runway extensions, Government buildings, is very different to the agricultural famine relief work of Paul Richards and other development workers which can have immediate, life-saving results. Nevertheless, Richards's assessment of food production in West Africa criticises western development for ignoring the local world-views of participants,<sup>13</sup> just as I

would argue for the inclusion of local world-views - world-views which 'belong' - in the development of Montserrat. Yet, when David Brokensha *et al.* argue that indigenous knowledge should be included when development is considered,<sup>14</sup> is the anthropologist redressing the balance - confronting the rhetoric with the reality of the situation?<sup>15</sup> As a solution, many applied anthropologists simply incorporate the native point of view within the constructed scientific label 'ethnoscience'. This, Dennis Warren claims, is the dialogic solution to development problems, seeing 'peasant's problems 'through their eyes''.<sup>16</sup> Although this ethno-science - local-science - approach contrasts with the global, 'world-ordering' knowledge Hobart criticises at the start of this chapter, seldom does it range further than a brief incorporation or consideration of indigenous knowledge or local perspectives.

According to David Fetterman, ethnography is the continual assessment of contrasting world-views.<sup>17</sup> What this chapter has attempted to show, by juxtaposing development worker and Montserratian conversation-narratives, are some of the contrasting occupations and outlooks - Jonathan the anthropologist, Alan the UNDP worker, Cherrie the retired civil servant: Jonathan introducing himself and memorising the gist of conversations; Alan hungry for samozzas and other development projects; and Cherrie the entertainer who rates herself and her fellow islanders according to the quality and class of the British working on their colony Montserrat ("*They don't send us the ones that they used to*"). For this chapter I abandoned the tape recorder in favour of field-notes: a tape-recorder would not have been appropriate at either dinner party, and, to be sure, development workers would not have been so candid or critical or revealing in their conversations had a microphone swayed in front of them from time to time. I recognise that with this scene, as with the calypso scenes in Prof's den in the forthcoming chapter, the reliance upon a tape recorder or a video camera to capture fully or represent accurately the conversations - let alone the heterogeneous events of the evenings - would have been inaccurate as to the meaning of the experiences, and would have resulted in what Paul Atkinson coins as an 'illusory fidelity' of unreadable and over-detailed, meaning-less textual representations.<sup>18</sup> I do not view this as a sacrifice or a compromise to the situation in which I found myself. In other situations I make use of the tape recorder, but less than I expected because a tape recorder stultifies fieldwork records and numbs fieldwork interactions; nor can

the bland transcription of a taped conversation give an impression in the writing of, say, my un-stated feelings - Jonathan's empathy with the Montserratians at Cherrie's dinner party, and the anthropologist's estrangement from the TCOs: my sense of belonging with the belongers, if you will, my reality.

The development workers are a diverse and experienced constellation with much experience in West Africa and South Africa, and more first-hand knowledge of Africa than the 'Montserratians who label themselves 'African'. The "crowned whites on the island's checkerboard", they have a range of opinions and perspectives about Montserrat - that small island with a tiny population favoured by more development money than any British town back home. So too, their opponents on the same board "perspect" differently, with different world-views, but a similar, shared outlook: Montserrat - where money flows in and out of Barclays Bank without settling; Montserrat - dependent home desperately seeking education to break into the United Nations (not just the TCO circle). This difference between the two constellations is partly to do with the members' place of origin, their colour, but also, in my view, their temporal commitment to Montserrat and her people - short-term and impersonal for the development workers, long-term and partisan for those at Cherrie's who would not hesitate to refer to themselves as 'Mons'rat neaga', though they might use less colloquial language.<sup>19</sup>

On Montserrat, and elsewhere, development work is still being practised without reflexive consideration of indigenous knowledge, perceptions and world-views. This chapter poses the adoption of Rapport's approach to Hobart's problem. This part-solution, part-resolution, of development problems has also shown that different inter-subjective constellations should be recorded in anthropological accounts. No matter how distinct or diffuse they may be, these constellations are temporary, partial and inconstant; hence the need to situate them and privilege them according to Tyler's 'perspectival relativity'.<sup>20</sup> Let me, now, recall the indeterminate anthropological discipline I mentioned in the Preface, so that I might add some more lessons given to us by Lucy Mair and Raymond Firth:<sup>21</sup>

[s]ometimes the anthropologist can do a simple job of interpretation to people who just do not know what the life of the people whom they are seeking to improve is like.<sup>22</sup>

[A]n important part of the anthropologist's job is to expose the difficulties, the contradictions, the conflicts of interest in a situation in order that false hopes of easy solutions should not mislead.<sup>23</sup>

This is the challenge to the anthropologist, but the final words and comments must come from the eloquent natives; in this case, from the Montserratian belongers themselves:

*"What do you think of that new building for the Government, eh? Pink! Pink! What do they think it is, an iced-cake Government from a fairy tale? They built it in an old-fashioned colonial style and paint it pink just to remind us who we are and where we are. That's for tourism too. It's all heritage tourism for the Americans. I hear that the air-conditioning is the latest technology again."*

*"Of course. Nothing but the best for Montserrat."*

*"Every room in the building has air-conditioning. Why? Do you know how expensive that is or how we can repair the latest technology? They going to fly down an American each time it breaks down? And what if one person decides to stay at work for one hour then the entire building has to be on? And if there's a failure then no one can go to work at all?"*

*"But that's ridiculous, this is the tropics. Why don't they ask any Montserratians about it? That's not what we want. We should have been involved in the planning. We have qualified people who can do that."*

**"THIS IS A FIRST WORLD SOLUTION TO A THIRD WORLD PROBLEM."**



## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Some sections of this chapter have been published as 'Conversing Montserrat: Perspectives and wordviews on development and dependence' by Jonathan Skinner (*Arbeitsgemeinschaft Entwicklungsethnologie e. V.*, October 1996: 44-57).

<sup>2</sup> (Fish 1988: 325).

<sup>3</sup> (Rapport 1993: 80, author's emphasis).

<sup>4</sup> (Boissevain 1974: 24). Erving Goffman's 'total institution' is a similar concept, one which stresses the hierarchy of the institution (1987: 11).

<sup>5</sup> (Hobart 1993: 1).

<sup>6</sup> Here, I make use of David Riches's discussion of the nature of power which begins with Max Weber's notion of power as the ability to carry out one's will despite resistance (Riches 1985: 84).

<sup>7</sup> (Good 1994: 140).

<sup>8</sup> (Montserrat Dept. of Tourism 1993: front cover).

<sup>9</sup> (Overseas Development Agency 1994: 1).

<sup>10</sup> (Hobart 1993: 2).

<sup>11</sup> Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) is a British Organisation which arranges for skilled British volunteers to work overseas, often assisting local Government projects in return for accommodation and a living allowance. The American equivalent is the Peace Corps.

<sup>12</sup> (Lewis 1988: 378).

<sup>13</sup> For Richards (1985: 116), a prime example is the introduction of agricultural techniques and strains of crops without considering the social implications: many high-yielding crop varieties associated with the 'Green Revolution' require additional inputs of water and chemicals which are only available to the wealthy farmers who flood markets with harvests which the poor farmers cannot compete with.

<sup>14</sup> (Brokensha & Warren & Werner 1980: 4).

<sup>15</sup> (Hirabayashi & Warren & Owen 1980: 354).

<sup>16</sup> (Warren & Meehan 1980: 318).

<sup>17</sup> (Fetterman 1987: 344).

<sup>18</sup> (Atkinson 1995: 13).

<sup>19</sup> Such a temporal division might go some way in explaining the troubled status of the 'snowbirds' - residential tourists who visit the island regularly over a lengthy period of time (or those who settle on Montserrat) and, controversially, come to regard themselves as locals, 'bang waata' belongers?

<sup>20</sup> (Tyler 1986: 127).

<sup>21</sup> For a perceptive piece of writing about anthropology and development in the 1990s, see 'Anthropology and the development encounter: the making and marketing of development anthropology' by Arturo Escobar (*American Ethnologist*, November 1991: 658-682).

<sup>22</sup> (Mair 1957: 7).

<sup>23</sup> (Firth, *Human Organization*, Fall 1981: 193).



## Student recalls volcano island ordeal

A ST. ANDREWS University post-graduate student yesterday gave an account of his last few days on the Caribbean island of Montserrat, which for some time has been under threat from a volcanic eruption - and, more recently, from a hurricane.

Jonathan Skinner (25) described his ordeal as "pretty frightening."

He is now back in St. Andrews, where he is completing his studies in social anthropology.

Jonathan, from Bristol, had been on the island since October as part of his studies.

He had been due to return to Scotland later this month but the increasing fears that the volcano could erupt at any time prompted him to shorten his trip.

The Chances Peak volcano has been spewing dust and debris for more than six weeks, forcing many inhabitants to move to other areas away from the immediate danger.

Jonathan said yesterday, "the first indication that there was a problem came in July, with a strong smell of sulphur.

"Over the ensuing days there were loud rumblings and they were followed by earthquakes. Smoke could clearly be seen coming from the mountain.

"The series of earthquakes got worse and several buildings developed cracks.

"It was very worrying to be walking along a supermarket aisle and then suddenly see the shelves start to sway back and forward.

"Ash was falling continually and everything was coated."

Jonathan's rented apartment was at the foot of the peak and he had a perfect view of the activity, with smoke belching from the top continually.

"Initially we were told we would be given a 24 to 36-hour warning if the volcano was about to erupt. However, that time-scale was reduced to only six hours. I eventually couldn't sleep or eat and the situation became unbearable. I decided then to leave," he said.

He brought back only a few belongings, leaving money in the bank there and also most of his clothes.

Although glad to be away from the island, he is keen to return once the crisis is over. He said, "I was very warmly accepted by the local people and made a lot of friends."

Jonathan graduated from St. Andrews in 1993.

His studies on the island involved interviewing inhabitants and asking how they perceived their own nationality.

(Anon., *The Courier and Advertiser*, 6th September 1995: 4, no other references available)

## Chapter Four - Rum & coke and calypso: explicit social commentary in private and public spaces<sup>1</sup>

Indignant, he replies, "Boy! Boy! Me caan believe me ears! A wha' you mean by dis - 'So Mr. Greenaway, what is calypso?' Calypso. Calypso! Calypso is social commentary ya know. What else it be?"

I try another tack: "So you singin' 'bout the island den, Mr. Greenaway?"

"Dat's right, dat's right. But listen, look at me shop, what me call it?"

"Top Secret's," I answer.

"Dat's right, dat's right. Nobody call me Mr. Greenaway - me gotta name 'aven't I? Top Secret's me name. Dat's wha' me always bin called. Only de Government calls me Mr. Greenaway."

It's night, but only now do Mr. Greenaway's shades come off. Top Secret leaves his Fedora perched upon his Afro. I've asked another dumb tourist question, but now I've caught his interest. He sticks his thumbs behind his braces so I volunteer more ignorance: "Why 'Top Secret' den? How you get dat name?"

Top Secret replies with a knowledgeable "Arrr."

He pulls his braces, composing himself for his story.

"Arrr, well. Me build during de day, someone look after de store during de day -- ¿hola, qué pasa amigo?"

An old Spanish speaker from Puerto Rico, a man in a hair net, wanders by and takes a seat outside the store. He is oblivious to Top Secret's greeting.

We both shrug at each other.

"Where was we now? Arrr, yes, dat's right, me name. Right, well, me drivin' taxis 'fore de business, an' you know, some people dey waan fu keep t'ings secret like ..."

My thoughts turn to contraband, smuggling, boot-legging?

"... Yeah, dat's right," Top Secret continues. "Me pick dem up and take dem to places to meet others."

"Rendezvous?" I volunteer.

"Yeah, dat's it, like. You know de kinda t'ing: a man an' a woman, gettin' togeder widout others in de know. Yes man, dey waan t'ings Top Secret."

"Arrr, right. I get it." I accidentally repeat Top Secret's speech.

"Dis is me firs' time calypsonian. Me wrote de lyrics by de till, an' some o' de boys, we jam de tune togeder real nice. Somet'ing for de kids to sing to, dat's right. Come an' listen to dis."

I venture an intelligent guess: "'Tropical Gal'?"<sup>2</sup>

"Dat's right ..." Top Secret leads us into a corner of his store where a cassette player rests. He plays 'Tropical Gal' for me:

Tropical gal - where you come from

You look so neat

Dress so sweet

Tantalising man

Always in de latest fashion

Yet still you work for no one

Like you have a plan

To rob down every man<sup>3</sup>

Inside de store, Top Secret sings along to dis firs' verse he has on tape. He then explains this tale of rampant women roaming the streets with STDs:<sup>4</sup> a man sets up a date; the woman Elsa's always late; they meet in the quiet south of the island. I get to join Top Secret with the chorus - catchy and colloquial:

You're a jig-saw

Or a power - saw

A - trick saw

You gal Elsa

If you want me money - wuk fu um

I must take de honey - wuk fu um  
 You sexy - wuk fu um  
 You think you've fool me - wuk fu um  
 You can't even wine  
 You can't even grine - gal  
 You can't even wine  
 You can't even grine - gal  
 You can't even grine - gal  
 Come better than dat  
 Come better than dat<sup>5</sup>

A chorus-line gal must use her body to best effect: if she expects to get paid then she has to work for it; to try better, to do better. *'Tropical Gal'* is a calypso song considering the sexual dynamics of male-female relations from a male perspective. Top Secret also has another calypso, *'Don't Rock The Boat Dada'*.<sup>6</sup> This is a more focused commentary upon recent political developments on Montserrat concerning Neville Tuitt, commonly known as Dada, who holds one of the crucial opposition votes in the House of Parliament. When fellow member for the Government in opposition, Ruby Wade, introduced a motion for the opposition, Dada compromised his critical stance towards Chief Minister Reuben Meade. Dada was conscripted to the Government side and was told by Justin 'Hero' Cassell - noted calypsonian and Government Public Relations Officer - to continue to toe the line, for it was in Hero's favour, and now Dada's. The second verse and the chorus run:

Hero in the front seat driving  
 Dada in the back seat hiding  
 Yes they compromising  
 And this what they were saying

Chorus:        Don't rock the boat - Dada  
                   Don't rock the boat - Dada<sup>7</sup>

### Calypso as social commentary

Top Secret is adamant in his understanding of calypso as 'social commentary', an opinion or definition shared by other calypsonians I spoke with on Montserrat. These two songs are similar to some calypsos by the Mighty Sparrow, an international calypsonian from Trinidad.<sup>8</sup> Mighty Sparrow, accepted as an international King of Calypso, is a master of his lyrical message; his songs confirm Top Secret's message that calypso is 'social commentary'. Sparrow has a well-known song '*Sell de Pussy*',<sup>9</sup> a bawdy tale about an unemployed boyfriend who persuades his girlfriend to sell her 'pussy cat' - a cat which she's had 'since she born', big and lazy and not being put to good use. It is only in the last line of the tale, when the boyfriend finds no work, that this lyrical parable of prostitution on his home island of Trinidad becomes disambiguated with the line '[s]ince ah can't get no work she continue working she trade'. Similarly, another of Sparrow's calypsos, '*Wood in the Fire*',<sup>10</sup> plays upon West Indian words and dialects: 'wood' refers to the penis and deepens the interpretations possible with a song about male sweet-talk and engorged promises followed by sour relations and languorous realities. Both of Sparrow's calypsos are social commentaries upon Trinidad society, just as Top Secret, on Montserrat, describes the calypso genre as 'social commentary'. Sparrow's '*Sell de Pussy*'<sup>11</sup> and '*Wood in the Fire*',<sup>12</sup> and Top Secret's '*Tropical Gal*',<sup>13</sup> are sexually explicit carnal commentaries about the society around them. Another of Sparrow's 'social commentary' songs pokes fun at the colonial Governing bodies - '*Governor's Ball*',<sup>14</sup> for example, describes a crazy woman jumping the wall to the Governor's guarded grounds, just so that she could 'shake she waist / [i]n the Governor face'<sup>15</sup> and thus embarrass the British.

So we hear that calypso is social commentary. Like the barbarian poetry by Dr. Fergus and the other Writers' Maroon members, calypso on Montserrat is a medium and mode of social expression, of social situations, social issues, ills and opinions. Calypso is explicitly a form of social commentary, and calypso as social commentary can be very explicit in its content. Calypsonians sing their realities. This chapter examines calypso on Montserrat by presenting examples of its use in private and in public - in the

neighbour's den, on the Festival stage, and in the local newspaper. The multiple facets of calypso require a range of representative techniques to convince you that calypso evokes Montserrat place and Mons'rat neaga. Above, I have illustrated the calypsonians' understanding of calypso as social commentary, and I gave just one local reading of the calypso messages. Below, I explain what calypso is understood to be, and I then go on to explore calypso's social, political and carnal nature. At the end of this chapter I give a lengthy ethnographic example of the personal importance of calypso; this is illustrated by an evening of calypso in private company as opposed to calypso on a stage.

Local history supports the idea that calypso originated on Trinidad and spread throughout the English-speaking Caribbean, becoming a part of the local culture on many of the islands such as Montserrat. 'Calypso verses are witty and humorous and mirror popular social attitudes on personal, social, economic and political problems, or philosophise, teach and appeal to the social conscience'.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, Olive Lewin goes on to note that in the 19th century all Trinidad songs making pointed social commentaries ended with the words 'sans humanité' to absolve the singer from responsibility for their risqué remarks: such was the candour of the calypsonian; such were the comic taunts of the unconstrained calypso. Whereas pre-glasnost Russians circulated social opinions and commentaries on home-printed samizdat sheets, pre-independence Trinidadians criticised colonialism and local Government from the calypso stage. With impunity, Sparrow taunted American GIs brought to Trinidad during her oil boom, celebrating their departure with lyrics - '[i]t's the glamour boys again / [w]e're going to rule Port of Spain'.<sup>17</sup>

With their distinctive calypso titles, singers can assume another personality from themselves. The names which they are given, or create for themselves, often suit aspects of their personality. They are more than stage names for they become nicknames and are associated only with the particular calypsonian. Whereas a writer might use a *nom de plume* in the newspapers to write unknown, with impunity, a calypsonian has a calypso name which is used on and off stage. Though the calypsonian is clearly identifiable, the calypso name - a projection of his persona - allows the calypsonian to absorb criticism as a singer without it affecting his character,



absolving the calypsonian from punishment by those targets of his satirical gibes. In addition, the timing of the subversion is significant: a calypso competition on Montserrat is held at Carnival time (Christmas on Montserrat) - at a symbolically liminal time between one year and another. This is a time when disorder - anti-structure - is permitted in the volatile and lyrical recapitulation of the year. To use Victor Turner's symbolic terminology, this is an example of social drama taking place at a symbolically liminal time between one year and another, bringing about a sense of *communitas* amongst the participants (the calypsonians and spectators).<sup>18</sup>

As social commentaries, the calypsos consider all manner of social, sexual, and political topics. Drawing upon calypso's non-liable dispensation, calypso's lyrical licence, Barbados calypsonian Mighty Gabby sang a controversial song, 'Jack', at the 1982 Crop Over Festival in Barbados:<sup>19</sup>

I used to sell coral and lime  
 But Jack insists  
 That is a crime  
 Now when I see the police face  
 I run in haste with my briefcase  
 Cause Jack don't want me  
 To bathe on my beach<sup>20</sup>

On Barbados, so John Patton writes, this song galvanised public attention to the issue of the right of access to beaches. Here, Mighty Gabby portrays the role of a beach vendor unable to sell on his island's beaches. The song hit a cultural nerve by articulating populist local sentiments which resented the informal social apartheid operated by all-inclusive resorts restricting access to beaches which are public only below the high-water marks. 'Jack' refers to Jack Dear, Attorney-at Law and Chairman of the Barbados Tourist Board in the early 1980s. He was introducing wardens to police the beaches so that locals could not harass female tourists; and 'Jack' was representing resort hotels in their effort to extend their property rights to - and beyond - the beach high-water marks. 'The effects of such a proposed ruling', Patton argues, 'would have restricted or virtually eliminated beach access by local

people.<sup>21</sup> Mighty Gabby's song won the Road March Title for 1982, and Mighty Gabby was fêted as a calypso star. Mighty Gabby was expressing a major social problem on Barbados as well as other Caribbean islands. 'Like an alien / In we own land' was the chorus line to 'Alien', the winning calypso of the 1994 Carnival King competition in St Lucia sung by Mighty Pep and written by Rohan Seon, a similar social commentary about indigenous exclusion.<sup>22</sup> Calypsonians on Montserrat do not have such strained relations with tourists to draw upon, yet, without personal sanction, they do have a wealth of island material to draw upon; there are always annual scandals which can be expressed in what Gordon Rohlehr has described as 'the music of the masses'.<sup>23</sup>

Calypso can be just as controversial on Montserrat as anywhere else. Let me give you an example. Herman Francis is a school teacher (a civil servant for the Montserrat Government) and a popular calypsonian known as 'Cupid' or 'Q-pid'. Always a serious contender for the Calypso King title, Cupid entered the 1987 competition with the song 'What's Inside de Box',<sup>24</sup> (I explain the nature of the calypso context in the next section). 1987 was an exciting calypso competition year, one in which the current monarch, Justin 'Hero' Cassell, and the former monarch, Everton 'Reality' Weekes, were not competing - between them they had won the title for the past eleven years.<sup>25</sup> Cupid's song satirised a controversy surrounding the re-election of the People's Liberation Movement (PLM) led by John Osborne in the 1987 General Election: nine respectable Montserratians signed affidavits to the effect that the names of the candidates had not been printed in the correct order on all the ballot papers, thereby arousing suspicions as to the legitimacy of the ballot count. Justice Albert Redhead was flown in from Antigua and was persuaded by a Crown legal representative (Attorney General) defending the electoral officials such as Howard Fergus (Supervisor of Elections) not to open the boxes and examine the ballot papers. The boxes remained closed, even when the Attorney General later decided to campaign - less vigorously in the eyes of *The Montserrat Reporter's* Editor - for the election boxes to be opened, and the case of the suspicious ballots resolved.<sup>26</sup> Cupid's song repeatedly ran these lines in its chorus - 'What's in the Box, Redhead? / Redhead, open the box'.<sup>27</sup> It was banned from being played by Radio Montserrat, the Government-run radio station, whilst, ironically, the song was passed on to the very same Attorney

General for a ruling.<sup>28</sup> One verse expressed criticism for the culprits and for the democratic process on the island:

Some got promise, others got threats  
 I hear some even sold their 'X'  
 Governor needs to investigate  
 The culprits, they must not escape  
 True democracy must be upheld  
 Any breaching must be repelled<sup>29</sup>

Another verse more explicitly referred to the shenanigans of the National Development Party (NDP) which had planned an election eve 'rum and bull water fête' which had to be prohibited by the island's Police Commissioner because it contravened prohibitions forbidding the 'treating' of electors immediately before and after an election.<sup>30</sup>

This new party promise  
 To uplift the standard of politics  
 But in order to cope with the pressure  
 They put their plans right down in the gutter  
 Transporting people all around  
 From St. John's right up to Long Ground  
 Commissioner had to use the law  
 To stop their sharing of bull water.<sup>31</sup>

It is interesting to note that the only sanction available for a calypsonian and his song, is to ban it from the Government-run air-waves. Cupid's song was not played, just as two years earlier ZJB Radio withheld airplay of 'Long Grass',<sup>32</sup> another of Cupid's calypsos which, then, was directed at one of the columns in *The Montserrat Reporter*. In addition, the reported responses to the informal ban of Cupid's 'What's Inside de Box'<sup>33</sup> are telling indications as to the perceived nature of calypso. David Edgecombe, Editor of *The Montserrat Reporter* and critic of the PLM,<sup>34</sup> questioned the ban, playing upon Montserratian dialect, or nation language, and standard English - 'Why is the regime, to use a lovely Monglish phrase, so touchous bout de box?'<sup>35</sup> Edgecombe

continues:

Q-Pid is exercising his artistic right to explore an issue which affects and is the concern of thousands of people. If anything, in this age of jam & wine, he should be congratulated for so consistently selecting themes of greater substance. For choosing subject matter of relevance, which so closely touch on what it is like to live on Montserrat in the 1980s.<sup>36</sup>

Q-Pid, himself, had this to say about the nature of calypso when interviewed about his song's disadvantage as an unknown in the calypso competition:

[w]e need to go back to the roots of calypso. It is an art form which has traditionally been used to reflect and comment on the lives of people socially and politically.<sup>37</sup>

Despite all the controversy, Q-Pid eventually finished as first runner-up to Cepeke, the new Calypso Monarch of Montserrat 1987/1988.<sup>38</sup> He failed to gain the crown that year.

'Calypso, the commonest song-form of the Caribbean' - so local cultural artist Ann Marie Dewar states:

is one of the most communicative forms of music, enabling the composer to comment on any situation with a freedom of expression and language. [...] Calypsos as sung by local calypsonians are now locally composed, and while some simply invite listeners to join in the Christmas merriment, to "jam" and "shake up you' wais", most are true commentaries on local and regional topics.<sup>39</sup>

Calypso song topics generally attempt to subvert dominant forces. So too is the chosen linguistic form of expression. Dewar draws attention to the freedom of the calypsonians' use of language, Edgecombe to the hybrid use of Monglish - a mixture of

English and Montserratian. Both refer to the question of 'nation language': whether West Indian English is a pidgin English<sup>40</sup> - 'a debased dialect',<sup>41</sup> or a language in its own right. Discussing 'nation language' in the use of dub poetry,<sup>42</sup> Angrosino points out that since the 1970s, West Indians have denounced their forced adoption of a standard language such as English as a damaging form of imperialism. 'Nation language' has thus become 'a potent symbol of a nascent consciousness of an identity separate from that of the old colonial "metropole"'.<sup>43</sup> The first-class calypsonian Alphonsus Cassell promotes the validity of the nation language of Montserrat in his calypso '*Montserrat English*',<sup>44</sup> perhaps a response to attitudes such as those expressed in this delightfully written letter to *The Montserrat Mirror* in 1967 which, unfortunately (grammatically speaking), tries to complain about both the teachers and the teaching of English at primary school level on Montserrat:

[w]hy cannot these primary school teach English? Because they do not speak English themselves. They speak Montserratian, which is a garbled patois completely divorced from - or unaware of - the basic rules of English grammar. Granted that most of their pupils use this patois, and that the teachers themselves were brought up in it - but what are they being paid to teach - patois of the Queen's English? To teach proper English, as spoken and written by educated English people, the teachers themselves must know, and be at home in, the English language.<sup>45</sup>

Dewar explains that '*Montserrat English*' is a rebuttal of such sentiments, 'to all who think that Standard English is the only "correct language" and who scold and scorn those who speak dialect.'<sup>46</sup> Arrow deliberately oscillates between Standard and Dialect English, explaining to his listeners his pride in Montserrat English which is a part of his pride in Montserrat and her culture. He begins:

People think that it's wrong  
 To talk real Montserratian  
 They say it ain't right - gramatically

Day can't find them words in no dictionary  
 Call it bad language  
 Despising we heritage  
 But don't care if dey call we foolish  
 Dis is Montserrat English<sup>47</sup>

Beginning in Standard English, the verse develops in dialect with the use of 'dey' instead of 'they' ('dey call'), and the unorthodox grammatical use of 'we' instead of 'our' ('we heritage') or 'us' ('we foolish'). The chorus skilfully emphasises the argument for a Montserratian nation language by exemplifying some common dialect expressions which an audience from the motherland would have difficulty comprehending (I have translated the expressions in brackets):

Gee me lee - wha you ah yete dey	(Give me a little of what you are eating there)
Dat ah wa we just say	(That is what we just said/that is how we say it)
Pick um up - han um gee me	(Pick it up and give/hand it to me)
Dats de Montserratian way	(That's the Montserratian way)
Com - ma sisah - fetch me de poh	(Come here/my sister, get/hand me the potty)
Wan pain na me belly yah so so	(I have a pain in my belly right here) <sup>48</sup>
Dis is Montserrat culture	
We'll be proud of it forever	
Dis is Montserrat culture	
We'll be proud of it forever <sup>49</sup>	

In his most popular calypsos, Fergus writes, Arrow is a part of the national conscience, 'warning against profligate squandering of the landed patrimony in *'Hold on to Your Property'*, the upholder of creole language in *'Dis is Awe Culture'*, the celebrator of national resilience in the face of vicious adversity in *'Man Mus' Live'*.<sup>50</sup> In Montserratian dialect, 'um' stands for 'it' - an important difference with Standard English for the proud dialect speakers on Montserrat who can thus use dialect as a distinctive and exclusive feature of their identity, one which they know that visitors and tourists have difficulty in fathoming.<sup>51</sup>



Like reggae songs - with their disclosure and affirmation of ghetto values, concerns and discontentment in Jamaica - these calypso songs are concerned with resistance and the subordination of domination. Let me repeat here some of the Caribbean history which declares that this musical genre originated on Trinidad and Tobago in the 18th and 19th centuries.<sup>52</sup> With the emancipation of slavery (1834), slaves in Trinidad's capital, Port of Spain, came to dominate and overturn the white minority's celebration of Lent. The former slaves brought African songs, dances, instruments and customs to a sedate religious holiday. They introduced night-time processions through the streets featuring stick fighters (*batoniers*), accompanied by *kalindas* - men who sang obscene songs to encourage their favourite fighters. Kalindas were expected to rally crowds to the side of their batonier, and to improvise insults against his opponents. They were the early calypsonians which the white ruling classes were unable to suppress. Following regular riots between blacks and whites, the Peace Preservation Act was passed in 1884: an attempt to quell this annual celebration of black liberation by banning the use of the African drum.

### **Calypso as carnival performance**

The ban failed as processionists/percussionists improvised a beat by striking bamboo tubes, blocks of wood, strips of metal, or the ground ahead instead of the emotive African drum. The carnivalesque festival of disorder remained an annual event and by 1900 it had turned into a masquerade event of 'bands' of Port of Spain neighbourhoods dressed up in various costumes and disguises. And in this way calypso continued - as a means of social protest, and class and ethnic struggle<sup>53</sup> - and calypso developed, as individuals took to satirising society: releasing topical songs through the year, popularising them for the Carnival; competing against each other in calypso tents, and attracting tourists to the island; maintaining a vocal position in 'Trini' society right up unto the 1990s with calypso commentaries about the 1990 coup.<sup>54</sup> Elsewhere in the English-speaking Caribbean, Chris Searle and Gail Pool have examined the role of calypso in the Grenada Revolution (1979-1983) showing that '[a]n important aspect of the revolutionary culture is its language', a technique for

mass mobilisation, and a way of expressing the cultural power of the people.<sup>55</sup>

Calypso - capoeira with the kick in the song rather than the foot<sup>56</sup> - and Carnival were exported and diffused throughout the Caribbean, especially to the English-speaking islands of the Eastern Caribbean. There, each island adopted and adapted a distinctive hybrid version of Carnival such that Carnival has become 'a symbol of national culture'.<sup>57</sup> The English-speaking island, Nevis, celebrates Culturama at the end of July and the beginning of August:<sup>58</sup> the island Montserrat holds Festival over Christmas and the beginning of the New Year. Both islands converge their respective national cultures with calypso competitions and morning J'Ouvert Jump Up dancing in the streets from sunrise to sunset; however, amongst the Cultural Pageants, street fairs and International Artistes Shows, the island programmes diverge. Whereas Nevis has a self-contained week of Culturama from Wednesday to Wednesday which it has organised since 1974, Montserrat holds a Festival Queen Show instead of Nevis's Miss Culture Talent Contest; on Montserrat there is also carol singing, and a combination of Christmas and New Year celebrations. Finally, on Montserrat the calypso competition has three heats: in 1994 the Calypso Eliminations opened the Festival Season on 2nd December, the Semi-Finals were held a fortnight later on 16th December, and the finals occurred another fortnight later on 30th December. One band, composed of bass and acoustic guitars, drums, synthesiser and a section of trombones and trumpets, plays for all the calypsonians on Montserrat. Each of the thirty or so Eliminees have two songs for two rounds of singing and performing to a listening and dancing audience. Half that number will go on to the Semi-Finals which will narrow the number down to ten calypsonians in the Finals.

In the second-round, the calypsonian is allowed to enter an alternative song to his original selection - as with all the songs, they cannot have been sung in any previous year, yet they can have been released on the radio during the 1994 year. In practice, calypsonians will try to keep exciting the crowds by improvising some of their lyrics, by dressing in glittering costumes, or by acting out the story-line of the calypso in the finals. Only the King of the previous year's Festival is exempt from competition. He alone enters the competition, to defend his crown, in the Finals. The more popular the calypsonian, the more well-known the calypso, the greater the support at the

competition and thus the greater the chance of winning the competition: the judges of the competition allocate marks for Lyrics (0-35), Melody (0-20), Rendition (0-25), Presentation (0-5), Performance (0-15).<sup>59</sup> As Calypso king, the calypsonian will receive a pair of holiday flight tickets to another island, a trophy, \$5000EC (£1500),<sup>60</sup> celebrity status around the island, and they will represent Montserrat at the inter-island Calypso Competitions. All the other competitors receive financial prizes ranging from \$150EC at the Eliminations, to \$400EC at the Semi-Finals, and between \$1000-1600EC at the Finals. Though not necessarily the winning song, the most popular calypso to dance and sing to becomes the Road March Song, to be played through the streets - Glanville 'Spoiler' Roach's '*Wet me dong*' in 1994/5 (with its chorus: 't'row water pon me / look how happy me be', including catchy expressions about being drenched - 'Oh Lord / wet me dong / sappin').<sup>61</sup>

Though Culturama on neighbouring Nevis is only 20 years old, the Montserrat Festival has been running since 1962 when Justin 'Hero' Cassell won the first of his thirteen crowns. His brother Alphonsus 'Arrow' Cassell competed from 1968 - 1974 before going to Trinidad to make his fortune as 'Soca Ambassador to the World'<sup>62</sup> with the international album 'Hot Hot Hot'.<sup>63</sup> Both calypsonians practised in the junior high-school competitions and promoted calypso on an island whilst it was being deluged by (The Beatles's producer) George Martin's business associates: at his AIR Studios, Stevie Wonder cut a version of '*Ebony and Ivory*', Duran Duran recorded '*Rio*', Elton John recorded '*Jump-up*' and Boy George, Paul McCartney, Sting, and the Rolling Stones all cut records.<sup>64</sup>

Thus, we can say that music has always been important on Montserrat, be it 'Fife and Drum' for the Masquerade dancers, 'Soca and Dance Hall' for the all-night Jump-Ups, 'Reggae and Ragga' for the Rastas, 'Hip-hop and Techno' for the AUC students, 'Gangster Rap' for the street corner posse. Calypso, however, maintains a special place of its own on the island. Exempting 'Bob Marley and The Wailers', calypso is the only musical form which a wide spectrum of Montserratians share and identify with. Calypso is egalitarian in the sense that any person - of any age, colour, or gender, or level of literacy - can enter the Eliminations with a song;<sup>65</sup> calypso is traditional in the sense that it has a history which most will be intimately aware of, a

history created by friends and colleagues who chronicle the social history of the island; calypso is contemporary in the sense that each performance lyricalises the present social concerns; and along with Festival, calypso is 'bacchanal', a period of confusion, disorder and scandal when the facade of public life is collapsed by the earthy realism of calypso commentaries.<sup>66</sup>

### **Calypso as expressive performance**

On Montserrat, Fergus mentions that Carnival was proposed in 1958 but postponed for four years as opposing individuals resisted the introduction of 'calypso and cutlass' from cosmopolitan Trinidad to the placid Emerald Isle.<sup>67</sup> According to *his* history of Montserrat, the island was already undergoing irreversible change with the success of the struggle to achieve adult suffrage in 1952, and the rise in strength of the unions who worked against the centuries-old stranglehold of the plantocracy landowners. Many of the calypsonians consider themselves to be drawn from 'the working class' on the island - taxi drivers, airport luggage handlers, Cable & Wireless employees, the Seaman's Union, farmers and traders.<sup>68</sup> And, no doubt, he would argue that calypso has entered the collective memory and conscience of the islanders; phrases, tunes and songlines are in constant use in conversation and local interaction: Top Secret's 'come better dan dat' is a well-worn put-down; 'Mons'rat neaga' (Montserratian folk) from Teknikal's '*A News Dem A Look*'<sup>69</sup> is an all-inclusive reference similar to 'all-a-we' (all of us), yet it plays upon the slave legacy and present colonial condition.

Considered an art form, calypso places calypsonians into the category of cultural artists, heritage brokers accounting for the highlights of each year and each decade, beginning, historically, with the Trade Union dances (where the only sound systems were in use) and the 1962 Christmas Festival Show.<sup>70</sup> From the 1960s, nearly every year, there were songs and scandals concerning calypsos, calypsonians, the preservation of local traditions and customs, cultural and national identity, social and political and environmental caustic satires and lyrical narratives. By the 1990s, calypsos were all rated according to four criteria: Lyrics, Melody, Rendition,

Presentation, and Performance.<sup>71</sup> The performance of the calypso has remained a key element, one which can make or break the success of the calypsonian and their song - I have already mentioned Q-Pid's fear that the loss of radio airplay of '*What's Inside de Box*'<sup>72</sup> would hamper the success of the song on the competition nights because the public would not be familiar with it. No doubt many of the calypsonians had been to some of the Calypso Workshops facilitated by the Government's new Division of Culture: one such workshop specified similar criteria for judging: Lyrics (poetic/literary, rhyme, theme development, imagery) - 35%; Melody (originality, effectiveness, retention, catchy, arrangement with lyrics) - 35%; Rendition (voice clarity, diction, tempo, key, phrasing) - 20%; Presentation ('[t]he ability of the contestant either through movement, attire, stage presence, audience communication, etc., to dramatise the theme/message of his/her calypso') - 10%.<sup>73</sup> The unknown quantity, then, lies with the performance of the calypso in front of a vocal crowd of familiar faces.

The calypsonian, described by Patton as 'a voice for pent-up feelings, frustrations, and attitudes of the people affected by social and economic problems',<sup>74</sup> produces calypsos which are social and symbolic actions. In the moment of performance, when performer is accountable to audience, the calypso articulates and symbolises the thoughts and values of the audience, and 'becomes the means for defining and redefining issues of central importance to the shared cultural world of performer and audience'.<sup>75</sup> It is on the stage that, we might say after Richard Bauman, the calypso verbal performance becomes '*constitutive* of the domain of verbal art as spoken communication'.<sup>76</sup> In the calypso contests, the audience and judges need to identify with the calypso performance (lyrics, rendition, and all). The calypso and calypsonian fail if the audience does not feel that the calypso is 'speaking' to them. In 1987 and 1990 the calypsonians Mighty Trini and Denyse Plummer, respectively, were jeered and bombarded with rolls of toilet paper and orange skins by unruly crowds attending the preliminary rounds of the Trinidad Calypso Monarch Competition. Keith Warner explains these reactions to calypsonians because of 'the feeling that calypso is the exclusive province of the black section of the population', and Mighty Trini was from a Syrian family, and Denyse Plummer was a white woman born on Trinidad 'venturing into what is virtually a black man's territory'.<sup>77</sup> In these two situations, the



predominantly 'black' audience did not identify with the calypsonians' ethnicity. These situations are rare; for Patton - who treats public discourse as a rhetorical text - the usual 'shared meaning' fails due to a breakdown in the rhetorical signature between 'rhetor - text - audience'.<sup>78</sup> During the Montserrat calypso competitions there do not appear to be instances of sex discrimination against the female calypsonians (Calypso Bee, Rachael Collis, Singing Maro, and Belonger are all well respected calypsonians), nor is there discrimination against the ethnicity of entrants - though reigning monarch Cecil 'Cepeke' Lake's unsuccessful 1992 song '*White Man's World*'<sup>79</sup> was an uncomfortable entry by a 'black' Montserratian with a 'white' father from England (Peter Lake, a part-time poet).<sup>80</sup> One awkward calypso performance was made by Hero in the 1986/7 calypso finals when he acted out a version of his song '*Body-to-Body*',<sup>81</sup> wining - in a skin-tight costume - with a much younger woman. Hero won the competition, his sixteenth crown, and was criticised in the press for appearing 'paunchy-paunchy' rather than the 'sexy-sexy' which he sang about.<sup>82</sup> After an exchange in *The Montserrat Reporter*, Edgecombe explained why, in his opinion, Hero was out-performed in the finals by Hustler and Q-Pid but still managed to win the competition on aggregate: that year performance counted for only 10 points whilst 'lyrics and melody combined commanded a whopping 65 points.'<sup>83</sup> The most consternation caused by calypso on Montserrat, however, occurred at the 1988/9 finals when the audience disagreed with the judges' decision to crown Earl 'Hustler Browne', place Drago second and Belonger third, thereby unseating Monarch Cepeke to fourth place. Bottles and stones were thrown onto the stage in anger at what many considered to be a bad decision omitting Cepeke from the top three,<sup>84</sup> or for even misplacing between first and fourth place.<sup>85</sup>

So far, I have broadly focused upon calypso's identity and history, and shown how calypso is a form of expression - social, sexual, political commentary, controversial and communicative. One of the calypsonians, Teknikal, feared the uncertain performative aspect of being a calypsonian. Prior to the Heats and Finals he tried to familiarise all his friends, and as many people liming on the streets as possible, with his songs, greeting everyone with one of his chorus-line phrases, checking that they would be at Festival City - the stage area and temporary bars built for the occasion.



Many of the topical lines in Teknikal's pieces of work are well-understood by his audience who have recently experienced the problems outlined in the calypso. Despite the indeterminacy of listening to and writing calypso, and the various internalisations of the verses, there is a shared understanding as to the meaning of Teknikal's lines. One of his calypsos for the competition, '*A News Dem A Look*',<sup>86</sup> is a commentary upon the back-biting gossip which is the pre-occupation of small-island communities. I spoke with Teknikal about his reality - his impressions of Montserrat - which he was expressing. Its theme is that the people of Montserrat are more concerned with other people's comings-and-goings than doing their own business: life for Montserratian folk becomes a tabloid newspaper such as the local *Montserrat Reporter*. Verse one begins:

I wonder what happen to Mons'rat neaga  
 Dis woman askin' she neighbour  
 Some of dem was starin' de *Mons'rat Reporter*  
 You business is deir business, yes me sister  
 But if your [Pfc?], dem a come  
 You better pick it up, put it in your pocket an' try to run<sup>87</sup>

The chorus picks up on the addictive desire for gossip and information about the neighbours - advice for the idle to go and buy a newspaper and stop wasting people's time and energy. Desperate for news, the scene - carried to the extreme - results in neighbourly visits to examine the condition of the neighbour's house, and the condition of the neighbour's body:

Chorus:        Come in den  
                   Come by you house, an' dey come a visit you  
                   A news dem a look  
                   Dey want to see if you house clean or if it dirty, a true  
                   A news dem a look  
                   Watch dat one dere, wasn't she a pee  
                   A news dem a look

Dey want to open you mout' see if you carry false teet'  
A news dem a look

A news  
A news  
A news dem a look  
A news  
A news  
A news dem a look  
But ohhh, oh me neighbour  
Who a look news, tell dem dey den go buy newspaper<sup>88</sup>

The second part of the chorus is the popular calypso jingle with a catchy ring to it. It is also Teknikal's solution to the problem with the neighbours; all other sections in the song present a narrative story. Teknikal's advice in his calypso, spelled out here, is a recommendation that neighbours buy their news rather than create it. Customarily, if there is no gossip to be found, or no gossip is forthcoming from neighbours, then it will be made-up about each other. And this will concern inhabitants of the street, and the village, and even the island - from Wapping, to Plymouth, to the House of Parliament. Listen to what happened to Shirley in verse two:

And if you no tell dem you business  
Believe it, dem tell you any means  
Them make up them own story 'pon you  
And on the Bible, swear it is true  
Five-o-dem sit down attack Shirley  
An' as one-o-dem left  
The other four turn an' talkin' 'bout she<sup>89</sup>

Criticism feeds upon criticism in an cycle of self-destruction: Montserrat - where liming takes precedence - continues its decline to a standstill.

Dat's why dis country nat movin'  
 Because it's people business we mindin'  
 Long Town Patsy say Montserrat so hard  
 But 'pon she phone an' send news abroad  
 Mons'rat dis country take dem no care  
 We beg all-o-them apply fu work wid de CIA<sup>90</sup>

The only job left to spying and snooping neighbours is to apply for work with the CIA.

I would argue, here, that calypso is much more than public tune, public expression, end-of-the-year phenomenon. Calypso maintains both public and private spheres: calypso narratives are internal and external, both inner and outer. Naipaul demonstrates this in the novel Miguel Street where the character Hat continually quotes calypso advice to Eddoes and the narrator.<sup>91</sup> Lines from calypsos which capture the public's attention are internalised and surface as personal commentaries. When Eddoes has to come to terms with his girlfriend's unexpected pregnancy, Hat externalises and finds ground for the calypsonian's public commentary:

Hat said, "The calypsonian was right, you hear.

Man centipede bad.

Woman centipede more than bad.

I know the sort of woman. She have a lot of baby, take the baby by the fathers, and get the fathers to pay money. By the time she thirty-five, she getting so much money from so much man, and she ain't got no baby to look after and no responsibility. I know the thing."<sup>92</sup>

In this way calypso is - and can become - mother wit, social counsellor, whereby the lyrics internalised over the years come out at opportune moments to guide and assist with the present situation: calypso, expression of public values, is turned into expression of private situations. Pithy, apt and quotable lyrics make a song memorable, popular, and useful. Teknikal's calypso-line 'a news dem a look' stood

the test of time far into the New Year of 1995; so too, Top Secret's line 'come better dan dat', from '*Tropical Gal*',<sup>93</sup> is used frequently on the streets as a humorous put-down. Like art, calypso reflects life and life reflects calypso.

More than just a constellation of individual calypsonians presenting their perspectives of Montserrat, perspectives with which the audience identifies, there are private, public, playful, parodying dimensions associated with calypso. Calypso is as much public social commentary as it is private inner commentary - for the singer as much as for the listener. From my postmodern perspectives, it is only a partial commentary. Furthermore, it is possible to show this by taking a private calypso occasion in Wapping where I was living, a location akin to V.S. Naipaul's *Miguel Street*,<sup>94</sup> Port of Spain, where people repeat calypso to each other, play and parody the songs, and make sense of their lives by recourse to calypso. It is not possible to get 'closer' to the private situation than by recourse to a personal, private, heterogeneity of events shared between several people. This is, however, 'closer' to the internal thoughts and feelings people have than the public interview with Top Secret at the beginning of this chapter. Thus, here, I next present some scenes from an evening of calypso and rum & coke at Prof's on 3rd December, the day after Teknikal and his song, '*A News Dem A Look*',<sup>95</sup> passed through to the Calypso Semi-Finals. All the contributors to the evening, bar myself, are Government employed firemen stationed at the airport; a loose-knit posse. The sections are my impressions of the evening which do not privilege my tape recordings. I comment upon the evening and intersperse the account with other private commentaries made to me by other calypsonians.

### **Calypso as impromptu performance**

#### **Characters**

PROFESSOR -- senior fireman, boxer, poet and philanderer in his thirties, known also as 'Prof' and 'The Black Emperor'

TEKNIKAL -- fireman, calypsonian in his thirties

DESSIE -- fireman in his late twenties

GREAT -- fireman, taxi driver, married with child

MATHEW -- fireman in his early twenties, known also as '2Pac' and 'Global'

JONO -- anthropologist from Scotland in his mid-twenties, Prof's neighbour

The following dialogue is at pace, an interspersed 'dub' overlaid upon one of Teknikal's instrumental calypso tapes. Speech follows the speaker's colon: the 'left column' - (PROF:). Improvised dub calypso - social commentary speech made up on the spot and set to the calypso beat on the dub side of the tape - appears in the second column which begins with a second colon (:Music, music, music). The calypso lyrics sung to the music are found in the right hand column which begins with a pointer (>A news dem a look). The chorus refers to both the calypso chorus and when all the characters make noise together. Here is a sample section of dialogue with Professor talking to the group, followed by Teknikal singing the calypso song, and Mathew with some improvised dub calypso:

PROF: OK, a'right, let's sing dis song

TEKNIKAL: >A news dem a look

>ba-ba-ba-bam-ba-day-do-da-day-do-die-day-die

MATHEW: :heeiiiiiiii

:Music, music, music

*One night after the island Calypso Eliminations. Six men sitting in a circle with three bottles of Mount Gay rum, and calypso tunes in the background. Singing along to Teknikal's instrumental calypso tape, they have been trying to make as much noise as possible all evening - a traffic jam is forming outside as people stop their cars to*

*listen to familiar calypso lyrics.*

*Prof - broad, bald and very muscular - is swaying his head to the music, sitting cross-legged on the floor to the right of Jono - like Marlon Brando in 'Apocalypse Now'. The only whiteman, JONO, is fiddling with his tape-recorder. Mathew is in front of Jono on a couch: the youngest fireman, he is wearing a Chicago Bulls singlet and has just had '2Pac' shaved into the side of his head. Great is sitting quietly on Mathew's left. He's next to the door. On the other side of the door Dessie is slumped on another couch. Teknikal is on his left leaning forward close to Prof. He has his trademark red felt cap on. There has been a lull in the evening's activities as the dub side of Teknikal's calypso tape rewinds to the beginning again.*

### **Scene I - calypso in the den**

PROF: *(addressing everyone)* Yes

MATHEW: *(quoting a Road March lyric in reply)* Oh Lord

DESSIE: Yes, yes

PROF: Let's sing dis song

GREAT: *(languidly)* Yes

PROF: By de --

*(Prof takes a mouthful of rum & coke and is interrupted by Teknikal singing, shouting and then screaming to the rhythm of his calypso song which is about to be played again)*

TEKNIKAL: :Music, music, music

PROF: Let's -- hello, hello

TEKNIKAL: :Music, music, music, music

DESSIE: *(joining Prof against Teknikal)* A'right, a'right

PROF: Hello, hello



TEKNIKAL: :Music, music

*(Mathew and Jono watch Teknikal ignoring Prof and Great. Dessie takes up Teknikal's rhythm)*

DESSIE: :A'right, a'right

PROF: OK, OK

TEKNIKAL: :Music

PROF: OK, OK

*(Teknikal looks like he's finished his outburst, Dessie continues, Mathew appears to be about to join in)*

GREAT: Sssshhh, sssshhhhh, sssshhhhh

DESSIE: :Music, music, music

TEKNIKAL: A'right

GREAT: *(calming Dessie)* OK, OK

PROF: *(growing angry)* Dessie, Globey, shu-shu-shu-shut-shut-shut you flap

DESSIE: :Where's de music?

TEKNIKAL: :Music - music - music

DESSIE: Arrrrgggghhhh

TEKNIKAL: Where's de fuckin' music?

PROF: Dessie, Dessie, Dessie, shut you churc--you turret

TEKNIKAL: :Music

*(Mathew joins Dessie and Teknikal with guttural ragga lines to the imagined beat of 'A News Dem A Look')*

MATHEW: :You ask for it, you get it

DESSIE: :Music, music

MATHEW: :You ask for it, you get it

DESSIE: :Music, music, music

MATHEW: :You ask for it, you get it  
 :You ask for it, you get it

TEKNIKAL: :Definit-el-y

DESSIE: :Music

MATHEW: :Wet me dong den, wet me dong (*changing back to the calypso Road March song*)

TEKNIKAL: Come again

MATHEW: Me warm

DESSIE: (*to the calypso beat*) :Huhuhuh

MATHEW: Me warm now

GREAT: Well warm

PROF: (*deferring*) Globey you sound good y'know

MATHEW: Me rub up

TEKNIKAL: (*agitating Prof*) Yeahesssssss

MATHEW: Me rub right up

PROF: But de song sound bad wid dat

TEKNIKAL: :Re-remix, re-remix, re-remix

The fire-fighters and the anthropologist have already belted out 'A News Dem A Look'<sup>96</sup> several times. Everyone is thoroughly familiar with the song and can take Teknikal's place as main singer; however, it is his song, so Teknikal leads most of the singing. The dub side of Teknikal's calypso tape is rewinding on Prof's stereo, Prof trying - but failing - to control the evening. Part celebration of Teknikal's success last night in the public Calypso Eliminations, part private gathering of friends, the evening is loud and local, a deliberate attempt to arouse the interests of meddlesome neighbours. This was a success in that the singing had enticed the anthropologist to join in, and later it attracted the bar staff of The Green Flash and the Chef of The Emerald Cafe to look in, but not stay.

Though the Chef and bar staff are friends with Prof, the fire-fighters and Jono, the singers in Prof's house have created their own privately shared *communitas*. All six in the room sing and participate in the calypsos; those entering the room can only

spectate. Fortunately for Prof, Emilia and Shontel cannot complain about the commotion, they are away in America visiting relatives. Cherrie, however, is at her window further down Wapping, listening to the noise of the Flash and looking for the disturbance at Prof's. Passing her house is Saltfish tapping away complex rhythms on the walls of the buildings he passes with his drumsticks: another calypsonian - Saltfish is his nickname derived from his favourite subsistence - Archibald 'Lord Alfredo' Mills has been singing calypso since 1972. Alfredo is a simple man: a part-time construction worker, who helps unload ships when they arrive, and plays in a steel band for tourists on Wednesday nights. Though not often a contender for the calypso finals, Alfredo's great gift for music has led to the production of some very popular and memorable songs, for example 'Socialism Jam',<sup>97</sup> winner of the 1980 Road March Competition. A very danceable and memorable calypso, the song's chorus runs with these instructions,

Chorus:        Ah say a jam to the left  
                   Wail to the right  
                   A make a wine to the centre  
                   Push back to the rear<sup>98</sup>

In an interview with Alfredo, in his own words, he revealed to me that the song was a very personal expression of an experience, and that the chorus instructions had, in fact, been directions:

*One night in 1979, you know, dat time de Jimmy Cliff picture came here. 1979. So I know, I took a walk around the island, you know, you know, around St. John's and Roaches, because I really believe in de Marines, you know. So I had on de full combat - knapsack, helmet, and everything. [...] And when I came back, you know, I felt sleepy but I wanted to see de movie - de Jimmy Cliff dat - a Saturday night. So I now went over in Grammar School. And when I went, I met people, you know. Dat time some people from Guadeloupe were camping down by the establishment. And I, now, um, went over from Grammar School to Sturge Park and went in de last bench, you know - cooling out. And this guy came up there, you know, and put a lock around my neck, right. [...] And it's de first time that um, I believe dat de heart is more on*

*the left side because dere is a kind of beating, de heart beating, you know. We call it a kind of frightening, you know, and so. And he held me in de um, in the local way - and raped me. ['And, and, dat's what the song's about?'] Yeah. ['Did he - did he go to jail?'] Well um, after that, you know, he continue raping people. So one time, you know, he rape an old woman who is cripple. And, ah, he spent ten to fifteen years in jail. ['So, it sounds like de Rasta guy last year; similar, similar kind of person. And you, you, built this into a song de same year, or later on?'] De next year.<sup>99</sup>*

A version of this song called '*Push To The Rear*'<sup>100</sup> is included on the tourist souvenir cassette '*Emeral City Festival Volume 1*'.<sup>101</sup> I would suggest that it is a cathartic number evoking poignant memories of the rapist's instructions - move to the left, to the right, wine and push back - for Alfredo. It forces a response from the listener who is aware of the personal dimension, the painful significance, of the dance lyrics. I can think of no stronger case for the argument that calypso is explicit commentary, personal expression as well as public performance.

Once the tape had rewound and the dub side was in play again, then, the spontaneous dub calypso begins anew.

### **Scene II - dubbin' in de den**

TEKNIKAL: >A news dem a look  
>ba-ba-ba-bam-ba-day-do-da-day-do-die-day-die

JONO: (*joining in*) :heeeiiiiiiiiiii

(*Great slaps his thighs to the beat*)

MATHEW: :hound de ray die slip me be be

DESSIE: Oh Lord, warm

Chorus: >A news dem a look

>But ohhhhhhhh  
 >Ohhh me neighbour  
 >Who a look news  
 >Tell em to go an buy newspaper  
 TEKNIKAL: >Here dis  
 >I wonder what happen to Mons'rat neaga

*(Mathew spills his rum & coke on the carpet whilst Teknikal continues singing the entire song)*

MATHEW: Sorry bout dat

PROF: Yeah mon no problem

TEKNIKAL: >... Dis woman asking de neighbour

MATHEW: Me don't see bout dat

TEKNIKAL: >... *Mons'rat Reporter*

PROF: Wotcha

MATHEW: See 'bout dat rum & coke

PROF: Yeah

MATHEW: Sorry sorry

TEKNIKAL: >... me sister

DESSIE: *(to Prof and Jono)* Wha' 'bout dis place getting crazy doin dis

MATHEW: *(hysterical)* hahahahhahah

TEKNIKAL: >... system a come  
 >He na want um  
 >He said you pick it up  
 >And put it in your pocket and try to run

*(Great starts clapping, Jono pours some rum, Teknikal loses place in his calypso song and Mathew takes over - improvising about those in the room, backed up by Dessie)*

DESSIE: *(pointing to Jono, addressing everyone)* He a want um

MATHEW: >A news dem a look

DESSIE: :But wotcha

MATHEW: :But watch Dessie isn't he a pea  
 >A news dem a look  
 :Dey want to look down your clothes  
 :To see what boots you got in ... a puss

DESSIE: :But wotcha

Chorus: :Aaaheeyyy

Chorus: >A news  
 >A news  
 >A news dem a look  
 >A news  
 >A news  
 >A news dem a look

Chorus: :Abhhhhhhh

Chorus: >But ohh  
 >Oh me neighbour  
 >Who a look news  
 >Tell dem to go an buy a newspaper  
 >Watch me now

MATHEW: :Hooooouuuuu

DESSIE: Professor

MATHEW: :Me tie de guttie and be bestest in a world  
 :Me tie de guttie and be bestest in de hi hi  
 :Me tie de guttie and be bestest in a world  
 :He say a look news  
 :Me tie de guttie and be bestest --

DESSIE: :-- News

MATHEW: :But me gat a tiny girl, she a look news too  
 :Me gat American, she a look news too  
 :Me kinda gat a nigger, he a look news too  
 :Jonathan matters, he a look news too  
 :Dey want to feed your belly, who a look news too



:Dey want to know what time to a go poo poo  
 Chorus: :Oohhh-ooohoohhh-aaaiiiiiii  
 MATHEW: >A news dem a look  
 GREAT: Stars  
 Chorus: >But ooh  
 >Oh me neighbour  
 >Who a look news  
 >Tell dem to go an buy ... newspaper

*(Prof claps Mathew, everyone slumps back laughing hard, Mathew wants Jono to take over for the next rendition)*

Chorus: :Aahahahaha  
 MATHEW: :Go Jono

*(Jono gets ready, Dessie breaks Mathew's rhythm as in the calypso song)*

DESSIE: :Heh  
 MATHEW: :Go Jono  
 DESSIE: :Heh  
 MATHEW: :Go Jono  
 DESSIE: :Heh

In this spontaneous dub calypso scene, the ludic, playful and disorderly nature of calypso is made manifest. In between chorus-lines which everyone sings, and Teknikal's lead singing of his calypso, the others hold conversations and join in with their own versions of the lyrics, even screaming, tapping the floor and thighs, clapping and making other noises to the dub rhythm of 'A News Dem A Look'.<sup>102</sup> Mathew, in particular, *ad libs* his own lines, including in his version the people in the room. He plays with his neighbours in the room, admitting Dessie into his version with key words and phrases. There is even a joke about neighbours meddling in the midden, trying to find out what time they 'poo poo' - release their bowels. In this instance,

Mathew lyricalises the present, using the calypso medium which acts as a fragment of national culture on each Caribbean island, appropriating the calypsonian heritage broker's expressive and evocative tools.

Mathew, with his guttural rendition of a muted commentary, and his friendly interjections with Dessie, is a significant part of this private performance of calypso. A release valve in public, calypso can also be a release valve in private. Given more time, Mathew may have worked and played with some of the fire-fighters' collective knowledge, their work jokes, island memories, and sexual slogans ('We find t'ings hot an' we leave dem wet'). Unlike Teknikal and Prof, who grew up in neighbouring villages on Montserrat, Mathew came to Montserrat from Dominica when very young. Perhaps this affects his dub calypso, forcing him to use only his impressions of Montserrat as a fire-fighter. Not to be curtailed in his contribution to the evening's private calypso performance, Mathew imitates the rasping gangsta-rap of the musician 2Pac.

Another immigrant to Montserrat who sings calypso is the well-respected female calypsonian Pat 'Belonger' Ryan who writes and sings her calypsos throughout the year. Belonger works with the social memories available on Montserrat: a native of Trinidad, she works with her impressions of Montserrat since she migrated there in 1981 after teaching French in Britain for several years. Well placed at third position in the controversial 1988/9 Calypso Competition,<sup>103</sup> one of the many calypsos Belonger wrote that year, one which took her to the finals, was '*Bring Dem Back*'.<sup>104</sup> This calypso was a complaint about the recent loss of island-known cultural practices and characters such as John Bull and Miss Goosie - both popular mummies, a bull dressed in sackcloth and wearing horns and carrying the devil's forked stick, and a very tall wooden puppet manipulated by a masked person on foot.<sup>105</sup> Her concluding lines in the calypso make reference to other masked masquerade dancers on the streets who come out in troupes at celebrations; for her, they should be the celebrated:

Culture shouldn't be a mask  
That we wear on Festival day

Take it to the classroom  
 Parade it in every way  
 Let's be proud and glad  
 Of a heritage that's our own  
 Foreign culture bang water come here  
 Is here we tradition born<sup>106</sup>

Ironically, Belonger 'bang water coom ya': Belonger, herself, migrated from Trinidad to Montserrat when she married a Montserratian. This, so she explains, accounts for her calypso name:

*['Could you tell me how you got your name Belonger?'] Well, generally, if a non-Montserratian marries a Montserratian, dey acquire 'belonger' status, and generally gives dem de sort of rights and privileges of Montserratians, right. So, so, dat was it. I mean, I have since den become a registered Montserratian, I t'ink I've been dat in 1987. So in truth and fact, I'm not really - I mean people keep telling me, 'you're not a believer', because I t'ink de believer status, although you have - I'm not really sure what it entitles you to, except dat in broad terms, I t'ink dat in broad terms you have de right to vote, you have a right to do alla dose t'ings. So um, but I like it, because of de um, it's an emotional - my attachment to dat name is an emotional t'ing. Dis idea of belonging.<sup>107</sup>*

Belonger took this name in 1988 when she first began singing calypso. It now belongs to her, just as she now belongs - is attached - to the Montserrat she evokes in her songs.

### **Scene III - calypso denouement**

PROF: (*Prof speaks into the tape recorder, quoting from the Road March calypso before waving it around*) Oh Lord

MATHEW: (*speaking to the tape recorder, pointing at himself*) Dis is Globitis

PROF: Wha' you have fu decide, after dis song, after dis song, after dis song

TEKNIKAL: :Le' we go Tyrone, le' we go Tyrone, le' we go Tyrone, le' we go Tyrone, le' we go Tyrone

PROF: (*to Teknikal, annoyed with disruptions*) Eh

TEKNIKAL: :Le' we go Tyrone, le' we go Tyrone

PROF: Eh, wha' de fuck, me got fu have a' interview wid Global

DESSIE: Wooaaah

MATHEW: :Global an' Teknikal

TEKNIKAL: :Le' de song play, le' de song play

MATHEW: (*to Prof, wanting Jono to sing solo*) Jonathan

TEKNIKAL: :Le' de song play

DESSIE: :Rubber

TEKNIKAL: (*joking with Jono*) When, when your girl come here she gonna enjoy herself

Chorus: (*laughter and shrieks and the same music starts up again*) :OOOOOOOOO

AAAAAAA HHHHHHHHHH WWW WWOOOO

TEKNIKAL: :AAARRRIIBBBBBBAAAA

MATHEW: :Yeeeeaaaahhh, pump it up, pump it up, pump it up, pump it up, pump it up, pump it up

DESSIE: :Pump it up

(*Great starts tapping the beat on the couch. All the firemen note Jono at last joining in with all the words; the rhythmic repartee echoes the calypso beat*)

MATHEW: : 'E a want um, 'e get um

JONO: (*to Mathew with mock innocence*) Excuse me

MATHEW: (*to the others in the group*) Excuse mind me now

JONO: (*to the group, replying to Mathew*) :News

PROF: Yea right, a news dem a look

TEKNIKAL: For real?

PROF: (*offering rum to Jono*) Yeah, you na want um?

*(Mathew and Teknikal play to the others with their exchange)*

TEKNIKAL: :Indeed

MATHEW: :Induce

TEKNIKAL: >A news dem a look

DESSIE: *(shouting into the tape recorder back in the middle of the room)* Professor

TEKNIKAL: *(to Mathew about Jono)* Boy, 'e rub right up

MATHEW: 'E warm

TEKNIKAL: Jonathan warm, aarrgghh

GREAT: Jonathan warm, boy

DESSIE: *(shouting into the tape recorder again)* Boy

*(PROF takes the tape recorder to use just by himself)*

PROF: *(into the tape recorder)* Ohhh yes, respect to all man Jono, onetime, respect your baby Holly dat comin' from Scotland in a few time, yes man

GREAT: Wassie Jono

TEKNIKAL: A'right, Jonathan

PROF: *(Prof paces the room lecturing bibacious wisdom)* Respect, respect, respect, you know what I mean

JONO: A'right

PROF: Pure respect, dat's wat Jah say, you know what I mean, yeah mon, Black Emperor Productions, ... le' we go de song right ...

Finally, the evening disintegrates, breaking away from 'A News Dem A Look' verses and chorus, and from the dub calypso renditions. My tape recorder in the centre of the room becomes the centre of attention. Imitating the inquisitive anthropologist, Prof tries to interview Mathew, but Mathew and Teknikal are more interested in hearing my version of 'A News Dem A Look'. Here, they too are involved in the topic of the song: at the end of the evening, they incarnate themselves as the neighbours in the song, and they make me the subject of their speculation and gossip. Mathew and Teknikal still rebound phrases off each other, invoking the form of the calypso, and so, also the

licence to engage in sexual innuendo: the arrival of my girlfriend is anticipated with explicit references to sexual intercourse - cannily linked to the volume of the calypso music running in the background ('pump it up, pump it up, pump it up'); my unsated sexual desires whilst on Montserrat the past few months ('E a want um, 'e get um');<sup>108</sup> and my sexual and alcohol 'induced' 'warm' state. The teasing wordplay continues after the calypso with these rejoinders, all framed within the context of the phrase 'a news dem a look'. Unbeknown to the fire-fighters, at the end of the evening, they are themselves illustrating the content of the calypso in their conversations - juxtaposing private chit-chat in-between the lines of the public calypso which essentially reviles and criticises such private gossip-mongering.

At the end of the 1994/5 Calypso Competition, the Crown went to Roland 'Kenzie' Johnson despite a successful final performance of 'A News Dem A Look' by Teknikal.<sup>109</sup> At the Calypso Finals, Teknikal sang his calypsos wearing his felt cap, dressed in a sparkling gold jacket. He waved a rolled-up copy of a Montserrat newspaper from his fist, and because everyone already knew and understood the chorus, the crowds sang with him. No doubt, if the calypso commentator David Edgecombe had been on Montserrat during the competitions, he would have reiterated his comments from a few years back when he wrote in *The Reporter*,

"Calypso a ah we culture,  
[w]e'll be proud o' um forever."<sup>110</sup>



## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Part of this chapter was recorded and reproduced by 'Jono', a grateful honorary member of 'The Fire-Fighter Posse' from Blackburne Airport - now Bramble Airport: 'Teknikal', 'Dessie', 'Great', 'Global', 'Professor'.
- <sup>2</sup> 'Tropical Gal' (Top Secret 1994).
- <sup>3</sup> 'Tropical Gal' (Top Secret 1994: 1.1-8).
- <sup>4</sup> Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs).
- <sup>5</sup> 'Tropical Gal' (Top Secret 1994: 1.25-36, chorus).
- <sup>6</sup> 'Don't Rock The Boat Dada' (Top Secret 1994).
- <sup>7</sup> 'Don't Rock The Boat Dada' (Top Secret 1994: 1.5-8, 9-10, chorus).
- <sup>8</sup> (Sparrow 1992[a]; see also Sparrow 1992[b]).
- <sup>9</sup> 'Sell de Pussy' (Sparrow 1992[b]).
- <sup>10</sup> 'Wood in the Fire' (Sparrow 1992[b]).
- <sup>11</sup> 'Sell de Pussy' (Sparrow 1992[b]).
- <sup>12</sup> 'Wood in the Fire' (Sparrow 1992[b]).
- <sup>13</sup> 'Tropical Gal' (Top Secret 1994).
- <sup>14</sup> 'Governor's Ball' (Sparrow 1992[a]).
- <sup>15</sup> 'Governor's Ball' (Sparrow 1992[a]: 1.7-8).
- <sup>16</sup> (Lewin 1980: 634).
- <sup>17</sup> 'Jean and Dinah' (Sparrow 1992[a]: 1.30-31; see also Hebdige 1987: 41).
- <sup>18</sup> (Turner 1996).
- <sup>19</sup> The 'Crop Over' Festival is a transformation of an old plantation holiday for slaves called 'Harvest Home', a one day holiday at the end of the harvest. The account of Mighty Gabby's 1982 calypso storm is narrated by Patton (*Bulletin of Eastern Caribbean Affairs*, September 1994: 56).
- <sup>20</sup> (Patton, *Bulletin of Eastern Caribbean Affairs*, September 1994: 58, no other references available).
- <sup>21</sup> (Patton, *Bulletin of Eastern Caribbean Affairs*, September 1994: 58).
- <sup>22</sup> "'Like an Alien In We Own Land": The Social Impact', Chapter Four (Patullo 1996: 80-103, especially 80-81; see also 'Alien' by Mighty Pep 1994).
- <sup>23</sup> (Rohlehr, *Savacou*, 1970: 87).
- <sup>24</sup> 'What's Inside de Box' (Q-Pid 1987).
- <sup>25</sup> (Anon., *The Montserrat Reporter*, 23rd December 1987: no other references available).
- <sup>26</sup> (Edgecombe, *The Montserrat Reporter*, 23rd October 1987: 4).
- <sup>27</sup> 'What's Inside The Box' (Q-Pid, *The Montserrat Reporter*, 18th December 1987: 4, 1.9-10).
- <sup>28</sup> (Edgecombe, *The Montserrat Reporter*, 18th December 1987: front cover headline article).
- <sup>29</sup> 'What's Inside The Box' (Q-Pid, *The Montserrat Reporter*, 1987: 4, 1.9-16, second verse).
- <sup>30</sup> (Staff Reporter, *The Montserrat Times*, 23rd December 1987).
- <sup>31</sup> 'What's Inside The Box' (Q-Pid, *The Montserrat Reporter*, 1987: 4, 1.17-24, third verse).
- <sup>32</sup> 'Long Grass' (Q-Pid 1985).
- <sup>33</sup> 'What's Inside The Box' (Q-Pid 1987).
- <sup>34</sup> David Edgecombe was the editor of *The Montserrat Reporter*, a newspaper which Howard Fergus - one of Edgecombe's in-laws - describes as '[t]he NDP organ' (Fergus 1994: 204).
- <sup>35</sup> (Edgecombe, *The Montserrat Reporter*, 18th December 1987: 4).
- <sup>36</sup> (Edgecombe, *The Montserrat Reporter*, 18th December 1987: 4).
- <sup>37</sup> (Edgecombe, *The Montserrat Reporter*, 18th December 1987: front cover headline article).
- <sup>38</sup> (Edgecombe & Chambers, *The Montserrat Reporter*, 23rd January 1988: 12).
- <sup>39</sup> (Dewar 1977: 75, 76).
- <sup>40</sup> A pidgin is 'a simplified language containing vocabulary from two or more languages, used for communication between people not having a common language.' This is different to a 'creole' language, which is 'a mother tongue formed from the contact of a European language with another' (Thompson 1995: 1033, 317).
- <sup>41</sup> (Angrosino 1993: 74). A dictionary definition of a dialect is 'a subordinate variety of a language with non-standard vocabulary, pronunciation, or grammar' (Thompson 1995: 372).
- <sup>42</sup> Dub poetry, so Angrosino explains, originated in Jamaican reggae clubs in the 1970s as disc jockeys became celebrities: 'offering commentary on the music they played, as well as on political events of the day.' They persuaded record producers to publish records with a 'dub side': the second side of the record contained the instrumental backing of popular dance numbers, but with the vocal tracks

'dubbed out'. The DJs would then play the 'dub sides' and improvise their own half-sung, half-spoken raps (Angrosino 1993: 80).

<sup>43</sup> Angrosino 1993: 74).

<sup>44</sup> 'Montserrat English', winning song for Calypso King The Mighty Arrow 1974-197. It is contained within the 'Ole Time Calypso Medley' version (Arrow 1994; see also Edgecombe, *The Montserrat Mirror*, 10th January 1975: 2).

<sup>45</sup> (G.S.C., *The Montserrat Mirror*, 29th April 1967: 1, continued on 4, sic). A patois is 'the dialect of the common people in a region, differing fundamentally from the literary language' (Thompson 1995: 1001).

<sup>46</sup> (Dewar 1977: 78).

<sup>47</sup> This transcription was given to me by Arrow. It is a transcription of a more modern soca version - 'Ole Time Calypso Medley' (Arrow 1994, 1.5-12, first verse excluding the introduction, sic). Dewar's transcription is more dialect oriented: for instance, the fourth line for her runs, 'Dey cyan' fin' dem words in no dictionary' (Dewar 1977: 78). This shows us that Montserratian dialect is often a non-standard spoken transcription of the spoken English/Montserratian. The verse and chorus are the same in both old (Arrow 1974) and modern (Arrow 1994) versions of the calypso, yet Dewar refers to a verse dropped for the modern soca version which began, 'English grammar you cyan' neglect / But hold on to we dialect' (Dewar 1977: 78).

<sup>48</sup> This is an amalgam of dialect translation by myself, and Joe Jackman and Chadd Cumberbatch from the Montserrat News Information e-mail group (23rd April 1997). Each line in the chorus is a well-known Montserratian phrase.

<sup>49</sup> (Arrow 1994: 1.13-22, first chorus).

<sup>50</sup> (Fergus 1994: 252).

<sup>51</sup> *Alliouagana Folk* is a dictionary of dialect explaining the grammatical nature of the Montserratian nation language, it was produced by George Irish (1985), to strengthen the case for a Montserratian nation language. It is interesting to note that though spoken, due to its non-standard spelling, the Montserratian dialect is very difficult to read, even by fluent dialect speakers. The local gossip column in *The Montserrat News* ('Miss Millie') often had to be read out loud to be comprehensible.

<sup>52</sup> (Myers 1980: 146-150).

<sup>53</sup> (Campbell, *History Workshop Journal*, Autumn 1988: 1-28).

<sup>54</sup> (Birth, *Ethnology*, Spring 1994: 165-177).

<sup>55</sup> (Pool, *Anthropologica*, 1994: 84; see also Searle 1984: 199).

<sup>56</sup> Capoeira is a Brazilian martial art which was devised by Angolan slaves working in Brazil. Based upon African dance movements, capoeira uses the hand on the ground for balance when kicking and leg-sweeping. This is because the slaves were fighting whilst still in chains. Clapping and singing accompanies the proceedings. Originally, the sounds were to hide noise of the slaves training each other in the art of combat (Francis, *The Sunday Times*, 26th November 1995: 21).

<sup>57</sup> (Miller 1994: 109).

<sup>58</sup> Presumably this is to coincide with 1st August Caribbean Emancipation Celebrations (Nevis Culturama Committee 1994: 55).

<sup>59</sup> The names of the 27 calypso competition entrants, the Judging criteria, and the list of Prizes to be given out by the Montserrat Festival Committee appeared in a news summary, (Lewis, *The Montserrat Reporter*, 2nd December 1994: back cover).

<sup>60</sup> These are Eastern Caribbean dollars which would be a considerable amount of money on Montserrat.

<sup>61</sup> 'Wet me dong' (Spoiler 1994: no other references available).

<sup>62</sup> This is one of Arrow's titles. 'Soca' is a mixture of 'soul' music and 'calypso', an amalgam of the first to letters of both musical forms. I would describe Arrow's soca as more of a dance version of calypso. Soca, like calypso, originated from Trinidad.

<sup>63</sup> (Arrow 1994).

<sup>64</sup> (Hanley, *The Sunday Cape Cod Times*, 5th August 1984: 48).

<sup>65</sup> Some calypsonians persuade others to write their songs which they sing from memory, whilst the band too, plays from memory. The advantage of calypso's oral medium of transmission is that it does not require literacy from the calypsonian or the audience.

<sup>66</sup> (Miller 1994: 245-255).

<sup>67</sup> (Fergus 1994: 253-254) quotes T. A. Marryshow's letters to the newspapers.

<sup>68</sup> I am aware that I do not set this thesis within a wider economic, social and political history of Montserrat such as Fergus's account (1994); to do so would be to ignore my own relativistic and postmodern approach. My concern here is to present several diverse impressions of Montserrat, some commensurable - and some incommensurable - with each other.

<sup>69</sup> 'A New Dem A Look' (Teknikal 1994).

<sup>70</sup> (Flasher undated; see also Dewar 1977: 75-80). In a more lengthy account, the following songs would be covered for their social commentary content: 'Jumbie Ol' Mas' (Hero 1982); 'Jumbie Dance' (Reality 1982); 'Masquerade' (Reality 1980); 'Beyond the Boundary' (Cupid 1992); 'People's Questionnaire' (Algie 1994); 'Socialism Jam' (Lord Alfredo 1980); 'Determination' (Collis 1992); 'Bad John' (Lord Meade 1991); 'Nation' (Cutter 1982); 'Save this country' (Patriot 1982); 'Montserrat is for Montserratians' (Rockamaya 1993); 'Lift this Nation' (Cutter 1994); 'Iraq's Invasion' (Accident 1990); 'Don't Blame Mr. Hugo' (Cupid 1989).

<sup>71</sup> In the 1994/5 competition, Jamaal Jeffers, an English teacher and Maroon poet was a calypso judge, assessing these criteria according to his training.

<sup>72</sup> 'What's Inside de Box' (Q-Pid 1987).

<sup>73</sup> 'Calypso Workshop - Criteria for Judging', undated - anonymous - handout from the Division of Culture (Anon. [b]: no other references available).

<sup>74</sup> (Patton, *Bulletin of Eastern Caribbean Affairs*, September 1994: 60).

<sup>75</sup> (Patton, *Bulletin of Eastern Caribbean Affairs*, September 1994: 55).

<sup>76</sup> (Bauman 1984: 11, author's emphasis).

<sup>77</sup> (Warner 1993: 275).

<sup>78</sup> (Patton, *Bulletin of Eastern Caribbean Affairs*, September 1994: 61).

<sup>79</sup> 'White Man's World' (Cepeke 1992).

<sup>80</sup> See 'My Old Back Door' by Peter Lake (Fergus & Rowden 1990: 54-56), a winning entry in the Maroons St. Patrick's Day Poetry Competition, and second place runner-up in the Radio Antilles World Poetry Day Competition.

<sup>81</sup> 'Body-to-Body' (Hero 1986).

<sup>82</sup> (Edgecombe, *The Montserrat Reporter*, 16th January 1987: no other references available).

<sup>83</sup> (Edgecombe, *The Montserrat Reporter*, 30th January 1987: no other references available; see also Anon., *The Montserrat Reporter*, 23rd January 1987: 4, no other references available).

<sup>84</sup> (Edgecombe & Burns, *The Montserrat Reporter*, 13th January 1989: 6).

<sup>85</sup> (Galloway, *The Montserrat Reporter*, 13th January 1989: 5).

<sup>86</sup> 'A New Dem A Look' (Teknikal 1994).

<sup>87</sup> 'A News Dem A Look' (Teknikal 1994: 1.1-6, first verse), unknown reference in the penultimate line. Translating from the dialect, Chadd Cumberbatch has suggested that the 'a news dem a look' expression means 'it's news you're looking for' as if to pass it on to another, or, 'it's my business you want to know about', a popular expression on the island. It should be noted that in Montserratian dialect 'a' can be used either as a verb or a preposition: 'a mine' ('it's mine') or 'dem in a de shap' (they are at the shop) (Irish 1985: 29).

<sup>88</sup> 'A News Dem A Look' (Teknikal 1994: chorus, no other references available).

<sup>89</sup> 'A News Dem A Look' (Teknikal 1994: chorus, no other references available).

<sup>90</sup> 'A News Dem A Look' (Teknikal 1994: chorus, no other references available).

<sup>91</sup> (Naipaul 1971).

<sup>92</sup> (Naipaul 1971: 98).

<sup>93</sup> 'Tropical Gal' (Top Secret 1994: 1.35).

<sup>94</sup> (Naipaul 1971).

<sup>95</sup> 'A News Dem A Look' (Teknikal 1994).

<sup>96</sup> 'A News Dem A Look' (Teknikal 1994).

<sup>97</sup> 'Socialism Jam' (Lord Alfredo 1980).

<sup>98</sup> 'Push to the Rear' (Lord Alfredo 1980: chorus, no other references available).

<sup>99</sup> Interview transcript of an interview between Jonathan Skinner and Archibald 'Lord Alfredo' Mills, 7th June 1995. In accordance with Alfredo's wishes, I would like to add that Alfredo was forcibly raped, and that he is not a homosexual ('bull-man' or 'anti-man' in dialect).

<sup>100</sup> 'Push to the Rear' (Lord Alfredo 1980).

<sup>101</sup> 'Emeral City Festival Volume 1' compilation of Festival hit songs arranged by Eddie Duberry (no other references available). The title deliberately omits the 'd' in Emerald.

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<sup>102</sup> 'A News Dem A Look' (Teknikal 1994).

<sup>103</sup> (Edgecombe & Burns, 13th January 1989: 6).

<sup>104</sup> 'Bring Dem Back' (Belonger 1988).

<sup>105</sup> These two figures are mentioned in 'Village Days', a section in Chapter Seven, 'Customs and Culture' (Fergus 1992: 43-61, especially 48-49). In the 1995/6 Carnival procession, Chadd Cumberbatch cleverly designed, built and reincarnated Miss Gooseie.

<sup>106</sup> 'Bring Dem Back' (Belonger 1988: 148-55). 'Bang water', Belonger translates from the Montserratian dialect as 'to cross the seas' (i.e. to migrate).

<sup>107</sup> Interview transcript of an interview between Jonathan Skinner and Pat 'Belonger' Ryan, 19th June 1995.

<sup>108</sup> 'Um' is dialect for 'it', a pronoun which in this context can be interpreted as sexual intercourse.

<sup>109</sup> 'A News Dem A Look' (Teknikal 1994).

<sup>110</sup> 'Calypso is our culture, / [w]e'll be proud of it forever.' David Edgecombe deliberately paraphrases the chorus of Mighty Arrow's crowning calypso chorus-line from 'Montserrat English' at the end of his review of the 1975 Calypso King Competition (Edgecombe 1975: 2).

## **Business as usual for the Tourism Industry**

The Montserrat Tourist Board wants to ensure that potential investors and visitors to Montserrat know that it's business as usual once again. Tourism Director Leona Midgette says they've now embarked on an extensive information distribution campaign to its representatives in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada and Europe. She says they'll also be targeting the international and regional media, cruise lines, international travel publications and magazines.

The information package includes updated information on the island's tourism industry, in light of the volcanic activity and then two recent hurricanes. She also notes that they want to emphasise that the disasters did not significantly cripple the island's tourism infrastructure.

She says tourist operators here have confirmed that they'll be offering complete services to visitors including sight seeing attractions. Mrs. Midgette acknowledges that they're now seizing the opportunity to give a big boost to the tourism sector, now that most of the mainland tourist attraction islands have been ravaged by the hurricanes.

(Anon., *The Montserrat Reporter*, 22nd September 1995: 2, no other references available)



## **Chapter Five - Chedmond Browne: teaching the past, protesting the present, altering the future**

The purpose of this chapter is to add some more diverse and debated impressions to the few individual and inter-subjective impressions of Montserrat which I have chosen to articulate in previous chapters. From an individual's poetic set of impressions in Chapter Two, I went on to show how realities can converge into constellations in Chapter Three - expats versus locals on the topic of development work on Montserrat. I then returned to the individual's creative impressions of Montserrat in the next chapter when I considered the work of the calypsonians on Montserrat. In this chapter I consider one Montserratian man's particular reality, that of Chedmond Browne, a West Indian, a Vietnam veteran, a Pan-Africanist, a politician, and the Leader of the Seaman's Union on Montserrat. Like Cherrie, Mr. Piper and Mary - whom we heard from in Chapter Three - Cheddy is firmly opposed to an increasing dependence of the island upon British aid and British and North American tourism. Cheddy's impressions of Montserrat are similar to those of Dr. Fergus, but he has his own extreme position that I feel is very important to articulate. Cheddy's own particular stance calls for an aggressive Pan-Africanism on Montserrat, one underpinned by an education in independence. As such, the ideas and themes contained in this chapter converge and diverge with previous chapters. The chapter begins by merging with Chapter One where I introduced Cheddy. It then juxtaposes with Chapter Two where Dr. Fergus advocated education on Montserrat as a crucial developmental platform for equality and independence. Next, it comments upon the development workers and their projects which was the focus of Chapter Three, and it joins with the celebration of Montserratian dialect ('Montserratian English') in Chapter Four. With a very different history of Montserrat to the development workers, Cheddy's reality shows the relativity of historical trajectories. In accord with my postmodern impressionistic anthropology, I seek these local histories and realities such as Cheddy's, rather than any global and globalising accounts and rationalisations.

In the last chapter I presented examples of calypsonians singing social commentaries, evoking their Montserrat, expressing themselves. Only the most risqué of calypsos



were censored from the public with the refusal of radio airplay. This, I mentioned, happened to Cupid with his calypso 'What's In De Box?'. Unlike the poets of the Writers' Maroon, or the calypsonians, Cheddy does not seek to express his impressions of Montserrat, or to evoke support for his ideas, by singing songs or writing poetry or by attending dinner parties. Cheddy has been banned from the radio by the island's Executive Council which is led by His Excellency The Governor, and is prevented from teaching history in the Montserrat schools. Cheddy is forced into preaching his 'independence for Montserrat' protest on the streets: he mobilises support through the sales of his magazine *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*, a magazine which he created and edits with the deliberately provocative, and harsh, spelling of 'Afrika', and an equally provocative re-writing of 'britain' which rejects her capital status with a capital letter.

Here, I offer a detailed and harsh account of the life and work of a man who is harassed by the British for proposing an alternative future, for protesting the present colonial condition, for teaching a blackened history of the island's colonial past. In articulating Cheddy's realities, I incorporate interview material and quotations from his magazine; I refer to his articles, his struggles, his successes and failures; to present his world-view and to examine the purpose of his work on Montserrat, I also contextualise the man and his position on the island. Though there are convergences with the ideas and historical writings of Dr. Howard Fergus, I intend to show the places where Cheddy's world-view diverges. In keeping with Thesiger's and Waugh's descriptions of the coronation of Haile Selassie - which I refer to as partial impressions, I view Cheddy's writings similarly; though Cheddy roots his 'extremist' arguments and opinions in a history of Africa, the West Indies, and Montserrat which he has read about and experienced, I insist upon treating them as but 'one' set of impressions of Montserrat which he espouses; but 'one' native reality, one which I hope to show is also at odds with many other native realities, particularly in his fight to save his Montserrat Seamen and Waterfront Workers' Union (MSWWU).

I begin with a meeting with Chedmond Browne. This initial meeting develops into an account of his beliefs and realities which he outlined, for me, at great length and with great conviction. I have made use of a tape transcript here, along with newspaper

snippets, because Cheddy was always very precise, consistent, and repetitive in his choice of words, and because Cheddy was just as articulate with or without the tape recorder. With my use of transcripts, I do not assume that I have captured 'the' reality - a better or more authentic version - of the conversation. Reminiscent of the diverse coronations of Haile Selassie in the Preface, this chapter then moves on to express diverse (world-)versions of the closure of the national Port and the dismissal of the Seamen's Union which has been articulated in several press propaganda outlets -- *The Montserrat Reporter* for the official Government course of action (*à la* Thesiger); *The Montserrat News* against the official line (*à la* Waugh) -- and Cheddy's ideological interpretations of the situation, and its consequences, in *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*. These final sections constitute a lengthy but necessary example of the various realities of Montserrat, their implications, and Cheddy's need for his *Pan-Afrikan Liberator* organ as both Port and Union groups manoeuvre and jostle for the public's regard.

### **An opening gambit - meeting the task master**

My daily tour of the town sometimes saw him at the Evergreen Roundabout talking to men sitting with their backs against Miss Josie's bar, Heinekens lying at their feet in similar disarray. Once he was forcibly ejected and the police were called to the affray. On a small island, the Police Station is always just down the road, and people with such personalities and public profiles are always easily recognised and easily detained. His work mates had hurried him out of the bar after two American tourists had gone for him. He'd joined their conversation about Columbus's discovery and naming of Montserrat: Columbus had sailed past the island and thought it reminded him of a monastery he had once known in Spain - and well, the Spanish were paying the bills, and just keeping the crew from mutiny. And so she was named.

The Americans had not appreciated Cheddy's historical commentary that had begun with the Amerindian landing way before any European Renaissance had begun teething. They didn't like his comments or his disrespectful, offhand way of speaking with them. The Americans were on holiday, and this wasn't a part of their pre-paid

package at the Vue Pointe Hotel. Who was this man who was telling them about Alliouagana - Amerindian land of the prickly bush?<sup>1</sup>

As usual, the police had not appreciated Chedmond's disturbance of the tourists' peace. This was one of the worst crimes imaginable on an Eastern Caribbean British Dependent Territory, dependent upon the vacillations of one-time visitors and the predilections of the Royal Montserrat Police. They had sent him back to his home behind their station, just along from Ram's Indian Supermarket, opposite the welding signs his neighbour had put up in front of his garage.

The next time I saw Cheddy was in the Memorial Square, downtown sleepy Plymouth. He was still carrying his rolled wad of news-sheets, and he was animatedly slapping them into his other hand. One workman's boot was up on the Memorial balustrade, as though he were cutting off his colleagues' escape route. This time, his audience shared his views, many of which he articulated for them. They were fellow port workers, old men without pensions, Seafront Union members who relied upon Chedmond Browne's leadership to retain an income at the port. Without him, they would have no income: without him, there would be nobody to represent them - nobody to make sense of all the letters they were receiving from the Government and Port Authority.

I wanted to make contact with him, this intriguing figure in local politics; a man who lectured in workboots and a shirt hanging around his bare torso; a man with a long, grey and wispy beard that shook with every angry gesture of his harangue. There was a lull in the conversation, the eye of the storm, in which I moved through the circle of black figures surrounding Mr. Browne - a man of mixed African-European descent: 'a man who takes much milk with his coffee'; a man - pale and pidgin-holed by photo geneticists.<sup>2</sup>

I stepped through the covey. "... jackasses. We na waan alla dis crap ya," finished Cheddy when he saw me in front of him. In retrospect I was sold a copy of his newsletter by surprise rather than by reason. He later told me that he never sold to expatriates or white people. There was just no point.

I left him to his heated exchanges for a few months. All I did each time I saw him about Plymouth - accosting liners and jawing - was to buy a newsletter for myself and my landlady at \$2.00 a throw. I knew that Cheddy knew and admired my landlady, Cherrie, and that they sometimes exchanged phone calls and support for each other. He respected Cherrie for the way that she had battled her employers in the civil service. She must have mentioned me and my work on the island and how, despite my colour, I had a sympathetic ear, for the fourth time that I bought from him, he accepted my request to talk to him. All other times he'd looked through me and my greetings.

"Could I get two copies please. ... Er, Mr. Browne, I'm looking at the literature on the island, and, and I wondered, um, if I could talk to you about it - some time?"

"A'right, anytime. Everybody knows where I live."

And for him I wasn't there anymore.

This was the first recognition and acceptance I'd had from him. It was hardly a confirmed meeting, and I'd have to find out from Cherrie where exactly he did live. I followed up his invitation the next evening. I found that he lived in a long, low bungalow, concrete, open glass-slats revealing the family interior; long-grasses continually cropped by goats and guarded by mongrels on the exterior.

I called out: "Cheddy, Cheddy, are you there?"

A teenager came to one of the slats, peered, shouted that he was out, went back to his sofa in front of the television. I left.

Two evenings later I saw Cheddy through the slats. I called. "Yo, who's dere?" came back to me in reply. I lifted the rusty levers on the gate and brushed past a goat, two inquisitive dogs and a cat feeding her kittens on the porch - a ground-floor balcony which served as the entrance. Through the back door, into the kitchen, I passed. The main room was a dining room, study, TV room, which led off into several smaller bedrooms. Cheddy was sitting in shorts, nothing else was on his body which reminded me of Gandhi or a skeleton diagram at the doctors. He was setting up a computer

board for a game of chess:

“Do you play? I haven’t been able to teach anyone on the island.”

We play three games on the dinner table. The window slats are open for ventilation and moths dart between us, kittens play with my alien socks, and we have to brush the colony of ants from the table - they’ve become dependent upon the food scraps spilled on the table. The television stays on and my eyes flicker from the board game to a Benny Hill Show on satellite. Behind Cheddy are pictures of his family and a poster of Christ in his true colour, black, with the messages - “I am black and comely [...] look not upon me because I am black [...]”; ‘Christ has hair like pure wool’; ‘his feet were like fine brass burnt in a furnace’.<sup>3</sup> Opposite, behind me, is a bookshelf stuffed full of black histories, biographies of Marcus Garvey, Martin Luther King, and Malcolm X. All the works have to be imported onto the island at great cost, and a few are in plastic wrappers to protect them from the humidity, cockroaches and wood slaves that can happily live off them by day and sleep at your feet at night. Black Athena, African Civilisation, Muslim philosophies and Islamic dietary manuals. And, beneath all these shelves, rows of science fiction from early Isaac Asimov to late Robert Heinlein and Arthur C. Clarke - well-thumbed, worn, yellowed copies.

Cheddy recognises a retiring mind and we put away the board. “I try to play at least six or more games each night. It trains the mind. It increases my concentration, you know.”

“So, how are the Montserrat newsletter, er, I mean, newspaper sales going?” I inquire, nervously correcting myself and taking the opportunity to look further around the room.

“A’right, you know what I mean. I can’t speak to you or be seen with you on of the streets, you know what I’m saying.”

I’d explored the covered computer and fax machine in the corner; the collection of tapes by the stereo; a child’s synthesiser; the poster of Marcus Garvey with African slogans, other African portraits; and now I was drawn back to what he had just said.

He went on to explain himself.



"I caan be seen talking wid you out there. That's why I ignore you. It's nothing personal, it's white people. I can't let people see me with them. So that's it, OK. You understand.

"Er, I, I think so. So why see me now?"

"I would have done the same as you. You know, try a different approach, keep buying the newsletter and asking. I like that, that's sincerity. Dere's no point selling the edition to alla the white people on the island, not that they'd buy it or anything like that, or, or come up to me and ask for a copy, no." All this is said with a bitterness directed not at me, but at those with the colour of my skin. I feel further colour conscious. A white token.

The TV turns to basketball, Cheddy churns out his doctrines and orders two children to bed. He does this as his wife comes in and chastises him for letting them stay up late, and me for not leaving my shoes at the back door. As with the rest of my visit - and indeed, all visits - there are no concessions to visitors, no platitudes of small-talk, no welcomes or affable salutations. Her son is as black as her and Dr. Fergus, but their daughter takes after Cheddy. This observation becomes relevant to Cheddy's doctrines which he reiterates with each visit at the end of our chess games. From an interview with Cheddy we glean that he is deliberately attempting to change the colour of his family and descendants, to blacken them with a strong African gene pool, thus reversing the trend followed by his mother when she married a white man. Cheddy's reasons are, of course, made perfectly clear:

c I am reintegrating my gene pool into what I know is the original gene pool of my mother, my grandmother, a'right.

j Uhuh

c And to, into the gene pool of the people who accepted me as a human being.

j Uhuh

c A'right. This is the reality for me. I've lived in England, I know what racism is. I've lived in America, I know what racism is. The European man doesn't accept me as a human being.

j Uhuh



c He doesn't look at me as a person. African peoples accept me as a human being, but beyond that part of my genetic gene pool is an African um, genetic gene pool.<sup>4</sup>

[EDIT]

c You have to be pragmatic. Cer, certain things take, take pragmatic purposes. The, the reason that I am the way I am

j Uhuh

c is because my mother perceived that power lay in this direction. So my mother determined that it would have been better for me to exist in this society having the physical features that I have. So she pursued a male or a man that would produce within, or help her produce somebody that has the physical features that I have, because she perceived that was a means of success in the society. I've grown up and I perceive it differently. I am just reversing some of the things that were put into her mentality because she made an assessment based upon the conditions under which she lived.

j Uhuh

c I've made the same assessments and I've determined that the direction that she had set up is not the right direction, and I have no desire to continue in that direction.

j But, I, I would have thought that was more of an unconscious

c Well, it's not.<sup>5</sup>

I am reminded of psychological theories of colonisation - that the black woman's child has a better chance in life if it has a white father, whether legitimate or not.<sup>6</sup>

Once, I held Cheddy to a draw at chess when he was testing my defences. This was on the second evening visit which followed a shared nod during the day as we passed each other on the streets. Each successive visit over my ten month stay on the island followed the same format: a concealed greeting, a curt nod or upward flick of the wrist in the streets, an evening call, a chess match, and table discussion. If we'd have used a chess clock for the monologues I received, then the dial would average - Chedmond Browne 3hrs.47mins : Jonathan Skinner 16mins.

### ***En Passant* - Chedmond Browne and his liberation theology**

In the interim period, between interview times, I researched Cheddy's position on the island, read some of the black histories, built up a collection of his newsletters and followed the events on the island with which he involved himself, and I elicited public reactions to his actions and reactions. Just before leaving the island I then interviewed him concerning all the issues we had broached in previous conversations. I use Cheddy's newsletter and interview transcript, island newspapers, and my personal experiences on the island as an anthropologist and interested party, my impressions of his determined protests, his disturbing histories and his visionary futures, to approach his reality. My re-creation here is as partial as my fleeting connection with Mr. Browne. My sympathetic responses described here show that I am as biased in his favour as a football supporters' club is for their local team. My choice of presentation and narration here is as vivid and impressionistic as my moments were with the man himself; after Nash, I use storytelling - the use of a narrative discourse 'which dominates the way we relate to each other and to the world'<sup>7</sup> - to give voice to my thoughts and experiences.

Away at the library, back in the librarians' reference section there are files and shelves filled with hundreds of Government pamphlets, local poetry publications, newspapers and reference copies of *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*. Cheddy leaves them in the library so that they develop into a resource base over the years. With a print run of several hundred, the rest are either mailed overseas or sold on the streets by Cheddy himself. Number One of Volume One dates back to August 1992. It is almost an A3 sheet folded in half to give four pages with three columns to a page. The format is to have a headline at the front, underneath several slogans and the Montserrat newsletter title which is between an outline sketch of Montserrat and Africa. Under this title reads:

**Agitate** until we create a stable society that benefits all our people.

**Instigate** the nation until we remedy the injustices of society.

**Motivate** our people to set a meaningful path for the coming generations.

**Educate** our people to free our minds and develop an Africentric consciousness.<sup>8</sup>

This initial August edition was timed to appear when the nations and colonies of the West Indies were celebrating 1st August Emancipation Day - and August Monday, international holidays and commemorations of 1st August 1833 when the Emancipation Proclamation came into effect. The leading article mentions how the Proclamation compensated owners for the loss of their property with the end of the European institution of slavery - 'the buying and selling of human beings to be owned by the owner as property'.<sup>9</sup> The general line of the article is that slavery was a European invention which was continually resisted and revolted against by Africans; that there was no passive acceptance of slavery; that '[t]he Empire of Great Britain, incidentally, lost two hundred thousand soldiers and over twenty million pounds in their attempt to take Hispaniola by defeating the Afrikan army'; that '[t]hroughout the entire region the greatest fear of the would-be master was what his slave would do to him'; that '[o]ur ForeMothers and ForeFathers paid the price in blood for our physical freedom'.<sup>10</sup> And as such, Browne concludes:

[o]ur Fore-Mothers and Fathers destroyed forever the shackles of physical slavery. The task now is left to us is to continue the battle to remove forever from our minds and the minds of our children the shackles of MENTAL SLAVERY that have us bound to our former would-be masters even tighter than the chains that once held us.<sup>11</sup>

Like Dr. Fergus - Montserratian historian and Deputy Governor of Montserrat, Mr. Browne understands that his present reality is conditioned by historical events, actions and reactions. Unlike Mr. Browne - Union leader and political activist, Dr. Fergus only cautiously and tentatively proposes individual and national independent thoughts and actions. If Fergus is the Du Bois of the island, then Cheddy is the modern-day Garvey of Montserrat, another latter-day Moses;<sup>12</sup> their individual realities, actions and convictions and differences all stemming from their personal character, their personal experiences, their colour, their upbringing and position on the island. When Vincent Thompson accounts for the personal differences between Du Bois and Garvey (who

controlled the Pan-African Movement outside of Africa), he may just as well have been describing the differences between Dr. Fergus and Cheddy when he wrote:

[t]he one was a scholar and university don, the other a mass leader, largely self-taught; the one a retiring figure, the other a showman and great orator; the one a diplomatic in his approach to his people's problems, the other a vociferous and daring character. [...] So far as Garvey was concerned Du Bois was a 'traitor to the race', and 'White Man's nigger', while to Du Bois, Garvey was 'insane'.<sup>13</sup>

Both Cheddy and Dr. Fergus consider themselves to be historians; however, neither would consider the other to be an historian. Dr. Fergus holds a PhD in education, teaches history at his Centre for Adult Education, has published a history of Montserrat through Macmillan, and he also reads snippets of slave history on the radio. For Cheddy, Dr. Fergus holds a PhD certificate in education, a scrap of paper that he earned through an opportunity denied to Cheddy; funding is scarce in the West Indies and Dr. Fergus, former Chief Education Officer, was fortunate to have obtained funding from the Government. Again, for Cheddy, Dr. Fergus is in the ideal position to campaign, lobby and agitate for independence - which Dr. Fergus also desires. Yet his quiet, slow and diplomatic policies and advances are too slow and quiet and diplomatic for Cheddy, and Dr. Fergus's position as Speaker and Deputy Governor are mere signs of his complicity with the *status quo*. For Dr. Fergus, Cheddy is a dangerous voice on the island, an agitator, an extremist with a vision of Montserrat as a socialist, black island with an independent agricultural economy - features which will scare off the staid and conservative nationalists on the island to whom Dr. Fergus is trying to appeal.

Cheddy shares with Dr. Fergus the same colonial education that they received at Montserrat's primary and secondary schools. Cheddy finished off his secondary education in Britain and subsequently went to the United States and volunteered to be drafted to Vietnam at the age of nineteen. Fergus remained on Montserrat before attending Bristol University and Manchester University whilst Cheddy served as a combat soldier. And it was as a combat soldier that Cheddy experienced first-hand the

competing global ideologies of capitalism, socialism and marxism, their institutions and propaganda mechanisms. For Cheddy, capitalism is a force synonymous with a firefight with an invisible foe:

j In, in, in what way were, were, the sort of, the American Government, confusing, what, or, propagandising

c Well, basically, in, in the way they reported what was happening.

j Uhuh

c A'right. We, we would go, we would get into a firefight as they sometimes call it, which sometimes was a pitch battle. We would be, be totally destroyed, maybe, maybe out of sixty - seventy men out of a company, at the end of that firefight, or that battle, six or seven of us would be walking; the rest of us would either be dead or wounded [door opens].

j Uhuh

c We would not have seen any enemy. We would not know how we got killed or destroyed. We would not have seen one dead body. We would not have seen one person shot that was supposed to be an enemy.

j Uhuh

c Right. We, we went through the area. We would not have picked up anything recogn - looking like a dead human being and you would read a report a few days or weeks later, whenever you got caught up with a newspaper that reported that same particular incident and you will see little or no American casualties and hundreds of dead enemy casualties, OK. In, in order to say that the might and the superiority

j But

c of the American military was destroying this enemy when the reality is that in almost every instance that we got into - a firefight or a battle or a war with these people, they literally destroyed us, and we never even saw them.<sup>14</sup>

For Cheddy, a seasoned veteran of physical, mental and ideological struggles, his repeated calls for independence for Montserrat are but other calls to arms in the life-long battle for self-determination and decolonization. These battles for the minds and the labouring forces of the world's population are fought on island land, in the

Caribbean sea, and in the polluted air: geographically, Cheddy points out that Montserrat is one of two bizarre locations in the world, the other being a mountain in Peru, where a radio signal broadcast from the Cable & Wireless mast atop Chances Peak can be received at any point on the globe. Ideologies have embraced technologies in that Radio Antilles used to broadcast throughout the Caribbean, North America, South America, Europe and Eastern Europe from Montserrat - articulating political philosophies, glossing capitalism, and propounding democratic virtues:

c Radio Antilles was the reason for um, bringing down the Berlin wall, for breaking up Eastern Europe, OK. Radio Antilles was a subsidiary of Deutsche Welle.

j Uhuh

c And Deutsche Welle subsidised Radio Antilles for 25 years and Radio Antilles broadcasted twenty-four hours a day on a short-wave station for twenty-five years in six different languages non-stop, OK.

j Uhuh

c The day the Berlin wall came down, Radio Deutsche Welle cut off its subsidy to Radio Antilles. Radio Antilles ceased to operate the same point in time and day that the Berlin wall came down. So the whole objective for Deutsche Welle and Radio Antilles and the German Government was to propagandise Eastern Europe, to destroy the communist empire - the Russian Empire, and to reunite Germany. Major, their major priority was the reunification of Germany. Everything else was secondary. But they got all of it in one bag anyway, because a few years after the reunified Germany, the Russian Empire fell apart. And the main reason for the Russian empire falling apart was the huge amounts of propaganda that they were able to pump into Eastern Europe, attempting to convince the Eastern European population that all they had to do was to turn over their governments from a communist government to a capitalist government, and the western hemisphere would funnel all the money in the world into their industries to help them to um, become western capitalist, um, free-enterprise systems.

j And democracies?



- c Yes.
- j But how come then, um, Radio Antilles is still continuing?
- c Naw, it isn't. It doesn't continue.
- j Well, in, with ZJB though?
- c Well, that's, it's, it's AM station, OK. The short-wave, short-wave station only functions now when the BBC hires it for the BBC world news one hour, when Voice of America hires it for Voice of American news for one hour, and when Deutsche Welle hires it for Deutsche Welle world news hour.
- j And Radio Canada?<sup>15</sup>

Within a small succession of hours, four international communities dominate the airwaves to discuss the merits and advantages of learning German, knowing how to buy *bratwurst*, obtaining a clear knowledge of local electoral voting patterns in Bavaria; mastering the intricacies of French-Canadian creole, and the skill involved in riding a skidoo; comprehending the democratic and capitalistic necessities for the North American Free trade Association (NAFTA), and the role of the United Nations throughout the world; and sympathising with Alistair Cooke's 'Letter From America' and the World Service. All purvey ideological goods, and to these means Cheddy explains his abhorrence towards neo-colonial capitalism's ends - an ideology inherently flawed, an ideological snowball of perpetual destruction:

- c Now, the United States currently boasts itself as the only super power left in the world. That means that the United States assumes that the whole globe, now is its world market, not only for economic influence, but for political control and military control, OK.
- j Uhuh
- c Which means that for it to maintain a hold on that empire, it and Europe, when it and Europe ever comes together and starts to see eye to eye, are going to have to hold politically, economically and militarily that empire together, and they're gonna have to use their resources to do that. They also gonna have to use their resources to look after their people at home. Now, the two, the two are contradictions, OK. They can't do both.

- j Uhuh
- c A'right. And this is where they goin'; this is where they are on the verge of collapse; this is where they gonna continue to collapse because they going - capitalism, by itself, demands expansion, capitalism by itself, demands military intervention, and, and, and a military type of economy.
- j Uhuh
- c They have to: they have to continue to ferment wars; they have to continue to expand; and they gonna over-reach - they nat going to be able to hold onto the vast global empire that they, that they perceive. They're extremely greedy people, and the greed is gonna blind them to the other realities that are in front of them, and they are gonna collapse, they just gonna reach out too far. They nat gonna have the pillars necessary to hold it up and they gonna collapse from the inside.
- j And, and you say that, what will, you say that something else will
- c I say that a window of opportunity will open, for the oppressed peoples in the world who want to get out from under that oppression.<sup>16</sup>

Working differently, speaking differently, with completely different backgrounds, interests and acquaintances on Montserrat, Fergus and Cheddy pursue an independent Montserrat. Both are involved in the education of the Montserrat populace: Fergus through education standards, poetry, national figures and pride; Cheddy through the rhetoric of revolution, oratory, agitation and black pride. Such brash and forthright traits are, for Cheddy, the means to achieve a viable system for civilisation, one that is humancentric and not egocentric, creative and not self-destructive in its appropriation and maintenance of the environment.<sup>17</sup> Consequently, the intentions and objectives of Cheddy's newsletters are explicit and direct. They have to be in a society, a British colony, where secondary school education was traditionally only an option for the children of the merchant and planter households, and only after 1972 was there any junior secondary school education available for those who failed the British eleven-plus exams.<sup>18</sup> As a result of all this, in his 'Message From the Publisher', Cheddy writes that:

[t]he objective of this publication is to counteract the mental slavery and genocide being perpetrated on Afrikans through the creation of an Africentric mindset.

By an Africentric mindset we mean a consciousness that recognises the legitimacy and validity of our interests, goals, objectives, values, history and culture and develop a world view that utilises the research of our scholars to organise our frame of reference.<sup>19</sup>

In sum, Cheddy is countering two activities which have been institutionalised by Europe - first, racism, the superiority of a race based solely on the *lack* of pigmentation (melanin) in the skin; and second, the invented histories and traditions, the creation of ancient civilisations which stem no further back in time than the year of 'our' Lord, and no further geographically south than Greece or Italy.<sup>20</sup> *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator* promotes Pan-African philosophies, ideologies; it is a Pan-African nationalist outlet for views which unite black people of the Diaspora and black Africa. On Montserrat, it is the 'Monthly Newsletter of KiMit', a Montserratian historical society named after the ancient name for Egypt.<sup>21</sup> Thus, Cheddy and KiMit are echoing and writing a version of Garvey's 'Back to Africa' inspirations. Their bold quotes at the end of pages - 'KNOWLEDGE IS POWER', 'KNOW YOUR HISTORY',<sup>22</sup> are all part of this black-consciousness-raising--independent--self-determination-for-Montserrat voice. The interview with Cheddy, again, carries across to the reader his intentions and convictions:

j So, so, it's, it's like, um, working towards a sort of nationalism?

c Well, that's what it is. That is the whole objective. That is the objective of Pan-Afrikanism. The mere fact that the papers' name is *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*

j Uhuh

c means that the prime motive of it is, number one, to become your own, your, to have control of your own um, national territory.

j OK.

[EDIT]

c But you cannot, you cannot unite with someone until you are free to unite with that someone. So the first prerequisite for us is to get free so that we have the freedom to make the choice of who we want to attach ourselves to - if we have to attach ourselves to somebody. Or who we want to make our economic links with, or who we want to make our cultural links with, or who we want - ya understand?

j Yeah

c But, but we don't have that initial freedom.

j And, and, and the choice of Africa is because obviously, historical

c Yes, 98% of the population is of pure African ethnicity regardless of what they gonna tell you at the Tourist Department, and regardless of what they tell the Irish people.<sup>23</sup>

This stance is reflected in every edition of *The Liberator*, a newsletter which is bought illicitly by the Government and sent back to the Foreign & Commonwealth Office in London where it is scrutinised and digested as a reflection of Montserratian feelings. From a limited print run of 350 copies, *The Liberator* has a measured and calculated impact upon Montserratian society,<sup>24</sup> and it is recognised for its impact by influential inhabitants of Montserrat. For example, when the National Youth Council organised a debate - 'An Independent Montserrat in the Twenty-First Century?' - involving Dr. Fergus of the University Centre, Claude Hogan from the Government Information Unit (and ZJB Radio Montserrat), and Lawyer Kenneth Allen QC, the speakers unanimously argued for the severing of the umbilical cords of colonialism, a break with British administration, to be achieved by 'a sustained education program on self-determination'.<sup>25</sup>

Speaking first, Fergus set the historical context and emphasised the conservative nature of Montserratians as far as sovereignty is concerned. Among other things, he pointed out that no island newspaper except Chedmond Browne's *Pan African Liberator* has seriously canvassed the independence cause and that in 1967

Montserrat chose colonial status instead of statehood in association with Britain, a semi-independent position, with the option of full independence later.<sup>26</sup>

In *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator* there are contributions from a wide range of 'conscious' individuals: articles by Rastafarians about Garvey and the Afrikan Mother of civilisation;<sup>27</sup> transcripts of interviews journalists have had with the Governor;<sup>28</sup> speeches by the Chief Minister of Montserrat and other political activists on other West Indian British Dependent Territories;<sup>29</sup> book reviews;<sup>30</sup> poems by Garvey, Rastafarians and a sympathetic British expatriate, Peter Lake, who settled and wed a Montserratian lady;<sup>31</sup> and there are highly informed articles by Cheddy writing under his 'Christian' name, 'Chedmond Browne', or under adopted, evocative 'African' names such as 'Mwongozi Shujaa C. Browne' or 'Cudjoe Kwame Browne'.<sup>32</sup> These are useful, critical and personal voices which Cheddy brings to the colony, allowing him to question and comment upon the Government, business activities, and the role of the British in its colonial control of the island. Using African names he shows the colonialists that there are other perspectives and cultures and ways of living. He introduces African names and terms in many editions of *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*. And at the end of the newsletter, there is a section devoted to news of events from the African continent.<sup>33</sup>

As Cheddy noted in the above conversation, a free Montserrat would allow Montserrat to ally herself with other nations of its choice, with the possibility of unifying with Africa. Such African nationalism is different to Garveyism. Browne would agree with Garvey's belief in self-determination for all peoples - Garvey's telegram salutation to the Irish Republican leader Eamon De Valera on behalf of the Universal Negro Improvement Association's 1920 convention is but one example.<sup>34</sup> Browne would advocate a racial nationalism, a *lebensraum* for black people, to cover the continent of Africa as well as regions such as the West Indies.<sup>35</sup> But, Browne is not seeking to repatriate his black colleagues from Montserrat to the African continent, as Garvey attempted with his establishment of the fated Black Star Line.<sup>36</sup> Browne often cites Garvey, particularly Garvey's speech when he visited Montserrat in 1936,<sup>37</sup> but this is

just a part of his consistent attempt to break the dependency cycle, 'the beggar mentality',<sup>38</sup> which Britain fosters with her political and economic stranglehold over the colony.

In 'Breaking The Dependency Cycle', the main article in Number 10 of Volume 1 of *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*, Peter B. White sets out the colonial condition for Montserratians. As crown colonials, Britain maintains responsibility for the island's external affairs, defence and law and order, and the Queen's representative now has firm control of any international banking services as well as being the head of the local Civil Service.<sup>39</sup> In calling for a Government which is 'responsible to the people and responsive to their needs and aspirations', in his call for independence, in his emphasis upon the creation of a basic infrastructure, White places great importance upon the 'sacred' notion of self-determination; a principle which the British have accepted as a right for all people throughout the world.<sup>40</sup> The catch is that self-determination and independence have to be voted for by a two-thirds island majority, and that there needs to be an island-wide collective self-confidence and pragmatic optimism for this motion to be carried. Whereas British policy is that self-determination is to be neither encouraged nor discouraged, criticism can be made that Britain embarks upon aid projects, building hospitals and Government buildings and promoting the tourist industry, but Britain does not really assist with the creation of a basic infrastructure of industry, local economic control, a devolved and independent civil service, and a strong educational sector.

Both White and Browne agree that Britain is not breaking Montserrat's dependency cycle upon Britain, that Britain is not establishing 'an economy with the potential for internal regeneration'.<sup>41</sup> In fact, both White and Browne believe, along with many other Montserratians, that Britain is pursuing a secret, hidden agenda. With the future loss of Hong Kong, Britain needs, more than ever, to keep her remaining Dependent Territories which she can use as the offshore banking arms of her reclining Empire. She has already firmly established the expatriate multinational Cable & Wireless on the island, and broken the local Cable & Wireless Union so that there is a cheap and plentiful labour force and a sophisticated telecommunications business established on Montserrat. Along with the Governor's personal control of the offshore financial



developments, Montserrat has become an island ripe for mercantile expansion of the virtual money variety. In effect, Montserrat is set to become a haven for British money-brokering, an offshore loophole for money-laundering, all at Montserratian expense.

c We are still a colony. And we're still being run and controlled as a colony, even more so now because it is more important for the British to maintain and hold onto the rest of its remaining colonies.

j Why is that?

c Because of what is going to happen in 1997. Because Hong Kong is going to go back to China in 1997 and Hong Kong is the most important colony for Britain right now. In its financial, in its financial offshore industry, Hong Kong plays a key hub. In that industry for Britain, Hong Kong plays a key hub period in the British financial empire in the shifting of moneys out of the Eastern hemisphere into Britain. When that, when that infrastructure is going to be impinged upon by Chinese, by Chinese legal laws, they cannot operate in the same manner as they used to operate when they only had to deal with a Governor. The entire, the entire financial structure of Hong Kong can only function under an atmosphere where a Governor is the sole head and control of the colony. So the whole entire financial infrastructure of Hong Kong has to be shifted, and the only place it can be shifted is to places where there are remaining colonies - and for this reason, and for no other reason, for the most overriding reason, Britain cannot afford to release any more of its colonies no matter what the Governor says, no matter what Britain pushes out diplomatically. Britain has all the intentions of holding onto those remaining colonies because it is integral to its financial Empire that it maintains them.<sup>42</sup>

Chedmond Browne's written work carries the same rhetoric as his speech whether it is an interview for tape, a conversation, or a Union meeting. His body of literature as a corpus is closer to that of Leopold Senghor and Kwame Nkrumah and Marcus Garvey than D.E.B. Du Bois. It is an articulation of oppression. His is the voice of the colonial. And Cheddy's voice from the margins has been further muted by the British

Governor of Montserrat who, as Leader of the Executive Council, cancelled Browne's weekly 'Conscious Connection' radio programme until further notice in a letter to the Director of Radio Montserrat.<sup>43</sup> The programme was popular on Montserrat and other islands and had needed rescheduling from Fridays to Wednesdays to meet its growing audience. Even the Editor of *The Montserrat Reporter* listened to the programme which he describes as follows:

[t]hrough the medium of conscious reggae music interspersed with discussion, Cheddy had been exploring themes such as African History, Colonialism and the re-interpretation of Black West Indian history. Similar material is echoed in his newsletter *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*.<sup>44</sup>

The purpose of 'The Conscious Connection' was, in Browne's words, 'to raise the level of the awareness of our people. We attempted to make people realise that we too have a right to determine our own destiny.'<sup>45</sup> Though many Montserratians did not necessarily agree with Cheddy, complaints were directed at the restriction placed upon his freedom of expression. Hilton Samuel's 'Letter to the Editor' of *The Montserrat Reporter* is a good example:

[t]here is a deliberate and calculating effort by a certain 'few' to stifle and stamp out from among us freedom of expression. The Executive Council appears to have started to blaze a trail of intimidation on anyone who has the guts to express his true inner feelings.<sup>46</sup>

These letters to the Editor, the Editorial, and article about the cancellation, appeared in *The Montserrat Reporter* at the same time that Dr. Fergus was releasing his fifth volume of poetry, *Calabash of Gold*.<sup>47</sup> Certainly, Cheddy has his detractors, but many who dislike his opinions and his aggressive dissemination of them, respect him. Even the Editorial in *The Montserrat Reporter* recognises Cheddy's rights on Montserrat, rights which should not be overlooked or overruled:

Montserrat is small enough for Mr. Browne to be viewed as an extremist and probably a bit of a crank to certain segments of the population. It is safe to say that he has some strong support and some mild support; there are those who oppose everything he represents and those who ignore him and wish he would go away.

It is safe to conclude that someone in Montserrat who has a lot of power or influence, does not like something Cheddy has said. [...] It should be pointed out that the actions like this do not go unnoticed by our neighbours. They make us look parochial, petty and COLONIAL. It's time we started having some dignity in the way we conduct our affairs.

Cheddy describes a conversation on the street with the Chief Minister's Permanent Secretary. In answer to his query, he is told that he has not been put off the air, but that the program is merely 'suspended' while the 'constitutionality' of the programme such as his and what they are permitted to say is investigated.

Utter baloney. If this is how our Government thinks and operates, we should focus on praying for a new one next week.<sup>48</sup>

Although an experienced college lecturer of history in the States, Cheddy is also now no longer able to enter Montserrat's schools.

In addition, although an experienced Union leader, Cheddy's own personal economic base has been removed with the 'illegal' termination of the Montserrat Seamen and Waterfront Workers' Union (MSWWU) by the Montserrat Port Authority in early 1995. In response to this Government/Governor 'sponsored' action, Mr. Browne filed suits against the Government of Montserrat on behalf of the Union. The Governor expected these actions to effectively immobilise Mr. Browne's campaigning: *"This should put an end to his childish little rag. If they're going to behave like children, then they should be treated like children"*, to paraphrase one of the Governor's comments at a dinner party.<sup>49</sup> However, Mr. Browne immediately stage-managed a 'coup' against the Governor and British authorities by organising an illegal visit to the island by Marcus Garvey's disciple, fellow revolutionary to Malcolm X, Honorary

Prime Minister of the Black Panther Party, Kwame Ture - previously known as Stokely Carmichael - chairman of the All-African People's Revolutionary Party.<sup>50</sup> Although banned from setting foot on British soil, and hence technically banned from visiting a British Dependent Territory such as Montserrat, Ture was able to visit and preach to Montserratians, as Garvey did before him, by claiming a social call upon his mother who lives in the north of the island. The visit to Montserrat by an eminent Pan-Africanist was publicised by all local newspapers, the radio, cable TV and *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*. The meeting was opened by Dr. Fergus and closed by Mr. Browne. At this unusual occasion, the two individuals were noticeably visible, whilst the Governor, the British representatives, and all the expatriates living on Montserrat were noticeably absent.<sup>51</sup>

#### **“Check” - Propaganda and Plymouth Port**

The Port situation is a useful case study to examine ideological conflict on Montserrat, incommensurable realities, and colonial power structures at work versus indigenous mechanisms for resistance. It is also useful in that it shows that my relativistic postmodernism anthropology does not preclude me from making practical comments. My argument is not just academic rhetoric about people trying to communicate their realities. Banned from the radio and unwelcome at *The Montserrat Reporter* which are media outlets sympathetic to Government leases and controls, Cheddy only has access to *The Montserrat News* and his *Pan-Afrikan Liberator* by which he can express his realistic version of Montserrat. To set the scene for the Port events, I will first look at the work force context on Montserrat, then the Montserrat newspaper coverage, and finally Cheddy's story set out in my interview with him and his newsletter.

The unions - so public opinion attests - arose out of the struggle for universal adult suffrage in the 1950s. Encouraged by Bramble and his Labour Party, the Montserrat Seamen and Waterfront Workers' Union was registered in 1961, and later affiliated under the umbrella organisation, the Montserrat Allied Workers' Union (MAWU)

which was formed in 1972 by George Irish, University of the West Indies Lecturer.<sup>52</sup> Yet, now, the men who work for the MSWWU at the Port constitute the sole corporation of organised labour on the island, a workforce operating under such a climate of extreme employment instability,<sup>53</sup> structural adjustment,<sup>54</sup> and high island customs duties, consumption taxes and service charges.<sup>55</sup> They have a legal contract with the Government-appointed Port Authority to be the sole cargo loaders and unloaders. This they undertake as longshoremen and stevedores. The system is labour intensive and has remained the same for decades. The Union maintains its side of the contract with the Port Authority, a contractual monopoly which the Port Authority would like to break so that they can increase their profits by using casual labour at rates which they can negotiate and decide upon without any resistance. In addition, for the Port Authority and the Government, the termination of the MSWWU would help them to repay existing port development loans which are now due.

Mention of trouble at the Port began at the end of 1994, Friday 22nd December's edition of *The Montserrat Reporter*. Although usually in sympathy with the ruling National Progressive Party (NPP), this edition of the paper discussed the near collapse of the 1994 Government Budget and the scrapping of the CET in February, and it blamed the local drop in inflation, and the lack of foreign investment upon the high freight rates imposed and incurred at Port Plymouth. To combat inflation (then running at 11%), the Government retains strict control upon the quantity of goods imported and exported, and the duties, tariffs and permits are established according to the economic situation rather than local demand.<sup>56</sup> At the start of the New Year, the same paper reported that the Port had advised the MSWWU that their members over the age of 60 would no longer be paid by the Port. In response, the General Secretary of the Union, Chedmond Browne, replied that this decision (which had been delayed from 1985) was inhumane because few workers had made contributions to any social security scheme, and they had no retirement package or pension plan. Traditionally, Browne mentioned, the workers themselves determined when they were no longer able to work, and that was the reason why there was no retirement age. With a work force of 100, Browne went on to scotch rumours that this large work force was the reason for the increase of rates at the port. The paper then pointed out that some public opinion felt it 'unfair to consumers everywhere for the Union to maintain on a roster



workers who never worked, but received wages every time their name came up.<sup>57</sup> The article was written due to a Union protest picket of the Port for four hours on Thursday 5th January 1995.

The same event was reported by *The Montserrat News*, a paper with an editorial policy critical of the NPP. They criticised the Port Manager, Roosevelt Jemmotte, an ex-military man like Cheddy, for using 'bulldozing tactics' against the Union. And they gave examples of the Port charges:

[t]he Port charges are believed to be among the highest in the world and an example is given of Mr. Uriel Howes who paid less than \$12,000 as freight for a 40ft. container from England to Montserrat, and \$7,000 for the same container to travel the few yards from ship to shore. Port Management say that something must be done to reduce those exorbitant costs and expects to make substantial reductions in charges by reducing labour costs.<sup>58</sup>

The stand-off continued with the Union trying to negotiate an immediate retirement package for workers over the retirement age of 65.<sup>59</sup> At this point in time, the propaganda battle for public opinion began in earnest.

In the same newspaper edition, in both *The Montserrat Reporter* and *The Montserrat News*, Cheddy published a lengthy response to the Port situation, protesting the negative publicity that they had been receiving in the papers, on the radio and the local Cable TV.<sup>60</sup> A week later, this was countered by a message to Montserrat from the Port Authority following the wholesale redundancy served upon the one hundred Union workers on 17th January.<sup>61</sup> At the same time, to alleviate island angst against the 'redundancy' of a union, the Port Authority masked its actions by reporting a 'cut in its landing, storage and distribution charges on all imports and exports', a cut in tariff which ranged in cargo handling from between 32% and 61% on containerised cargo, and 7% and 62% on breakbulk cargo.<sup>62</sup> *The Montserrat Reporter* concentrated its news upon these new wharfage rate rises, featuring comments from the Chief Minister and George Piper (President of the Montserrat Chamber of Commerce) to the



affect that island prices for goods would decline. The gist of the paper can be summed up by the following report about the situation which they printed:

[w]orkers who were made redundant, are being paid up to three months pay, in place of notice and will receive all other payments according to law. One insider said this is like saying thank you and giving you a cheque and then turn right around and say welcome to your Job with the Port. He said for some Port Workers, this could mean, that in fact they will not miss a day.<sup>63</sup>

This contrasts with the stance of *The Montserrat News* with the following sample from their Editorial:

[i]n a totally unprecedented act of national shame, the Port Authority Board acting with the connivance of the iniquitous NPP Government fired more than 100 employees who were working under a valid contract, supposedly because the Port and the Union could not agree in their negotiations. It is a blatantly unlawful act that could be contemplated only because the Union members are perceived as too old to fight and too lethargic to run and now an attempt is being made to confuse the public with a debate on their questions beside the moral, legal and ethical one as to why men should lose their jobs because their Union is lawfully in negotiation with their employer.<sup>64</sup>

And on the back cover, the dialect words of Miss Millie had much to say about the matter:

[d]em min ha fu do something, cause when de rice business come on stream dem couldn't ease up de man from St. Vincent, and cripple a-we, if dem min a go charge he \$5, and want to charge a-we \$37, you see de big drop? sudden really wrong, t'ink about it.

Dem want to kill de big man at de port, poor fellow, he accountable to one board, or he a float pon de board, de board accountable to

government, you see wha' me mean? A who you blame?

Well - by executed or executive, use any one you want, dem say de fellow at de port obnoxious and obdurate, and de others obfuscate, but together dem made a good team and gave good results.<sup>65</sup>

And in the middle pages they reported the lead up to the redundancy, written by Cheddy, with a running title across the page - 'The Whole Port Story - All the Port News - Black Friday - Diary of Shame'.<sup>66</sup> The Union had been in dialogue with the Port Authority since the Commission report of 1993, and they were still in negotiation with the MPA regarding retirement and redundancy settlements when the newly appointed Port Manager (November 1994, Jemmotte was appointed) took up the position and argued that the negotiations did not concern these two issues. He hand-delivered letters to Cheddy citing his position, and by January of 1995, it became clear that they were considering a change in the handling rates. The MPA demanded lists of workers over 60 years of age, refusing to pay them when their names came up on the work roster. However, all the MSWWU workers decided to strike on Friday 13th January unless all men on the work lists were able to work. A meeting was scheduled between the MPA and the MSWWU for 11am on Tuesday 17th January, and at this meeting, rather than continue negotiations, the MPA Board Chairman made announcements that the Port no longer required the services of the MSWWU, and that the Port would provide its own labour. The article noted some hasty and bitter meetings in the afternoon, and concluded with a statement of sentiments by the General Secretary:

[t]he Montserrat Port Authority and the Government of Montserrat have done an extensive propaganda program to mislead the people of Montserrat into believing that the excessively high costs of landing cargo at Port Plymouth was due the high cost of Labour. The reality is that the cost of labour was fixed in 1990 and has not changed materially to date. The cost of landing cargo in Montserrat escalated by over 300% in April 1994. This was due to the fact that the financing of the 30 million dollar debt that the government incurred to rebuild the port became due and payable starting in April 1994.

In order to service this debt, the Port increased all its charges. To come to the public today and announce a decrease in port charges at the same time that the Union has been dismissed was calculated to make it appear that labour was responsible for the high cost of bringing goods into this country. This is just another example of the steps that the NPP government will take to fool the public and mislead its own people.

This is just a sign of things to come. If the MSWWU is destroyed in this crude and callous manner without any response from the organised unions and the people of this country then we are moving back in time and slavery days are not far away. Who will the next 100 workers be and what organization will they be dismissed from? Montserrat's future is being determined now. Are we going to stand up and make it a progressive future or are we going to stand still and see what progress we have made over the last 50 years disappear in a day.<sup>67</sup>

By the end of the following week, *The Montserrat Reporter* was able to mention that 59 of the 94 Port employees, who had collected their 'terminal benefits' had reapplied for positions with the Port. Armed with this number, Reuben Meade reassured the public that the MPA action was an execution of Executive Council mandate, and that no longer would 65% of the Port's income be paid to its workers.<sup>68</sup> The matter left the public domain until Friday 3rd March, when it was reported that 30 former employees of the Port had contacted a local lawyer, David Brandt (former Minister of Communications and Works who implemented the Osborne Commission), to sue the Port for inadequate compensation which the Port had mysteriously calculated for the workers, yet some of the workers had not received. In order to protest at the Port's unknown compensation formula, the General Secretary of the MSWWU also contacted an Antiguan lawyer to represent the Union which suffered the dismissal of all its hundred members and subsequent rehiring of only about 30.<sup>69</sup> At the same time, most of the MSWWU members met and decided to forgo much of their compensation to fight the MPA with a civil suit against their dismissal - an infringement of their constitutional rights; they voted to retain the entire Union Executive and Mr. Chedmond Browne as General Secretary; and the legal action for compensation by

thirty of the workers was also discussed.<sup>70</sup>

It was not until the week of Friday 5th May 1995 that Port issues resurfaced with the headline in *The Montserrat Reporter*, 'Port Rocks the Boat - Workers Go Back To Work On Monday - At least one new face on the Board', and a special Port Extra edition of *The Montserrat News* to cover recent developments under the headline, 'The fight against injustice'.<sup>71</sup> According to *The Montserrat Reporter*, Jemmotte of the MPA - now reputed to be going to work with a sidearm - was forced by Communications and Works Minister Noel Tuitt (responsible for the Port and the Unions) to reinstate four senior office workers at the Port whom he had decided to put on 'forced' leave. The workers' legal representative, David Brandt, Windward Legislator and former Minister, advised them not to return the redundancy money which was paid to them. The General Secretary of the Montserrat Allied Workers' Union (MAWU) started mobilising resistance and mentioned that MAWU would 'fight injustice' such as this Port action. And the General Secretary of the Montserrat Seamen and Waterfront Workers' Union (MSWWU) responded to the Montserrat Trade Union Congress:

"[i]t hurts me deeply to see the response our sisters and brothers make for four workers. What has happened here is that a hundred labouring men do not add up to the same thing as four clerical workers."<sup>72</sup>

Other reactions are chronicled in *The Montserrat Reporter* by the workers' representative David Brandt, the Editor of the paper, and a former civil servant Cherrie Taylor. Brandt published a copy of his letter to Mr. Tuitt which mentions that the four female workers received letters on Wednesday 26th April 1995 telling them that they were dismissed from their jobs as of Thursday 27th April 1995 and that they should collect their redundancy pay; and then, on Saturday 27th April they received letters informing them that their dismissals were withdrawn, that they should consider themselves on leave, and that they should return their redundancy money. The Editorial sympathised with the dismissed workers but mentioned that the Union workers deserved their redundancies and had them coming to them. Cherrie Taylor linked the Port restructuring activities to future actions likely to be taken against the

civil servants in particular, and to the whole of Montserrat in general: 'I seriously wonder Mr. Editor, in how far the Montserrat Port Authority has been used to dramatise things to come as the prophet Jeremiah dramatised by walking the streets of Jerusalem with a yoke on his neck.'<sup>73</sup> Her comments explained the fear for individual jobs resulting in a lack of commitment shown to Union marches and rallies to the centre of Plymouth.

The Port Extra considered the further Port dismissals from a critical angle with detailed coverage of the event from the letters to the press statements. They did this not only as a means to discrediting the incumbent Government, but as a counter-weight to Jemmotte:

[Jemmotte] threatened staff against contacting *The Montserrat NEWS* - he had already brazenly bought off *The Montserrat Reporter* by hiring its editor as the Public Relations Officer of the Port - he sent home a worker who did not respond to his greeting the first time, he threatened a messenger who refused to run personal messages for top management, he instructed a worker who had offended him to keep a detailed diary of her daily activities.'<sup>74</sup>

Former Chief Minister and shipping magnate, John Osborne, described the Port's act as 'cruel and uncalled for', and requested that the four workers be unconditionally rehired. Member for Windward, David Brandt, was appalled at 'the cannibalistic treatment of the four workers', and implicated the current Chief Minister and his Government in the affair - speaking with vehemence similar to Chedmond Browne:

as the children of former slaves and field workers, we should not try to progress by destroying our brothers and sisters. Progress can only be achieved if we have concern and sympathy for one another. When one person is deprived of her rights, we should all resist it and unite to fight against it.'<sup>75</sup>



And, from his own outlet, Chedmond Browne was able to combine his Pan-African ideals with his leadership of the Montserrat Seamen and Waterfront Workers' Union. Cheddy was able to devote the majority of his January/February edition of *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator* to the demise of the Union. Under the headline 'Seamen Union Smashed With A Whimper - Continuing Saga of Britain's Agenda for Montserrat Played Out', Cheddy explained that organised labour was the only means for Montserratians to secure an independent and prosperous economy. When the Cable & Wireless Union was destroyed, the MSWWU became the new number one target for the 'Colonial Controllers'.<sup>76</sup> In the final section of this chapter, there follows a summary of Cheddy's post-mortem record of Union events from Tuesday 17th January 1995 which he wrote for his *Pan-Afrikan Liberator*. Cheddy's account reveals many conspiracies and complicities which he viewed. It is also a demonstration of his use of *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator* as an important outlet where Cheddy can express himself.<sup>77</sup>

#### **"Castle?" - A *Liberator* rebuttal**

**Tuesday 17th January 1995** - the MSWWU was dismissed whilst at a meeting with the MPA: 100 men given 50 minutes notice. The MPA Board claimed they were following Executive Council Orders, yet of the Executive Council (comprising of the Chief Minister, Governor, Financial Secretary, Attorney General and three Government Ministers), two Ministers claimed no knowledge of the rulings, nor of any debate, minutes or discussion. This leads one to conclude that the Chief Minister and Governor colluded to implement British policies - an observation strengthened by a public statement three days later by the Chief Minister explaining that the Port activities were carried out with full governmental knowledge (but no mention of Executive decisions). The MSWWU General Secretary explained the actions to the MAWU General Secretary who wrote a letter of condemnation; he failed to make contact with the Union's legal consultant (Kenneth Allen); at 4pm he met Lazelle Howes (Minister of Labour) who promised to re-establish all the workers or to resign



herself, and mentioned that the Chief Minister had not been able to tell her of the dismissal decisions because he had not been able to find her; he was unable to contact the Civil Service Association President, but was approached with backing by the Teachers' Union.

**Wednesday 18th January 1995** - The Civil Servants' Association (CSA) President called to express his sympathetic solidarity; an Antiguan lawyer was employed to make tentative research into a court case against the Port; the Union's regular legal consultant was still unavailable for consultation with the Union. Another afternoon meeting with the Labour Minister: she failed to carry out her own resignation threat, instead she encouraged the MSWWU to accept the situation and capitulate. That same evening, the entire Union met at a general meeting, and unilaterally voted to reject the MPA payout package, and unilaterally voted not to apply for employment with the MPA, and unilaterally voted to organise mass meetings, protests and marches: a public meeting the following Monday, a mass demonstration in the area of the Port Authority the Tuesday morning, a mass protest march to the Chief Minister's office on the morning of Wednesday 26th January, and a mass protest march to the Governor's office on the 27th. It was also agreed by unanimous vote that any Union member who broke the Union ranks and did not remain united with other Union members automatically gave up their Union membership.

**Thursday 19th January 1995** - By Thursday morning, three Union members had accepted the MPA payout and re-employment offer. The Port Manager and Board advertised that they only needed to hire 28 workers, and they set about canvassing and targeting Union members who received personal visits at home encouraging them to rejoin the Port on a first come first served basis. Families, friends and relatives were squeezed in order that the Union resolve weakened and cracked. Not only did the Port authorities phone wives of Union workers right into the night, but the merchant and shipping communities added their manpower to the subterfuge, assisting Union members so that they were guaranteed Port re-employment whilst appearing not to break Union ranks.

**Friday 20th January 1995** - This morning a contingent of Longshoremen, led by two members of the MSWWU Executive, met with the MPA management. Such an overt action signalled the demise of the Union. The majority of strikers under the age of sixty years crossed the line, believing that they were assured of Port employment for their deeds. Throughout the day, the Union backbone of strength - the unity of the workers - was fractured, splintered and shattered. The MSWW Union was still unable to contact or consult with their legal consultant, Kenneth Allen, and when their meeting was convened in the evening, only 32 members were present; 68% of the members absent were presumed to have broken rank, leaving only 13 members at the meeting who were under the forced retirement age of sixty years.

**Monday 23rd January 1995** - By Monday morning, only the MSWWU General Secretary and MSWWU President, Chedmond Browne and William 'Manny' West, still held the line as they had recommended that the remaining workers, if they so desired, accept the Port's terms. The General Secretary met with their legal consultant who only then mentioned to the Union that, as a member of Government which was in the action against the Union, he could neither advise nor represent the Union. Such actions would result in a conflict of duty.

Following the efficient and calculated destruction of the MSWWU, the MPA held a meeting with the initial 28 members of the former Union. These men were invited to become permanent staff at the Port. The other 40 men who crossed the line were not invited to join the Port and were given no explanation for their continued unemployment. In conclusion, the Union erred during the three crucial days from Wednesday to Friday: the Union underestimated the strength of its public support base; the Union miscalculated the reaction of the Labour Minister and members of other Unions - the Teachers' Union saw no reason to get involved, the Civil Servants' Association took ten days to convene an Executive meeting, the MAWU umbrella failed to react or communicate with all its members, and there was no action from any other Unions on Montserrat. Furthermore, the General Secretary had overestimated the social and mental understanding and resolve needed of his members in a unique situation. In his own words at the end of his *post mortem* he lamented:

[t]he inability of the majority of the members to balance integrity, principle, justice, loyalty to our elders and loyalty to each other against money was the major blow. How does one refuse a solid physical thing like money which one knows about, for some words and ideas which for the most part have never been a part of our lives?

Notwithstanding the fact that the MSWWU collapsed internally, the lack of support from the other union bodies sealed its fate. Their inability to mobilise for the MSWWU and their own collective survival have also sealed their destiny.<sup>78</sup>

For Cheddy, the destruction of his Union was not an individual event but part of a callous policy which began with the destruction of the Cable & Wireless Union, and will continue until there are no forms of collective labour left standing on Montserrat which are represented in Union fashion. For him, the Chief Minister and Governor have colluded to destroy all forms of organised labour because it does not fit with their vision for Montserrat as a country where multi-national and international corporations are welcome to set up and make use of cheap labour, tax breaks and an informal working relationship with the local and British Government. The MSWWU story of coercion, pressure and propaganda is just such an example, a case where a big business such as a rice industry was invited to the island. In an interview with Chedmond Browne, he cites this invitation as the cause for the trouble along with the Government mismanagement of a Port development loan. The Chief Minister signed a labour cost with the rice milling industry - Eastern Caribbean Rice Mills, at a fraction of standard workable labour rates, without consulting the Union, and so, Cheddy explains the inevitable confrontation:

- c The port? Well, the, there's a lotta, there's, there's, there's a lotta ramifications to the port, the port issue. But the overriding issue to the port - it again relates back to what the Governor was saying - the Governor is saying that we can afford; we cannot afford to allow multi-national and international corporations to come into this country and set up, set up their industries and utilise us as a cheap source of labour. But that is exactly what happened at the

port. The rice industry wanted to come here, the people wanted to come here and set up a rice industry which they wanted to be financed through, through the cheapest sources of labour available. On the waterfront you had an organised union labour which was not going to sit by and allow itself to be reduced to penury servicing the rice industry. And you have a Chief Minister who had already committed to a specific cost for the rice industry. Now the only way that he could get the day - the deadline day that they had said - set to start the rice industry and still guarantee the price that he had already given his commitment to the rice people,

j Uhuh

c is to get rid of the Waterfront Union. Because the Waterfront Union would not have accepted the cost factor that they wanted to give. And as such, if when the rice boat came here and the Union had already, had not come to any reasonable agreement, the Union was not going to land that rice and the Chief minister would have had a major problem. In order to solve that problem the Chief Minister conveniently got the board to use some fictitious excuse to dismiss the entire Waterfront Union. But the main, the main objective for dismissing the Waterfront Union from its workplace was to service the rice industry and to create an extremely cheap labour force to service that rice industry. Now, there are other ramifications to that, my position included, OK. I'm an active political activist in this country. I am also a main spokesman for giving our people some ethnic identity and some history; um, er, using the Waterfront Union as a powerbase it is possible that I could have made a humungous impact on this country through using my position in the Union.

j Hmhm

c So my position in the Union also plays, not a major part, but a minor part in the decision-making process to destroy the Union, because in destroying the Union you destroy not only my credibility as a leader of a large organisation, you also destroy my financial base and my ability to survive and exist in this community, OK.<sup>79</sup>

Cheddy lost the propaganda war played out in the Montserrat newspapers. The dominant reality of the situation revealed a Union receiving its money 'by the ton' and not 'by the man'. The public readers include the influential Dr. Fergus who, at the time of this interview, was invited by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) to attend, as a delegate, a seminar in Botswana on 'Parliamentary Democracy'. Following his stint as educator to the South Africans, Dr. Fergus visited Washington where he took part in a Partners of the Americas International Fellowship Seminar.<sup>80</sup>

For Cheddy, the future is fast becoming the past. The days of slavery are still present on the island, and history is repeating itself. Montserratian society, allegedly working class due to an ancestral slave descendancy, is riddled with class and colour divisions. An office worker does not feel akin to a dock labourer. When four Port staff workers are dismissed, there is more public protest, sympathy and empathy than when one hundred dockers are dismissed. Again, I cite his own words, a sociology of the present:

- c Everything of benefit to everybody in this country has come from the labouring man's sacrifice, through the labour Union, through the activities of the labour Union, and through the activities of the old labour party, and the first Chief Minister of this country, W.H. Bramble.
- j Uhuh
- c But the people now, the young people, the second generation who now occupy these positions are not aware of the fact - or choose to ignore the fact - that they occupy their, those positions based on the sacrifices of their own foreparents, recent foreparents. We're not even going back into our slave past now. We're going back as far back as their own mothers and fathers and grandmothers.
- j Wait. Could, could you draw, like, a bizarre parallel to a slave past where you had - the slaves working in the fields, and then you had the domestic servants, and um, you had the, sort of, the slave overseer
- c Uhmm
- j and, and, and then, sort of the expat?



- c Well, it's not bizarre! What you saying again is exactly correct. What, what is happened again here is this, um, we have a certain a level, a certain class of people now who have now found a niche in the society that satisfies them and that niche means to a great extent that they have to deny the true realities of who they are, and where they came from, in order to satisfy someone else and something else, so they can be - continue to be - upwardly mobile. It is a, it is not bizarre, it is a classic example of how slave societies and systems exist and how they operate. It doesn't matter what you call it now because the overall impact of the system has not changed, OK. So changing the names and the terminologies and putting on better clothes and driving in a vehicle and alla those things does not change the reality of the dynamics of the system. And it does not change the reality how, how people interact within that system. When we had slaves and we had slaves who worked in the field and slaves who worked in the houses, it was a clear definition. Well, it's the same thing now: you have labourers who still labour and you have clerks who work in better clothes.<sup>81</sup>

By interview, newspaper dialogue, anthropological narrative and case study of island politics, we build up a bleak understanding of Cheddy's present day reality, one of propaganda, competing ideologies, and protest. From this present day commentary upon society it is apparent that, for Cheddy, an alternative future to colonial and commercial exploitation is required, one which necessitates a popular protest base to break out of the mercantile cycle of history which has continued to abuse a group of Africans brought to the island as slaves in the seventeenth century, emancipated in the nineteenth century, given the right to vote in the twentieth century. But can this be achieved by a group of 'Afrikans' impressed upon by a colonial (Afrikaner) mentality, blackened with a colonial history, isolated from mainland representative democracy, confused by propaganda ideology, sold out by their Government majority? A king cannot castle out of check. There are few options available to Cheddy with his mission to persuade other Montserratians to see Montserrat the way that he does.



In sum, as an anti-colonial historian, Cheddy is a worthy opponent of the likes of Thesiger. And Cheddy's more circumscribed prose distinguishes him from Fergus's equivocal poetry. Equally distinct from Fergus - for teaching a blackened history of the island's colonial past, for opposing the island's colonial present, for writing back to Africa through the British Empire to alter the future, and for proselytising his reality, Mr. Browne has made few allies. The organisation KiMit may be a part of the wider Pan-Afrikan Movement, but the only avenue that KiMit and Cheddy have through which to express their philosophies - which is necessary to build a popular protest base to achieve what they see as a predetermined and inevitable future - is to sell *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator* up and down the streets; to talk, argue and harangue: to agitate, instigate, motivate, educate the Montserratian public. *The Liberator* continues to be published and the KiMit organisation continues to clamour for independence from Britain with Chedmond Browne as the political candidate for Plymouth in the next local elections. But the last labouring Union on Montserrat, the Montserrat Seamen and Waterfront Workers' Union, now only exists in the courtroom.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> (Fergus 1992: 6).

<sup>2</sup> For brief reference to principles of internal division based upon skin colour, see Thomas Hylland Eriksen's discussion of Coloured-Creole categories - 'the amount of milk in the coffee' (Eriksen 1992: 75-77, especially 76).

<sup>3</sup> The first quotation is taken from Solomon 1:5 where Solomon describes himself. Later, in Matthew 1, Christ's genealogy is traced back to Solomon. The second quotation comes from Daniel 7:9; and the third comes from Revelation 1. This issue is important in black societies where Christ is portrayed as white, and anything pure, positive and beautiful is associated with the same white colour. Silas Hamilton, a Montserratian reporter, who cited *The Bible* in an ironic article, 'The Colour of Christ' (*The Montserrat Reporter*, 24th February 1995: 10), made these points in a conversation in Zaki's bar (The Hangout, Wapping). As a result of this, he was described by his black friends as full of 'radical and communist teachings from the University of West Indies' (Hamilton, *The Montserrat Reporter*, 24th February 1995: 10). In the article, Hamilton notes the psychological damage to Africans in the false representation of the Son of God, how all his black friends 'oppose[d] the thought of Christ as black more than white persons' (Hamilton, *The Montserrat Reporter*, 24th February 1995: 10). For Silas Hamilton, it is this religious oppression which perpetuates the 'lie that we are an inferior race, stupid, ugly and unable to govern ourselves' (Hamilton, *The Montserrat Reporter*, 24th February 1995: 10). Thus, religion does little to dispel the well-known aphorism '[i]f you're white/that's all right/if you're brown/stick around/but if you're black/stand back' (Hamilton, *The Montserrat Reporter*, 24th February 1995: 10).

<sup>4</sup> Transcript of an interview between Chedmond Browne and Jonathan Skinner (10th July 1995: 47).

<sup>5</sup> Transcript of an interview between Chedmond Browne and Jonathan Skinner (10th July 1995: 48).

<sup>6</sup> (Lazarus-Black 1994; see also Fanon 1986; Mannoni 1990).

<sup>7</sup> (Nash 1994: back cover).

<sup>8</sup> Slogans which appear under the title of each edition of *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator* (Monthly Newsletter of KiMit, published by Chedmond Browne, P.O. Box 197, Plymouth, Montserrat).

<sup>9</sup> This article is anonymous but probably by Chedmond Browne (Anon., *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*, August 1992: 1, no other references available).

<sup>10</sup> (Anon., *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*, August 1992: 3, no other references available).

<sup>11</sup> (Anon., *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*, August 1992: 3, no other references available). Cheddy is not clear, here, as to whether or not he is referring to one master or not. This could be a grammatical mistake.

<sup>12</sup> (Cronon 1969: 4).

<sup>13</sup> (Thompson 1969: 42-43).

<sup>14</sup> Transcript of an interview between Chedmond Browne and Jonathan Skinner (10th July 1995: 36-37).

<sup>15</sup> Transcript of an interview between Chedmond Browne and Jonathan Skinner (10th July 1995: 16-17).

<sup>16</sup> Transcript of an interview between Chedmond Browne and Jonathan Skinner (10th July 1995: 39).

<sup>17</sup> Transcript of an interview between Chedmond Browne and Jonathan Skinner (10th July 1995: 40-41).

<sup>18</sup> See Chapter Eight, 'Education in the Twentieth Century' (Fergus 1994: 173-195, especially 181-188, 187).

<sup>19</sup> (Browne, *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*, August 1992: 2).

<sup>20</sup> (Browne, *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*, August 1992: 2).

<sup>21</sup> Transcript of an interview between Chedmond Browne and Jonathan Skinner (10th July 1995: 40-18).

<sup>22</sup> (Anon., *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*, August 1992: 4, 2, no other references available). The first slogan echoes Foucault. Other slogans in other editions are more inflammatory. *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*, March 1993, has many clear examples: 'A united union stands firm. With division you have no union. There is strength in unity' refers directly to the working-men on the island and Cheddy's position as leader of the Seamen's Union (Anon., *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*, March 1993: 5, no other references available). 'Give people bread and they feel like beggars. Teach them to make their own and you give them their dignity' refers to the importance of independence and self-reliance through education (Anon., *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*, March 1993: 5, no other references available).

'How long shall they kill our prophets while we stand around and watch? When will we start to name and claim our own heroes?' cites Bob Marley's lyrics and appeals to nation-building enterprises (Anon., *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*, March 1993: 6, no other references available). The last page of the edition reiterates these previous themes: '[t]he system has prepared the minds of its subjects to accept information without question', and, '[i]t is always better to form the habit of learning how to see things for yourself, listen to things for yourself, and think for yourself; then you are in a better position to judge for yourself - Malcolm X' (Anon., *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*, March 1993: 8, no other references available).

<sup>23</sup> Transcript of an interview between Chedmond Browne and Jonathan Skinner (10th July 1995: 21, 22). There is also a controversial myth surrounding the descent of Montserratians as there were many Irish indentured servants as well as African slaves who worked for British plantation managers on the island.

<sup>24</sup> Transcript of an interview between Chedmond Browne and Jonathan Skinner (10th July 1995: 40-20).

<sup>25</sup> The debate was televised and broadcast on the radio on 29th November 1994 from the Montserrat Allied Workers' Union (MAWU) building opposite the University Centre in Plymouth. The quotation is taken from a report of the debate, 'Independence' (Anon., *The Montserrat News*, 2nd December 1994: 15, no other references available). It was interesting to note the unanimous convictions held at the debate, that independence is a necessity and will be achieved. Linguistically, the debaters all premised independence as a future reality. It is also important to note that those present included myself, Cheddy, and my landlady who commented, with surprise, that Fergus stood publicly for independence and acknowledged Cheddy's contributions to the struggle.

<sup>26</sup> (Anon., *The Montserrat News*, 2nd December 1994: 15, no other references available). The 'k' is a spelling which is different to the naming, spelling and defining of Africa which was dictated by Europeans. Similarly, America, Britain and other places are sometimes spelled without the initial capital letter.

<sup>27</sup> (Ras Atiba, *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*, August 1992: 4).

<sup>28</sup> 'Does Independence fit into Montserrat's future? - Headline interview with Montserrat's Governor, David Taylor' by Claude Hogan (*The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*, November 1992: 1-4, entire edition; see also Cassell, *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*, September 1993: 1-4; Cassell, *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*, October 1993: 1-4).

<sup>29</sup> (Anon., *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*, February 1993: 1-4, entire edition, no other references available; see also Missick, *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*, April 1993: 1-2; Greaves, *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*, April 1993: 2-3).

<sup>30</sup> (Browne, *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*, October 1994: 8; see also Anon., *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*, May 1993: 5, no other references available).

<sup>31</sup> (Garvey, *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*, November 1993: 8; see also Cassell, *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*, July 1993: 3; the lines, 'Ethnicity is **BLACKMAN**./Nationality is **MONTERRATIAN**./Yes Brothers and Sisters, Let us/stand firm and unify./**WALK ONE PATH/CARRY ONE THOUGHT/ERADICATE COLONIALISM**.' 'Yes, Governor we want our independence', poem by Herbert, *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*, October 1993: 5, 1.45-51; "'Them" And "Us"' poem by Lake, *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*, October 1992: 3).

<sup>32</sup> (Browne, *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*, October 1993: 6-8; see also Browne, *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*, May 1993: 3-5).

<sup>33</sup> Volume 2, Number 7 of *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator* has a section 'Pan-Afrikan News' (Anon., June 1994: 7-8, no other references available) which concentrates upon the 7th Pan-Afrikan Congress in Kampala, Uganda (April 1994), as well as a page on 'Afrikan News' outlining Nelson Mandela's achievements in South Afrika (Azania) and Afrika south of the Sahara (Anon., June 1994: 7-8, no other references available).

<sup>34</sup> (Cronon 1969: 64).

<sup>35</sup> (Cronon 1969: 83).

<sup>36</sup> (Cronon 1969: 50).

<sup>37</sup> (Garvey, *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*, August 1993: 1-4, entire edition).

<sup>38</sup> (White, *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*, May 1993: 1).

<sup>39</sup> Offshore banking was made a British enterprise following the 1989 Constitution Order which Britain imposed (see Fergus 1994: 208-211).

<sup>40</sup> (White, *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*, May 1993: 1).

<sup>41</sup> (White, *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*, May 1993: 3).

<sup>42</sup> Transcript of an interview between Chedmond Browne and Jonathan Skinner (10th July 1995: 2-3).

<sup>43</sup> (Fenton, *The Montserrat Reporter*, 22nd October 1993: 14, back page; see also Anon., *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*, October 1993: 5, no other references available).

<sup>44</sup> (Anon., *The Montserrat Reporter*, 29th October 1993: 4, no other references available). The show was also hosted by the Montserratian radio DJ Owen Roach who went on to sing calypso for the first time in the 1994/5 Calypso King Competition as Owen 'Stud' Roach.

<sup>45</sup> (Fenton, *The Montserrat Reporter*, 22nd October: 14).

<sup>46</sup> (Samuel, *The Montserrat Reporter*, November 5th 1993: 6).

<sup>47</sup> (Fergus 1993[a]; see also Grell, *The Montserrat Reporter*, 22nd October 1993: no other references available).

<sup>48</sup> (Edgecombe, *The Montserrat Reporter*, 29th October 1993: 4, author's emphasis).

<sup>49</sup> Public conversation between Jonathan Skinner and Governor Savage following the Port developments, no other references available.

<sup>50</sup> In Ture's talk (Anon., *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*, April/May 1995: 8, no other references available), he stressed the importance of independence, echoing Cheddy's work. He criticised the mental, political and economic control of the Afrikan in America; the religious views that Christianity is not African; the educational system on Montserrat which fostered colonial mental dependency; capitalism in favour of socialism; and concluded with the following summary of A-APRP ideology:

[t]he A-APRP is an Independent, Socialist, Mass, Revolutionary political party, working to organise the masses of African People scattered all over the world. Our objective is Pan-Africanism, the total liberation and unification of Africa. Our ideology is Nkrumaism.

Nkrumaism is an ideology which has developed through centuries of struggle by African people to free ourselves from brutal, racist oppression of our nation and class exploitation. It is scientific. It is revolutionary. The A-APRP is a small but growing party with members and supporters throughout the world - Africa, Europe, South America, The Caribbean, North America, and all places where our people have been scattered. Its members and supporters are struggling and working hard to educate and organise our people into a unified, strong, and revolutionary political force to liberate our land, Africa and our people, Africans.

<sup>51</sup> The meeting was held at the University Centre on 23rd March 1995. Organised by Mr. Browne, opened by Dr. Fergus, attended by concerned Montserratians, the meeting was a public success and coup for KiMit (Anon., *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*, April/May 1995: 8, no other references available; see also Anon., *The Montserrat News*, 24th March 1995: 5, no other references available; Samuel, *The Montserrat Reporter*, 24th March 1995: 10). Presumably Stokely Carmichael changed the Western name which was given to him when he was brought up on Trinidad to Kwame Ture by taking the first name of the founder of the All African People's Revolutionary Party, the late Prime Minister of Ghana and co-president of Guinea, Kwame Nkrumah, for whom he worked as political secretary, and the last name of the deceased President of Guinea, Ahmed Sekou Toure (where Ture lives). Dressed in white African clothing, along with a similarly dressed Fergus, Jamaal Jeffers of the Montserrat Writers' Maroon, Jean White of the MNT, and many others, he preached his views and answered questions to an inspired audience for two hours. Throughout the next day, the radio station broadcast snippets of the talk, interspersing Ture's rhetoric with 'socially conscious' music. At the end of the evening talk, Cheddy, who had been listening from outside the converted classroom, was given a special ovation for organising the event. Fergus concluded the proceedings by plugging sales of his book about Montserrat, "his" history of a Caribbean Colony. I do not know to what extent Cheddy and Dr. Fergus worked together, if at all, arranging the conference.

<sup>52</sup> See "Trade unions after 1960" section in Chapter Seven (Fergus 1994: 169-172, especially 169).

<sup>53</sup> Following the 1989 devastation caused by Hurricane Hugo, Her Majesty's Government (HMG) instituted mass development and regeneration projects. In 1992, \$20 million (EC) was spent on rebuilding the Plymouth Port using European contractors; similarly, \$6 million was spent repairing the old hospital, organised by British contractors, unfinished by 1994, and evacuated in 1995 due to the volcano; similarly, \$3 million went to repair roads, roads which will not have pavements as the European consultants are not bound by the same European safety standards; similarly, British



contractors are spending \$12 million on a new Government Headquarters, nicknamed 'the Kremlin', constructed according to old colonial styles and painted pink so as to accord with tourists' expectations of a colonial Government Headquarters; similarly, \$5 million was spent refurbishing the Governor's residence, aptly named Government House (Anon., *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*, June 1994: 5, no other references available).

In addition, there are certain political conditions and strings attached to many of Britain's social and economic Montserratian policies. Britain has planned an airport extension so that Montserrat can compete with other islands for tourists, the proviso being that Montserrat receives £9 million out of the £23 million total necessary, and that the extension be designed by the British; it is up to the Government of Montserrat to raise the additional £14 million. Likewise, on 10th May 1994 an agreement between Britain and Montserrat was signed by Reuben Meade (Chief Minister), Frank Savage (Governor of Montserrat) and Richard Kinchin (Head of the Barbados Regional Secretariat), the Country Policy Plan (CPP), a plan which exists on Britain's other Dependent Territories and an agreement which allows Montserrat to receive the £9 million Britain was offering to give towards the airport. The Plan, devised by British consultants, identifies, assesses and devises future policy directions for all the public affairs of the island territory from tourism projections to offshore banking and investment protests, foreign industry to budget controls and civil service reductions, all of which have to be agreed to before Britain will continue her aid packages and complete her development projects. An example of one rumour circulating the island was that the hand over of the new Government Headquarters would not occur until the civil service cuts of about 500 household wage-earners were put into effect; Britain had deemed it unacceptable that 60% of the island's GNP was going towards local civil service salaries (Anon., *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*, June 1994: 2-3; see also Greaves, *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*, October 1993: 4, no other references available).

<sup>54</sup> In his article, Jamaal Jeffers (*The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*, January/February 1995: 6), an English teacher, laments the employment situation on Montserrat where few people besides civil servants have any form of pension, benefit, or job security, and that many workers - young and old - are unable to fulfil the Port's new employment criteria that they must be able to read and write.

<sup>55</sup> The Government imposed a Common External Tariff (CET) from 15th February 1994 to raise Government revenues (Anon., *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*, March 1994: 1, no other references available). The result was an upsurge in smuggling activities.

<sup>56</sup> (Anon., *The Montserrat Reporter*, 22nd December 1994: front cover, no other references available; see also Anon., *The Montserrat Reporter*, 22nd December 1994: 6, 23, no other references available). Several expatriate restaurants closed in 1995 because they were unable to obtain a steady supply of vegetables, and Government refused import permits for vegetables which, in theory, could be locally produced - though they were not available.

<sup>57</sup> (Anon., *The Montserrat Reporter*, 6th January 1995: front cover, back cover, no other references available).

<sup>58</sup> (Anon., *The Montserrat News*, 6th January 1995: 5, no other references available).

<sup>59</sup> (Anon., *The Montserrat Reporter*, 13th January 1995: front cover, no other references available).

<sup>60</sup> The full text of Chedmond Browne's offer can be read below (*The Montserrat News*, 13th January 1995: 12-13; see also *The Montserrat Reporter*, 13th January 1995: 7):

**The Montserrat Seamen and Waterfront Workers' Union speaks out - The Montserrat Seamen and Waterfront Workers' Union** has received some negative publicity because of our dispute with the management of the Montserrat Port Authority.

We believe the time has come for us to explain to the public, whom we ultimately serve, the background to our current problems and the efforts that we have made to resolve our differences with the MPA.

At present there exists a contract agreement between the Port Authority and the Union for the provision of labour; when a vessel is in Port Plymouth and cargo has to be landed.

The Union's policy is that labour must be distributed so that the work is rotated among the Union members.

To date we have not been informed by the Port Authority of any problems with the quality of work being provided by the Union, and we therefore carry on our responsibilities in the spirit and to the letter of our contract.

**Payment for labour by the Port Authority to the Union is made on a per ton basis.** For example, if 150 tons of cargo is landed, the payment to the Union is the same whether 20 men or 40 men work.

**Our present problem with the management of the Port Authority stems from the fact that the MPA wants to impose an age limit on the workers in the Union's Labour Force.**

We believe that this is not only unfair and arbitrary but unethical, and illegal.

The fact is the members of the Union are not employed full-time either on a weekly or monthly basis.

Union members work only if and when a vessel is in port. If no vessel arrives, we generate no Income. Therefore, we are job labourers with no continuity of Income.

At present, out of a membership of 100 men, there are 30 over the age of 60. The vast majority of whom live solely on their income from their work at the port.

**Accepting the age limit of 60 in the manner put forward by the MPA will have the certain effect of making these workers destitute.**

**We wish to point out that the number of members in the Union has no effect on cost at the Port since, as we pointed out earlier, we are paid on a per ton basis.**

Unfortunately there is a misconception that the size of the Union is causing high Port charges thus increasing the cost of living.

This is a false conception and we call on the Port Management and the Minister of Communication and Works to set the record straight.

The Union has not been inflexible on the issue. We have proposed a formula whereby the age limit could be phrased in so as to lessen its negative impact.

**OUR PROPOSAL IN SUMMARY IS:**

Reasonable compensation must be provided for the older members and the Union suggests the following formula:

**\*Immediate retirement for all members 65 years and older.**

**\*Retirement at 65 for all other members now 46 years and over.**

**\*The guarantee that all workers between the ages of 51-59 have a standard package of benefits regardless of other pension accumulation.**

**\*The setting of retirement age at 60 for all members now younger than 46.**

In fact we were of the view that this proposal had been accepted by the Port Authority since it ultimately met their stated objective.

We are still negotiating with the Port Authority and intend to continue conducting ourselves like responsible citizens.

However we believe that any settlement must be negotiated in good faith, and we will resist an imposed solution.

Signed *Chedmond Browne*

<sup>61</sup> The full text of the Port Authority's offer can be read below from *The Montserrat News* (20th January 1995: 18-21; see also *The Montserrat Reporter*, 20th January 1995: 6-7).

The Port report - The board of the Montserrat Port Authority today January 17, 1995 informed the Montserrat Seamen and Waterfront Workers' Union that it declares all Stevedores and Long-shoremen redundant, and no longer requires the Union to provide labour for the Montserrat Port Authority operations. The Port would therefore assume responsibility for employing Port Workers.

All labour formerly provided by the Union will be paid a package which contains three settlements:

(a) Payment in lieu of notice - up to three months wages in some cases.

(b) Severance payment according to law



(c) Holiday benefit (paid to the Union as Customary).

All Long-shoremen and Stevedores are being advised individually that they have been made redundant and that they may reapply for employment under the restructured conditions at the Port. Also, the Authority has assured the Union both verbally and in writing that the Authority will continue to recognise the Union as the sole bargaining agent for Port Workers as long as the Workers so desire.

It has been recognised for several years that the organisation and management of the Port in relation to staff, cost of operations (including handling charges) and Port Workers benefits needed to be rationalised particularly after the Authority was established, major investments made in heavy equipment, new buildings and related facilities, and a new jetty constructed.

Considerable public debate over the years has focused on the need for reduction of costs to importers, (and subsequently the consuming public), exporters and developers. Hence, the restructuring employment practices and procedures is only one of the many strategies to reduce overall cost of operations. Other major strategies include the reduction of insurance payments and overhead costs.

In 1993, Government established the Osborne Commission to review and make recommendations for the improvement of operations and finances at Port Plymouth.

Members of the Commission were:

Mr. John Allen, ACII - Manager of an Insurance Agency (former Accountant, Port Authority)

Miss Charmaine Daley, BSc - Accountant, Port Authority

Mr. Eric Kelsick - Member, Port Authority Board

Mr. Bertrand B. Osborne - Businessman (Member, Legislative Council)

Mr. Haycene Ryan, BSc - Deputy Comptroller, Inland Revenue (former Port Supt.)

Mrs. Vereen Thomas Woolcock - General Secretary, Montserrat Allied Workers' Union

The Commission interviewed and took submissions written and verbal from the widest cross-section of the community, sent members of the commission to visit several Ports in the region and spoke with shippers as far afield as the USA.

Its reports with recommendations to the Minister included;

- a) a revised tariff;
- b) changes in the system for handling cargo at the Port;
- c) proposals for the membership and structure of the Port Authority;
- d) necessary infrastructural improvements; and
- e) proposed amendments to the Port Authority Ordinance.

**One of the main recommendations of the Commission was that all labour at the Port be placed under the control of the Port Authority, and that in order to achieve this, the registered Long-shoremen and Stevedores who currently work at the Port should be made redundant or laid off. A similar recommendation was made by an Industrial Relations Consultant, Mr. Russell Morisson, who in 1993 reviewed employment practices in the Public Service and Statutory Bodies in Montserrat.**

The Osborne Commission also made recommendations for changes in the Tariff, as well as in the number and composition of work gangs. In the course of its submission, the Osborne Commission recommended that the Port rationalise its labour force by:

- 1) taking control of the Port labour that it employs;
- 2) reducing the total numbers and the size of the gangs; and

3) retiring all Long-shoremen and Stevedores over the age of 60 with their appropriate benefits.

Several efforts were made by the Authority between 1982 and 1985, and again since 1993 in the course of negotiation to arrive at a mutually agreeable settlement, keeping in mind the ultimate benefits that it wished to achieve. But the Authority was not successful, hence the decision to declare all workers redundant today 17th January 1995 and move to restructure in accordance with the Authority's aims and objectives.

Since 1981, the Authority has pressed the Union to establish a proper Pension Fund for its workers but this was never done. Now that the Port has taken control of its own work force, a Pension Fund will be instituted for these workers.

We believe that the action we have taken will rebound to the benefit of the general Public both financially and developmentally. Port charges are being reviewed and amendments to the Tariff will be published in a few days.

The Montserrat Port Authority is currently hiring port workers to operate light and heavy equipment and to load and unload cargo, whether in containers or breakbulk.

In order to be considered, one should be between the ages of 18 and 55, be able to read and have a valid Social Security number.

Qualified individuals who are interested are asked to apply in person immediately to the Manager, Port Authority, from whom all other relevant information will be obtained.

<sup>62</sup> Contrast the - 'Port Charges Slashed - Wharfage rates under review' - headline from *The Montserrat Reporter* (20th January 1995: front cover headline) with the - '100-Seamen dumped - The Inside Stories' - headline from *The Montserrat News* (20th January 1995: full front cover headline).

<sup>63</sup> (Anon., *The Montserrat Reporter*, 20th January 1995: front page, no other references available). The paper also mentioned that the restructuring at the Port was on the advice of the Osborne Commission 1993, an independent review made of Port activities by a wholesale businessman and Member of Legislative Council - Bertrand Osborne, who recommended that all labour at the Port be placed under the control of the Port Authority.

<sup>64</sup> (Anon., *The Montserrat News*, 20th January 1995: 2, no other references available).

<sup>65</sup> (Anon., *The Montserrat News*, 20th January 1995: 24, back cover, no other references available).

<sup>66</sup> (Browne, *The Montserrat News*, 20th January 1995: 4-8). I was present at Cheddy's house for the writing of some of this article - a lengthy response to developments at the Port.

<sup>67</sup> (Browne, *The Montserrat News*, 20th January 1995: 8). The afternoon of 17th January 1995, Cheddy met with the Minister of Labour who assured him of her resignation if the situation was not immediately rectified. However, so the article notes, the following day, the Minister apologised for the situation that the members of the MSWWU were in. In response, the General Secretary noted that he had been instructed by the MPA Board, who in turn had been instructed by Executive Order, to dismiss the entire Union. She replied that the last Executive Council meeting - to which she is a key member - had not mentioned any Port affairs, and so the General Secretary of the Montserrat Seamen & Waterfront Workers' Union concluded that the MPA Board had colluded together to transgress the legal system by using Executive Council powers to dismiss the Union. Some other last accounts of the event covered by *The News* are a statement of the action by the Chief Minister who, acting as Minister of Economic Development, recommended the action taken to Montserratian general public (Meade, *The Montserrat News*, 20th January 1995: 12); and Vereen Thomas Woolcock's (General Secretary for the Montserrat Allied Workers' Union) letter condemning the MPA (Woolcock, *The Montserrat News*, 20th January 1995: 14).

<sup>68</sup> (Anon., *The Montserrat Reporter*, 27th January 1995: front cover, no other references available).

<sup>69</sup> For a legal analysis and critique of the Port situation, see 'Tell all the truth' (Brandt, *The Montserrat News*, 20th January 1995: 11) and 'More Port Wars' (Anon., *The Montserrat News*, 3rd March 1995: 3, no other references available).

<sup>70</sup> See the following articles in *The Montserrat News* (March 10th 1995, Vol. V, Issue 9) for additional general information about the situation of the Port workers: 'Our Women's World' (Anon., *The Montserrat News*, March 10th 1995: 2, no other references available); 'Help your business' (Anon., *The Montserrat News*, March 10th 1995: 6, no other references available); 'P.S. Daniel under

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axe' (Anon., *The Montserrat News*, March 10th 1995: 3, no other references available); 'Union to fight Port' (Anon., *The Montserrat News*, March 10th 1995: 5, no other references available).

<sup>71</sup> See the following articles for specific information about the circumstances of the Port workers: 'Port Rocks the Boat - Workers Go Back To Work On Monday' (Anon., *The Montserrat Reporter*, 5th May 1995: 1, headline article, no other references available); 'The fight against injustice' (Anon., *The Montserrat News*, Port Extra edition, 2nd May 1995: cover for the entire edition, no other references available).

<sup>72</sup> (Anon., *The Montserrat Reporter*, 5th May 1995: 1, headline article, no other references available).

<sup>73</sup> (Taylor, *The Montserrat Reporter*, 5th May 1995: 5).

<sup>74</sup> (Anon., 'Jemmotte: petty tyrant', *The Montserrat News*, Port Extra edition, 2nd May 1995: 6, no other references available).

<sup>75</sup> (Anon., untitled report about the dismissal of four Port employees, *The Montserrat News*, Port Extra, 2nd May 1995: 9, no other references available).

<sup>76</sup> See the article, 'Seamen Union Smashed With A Whimper - Continuing Saga of Britain's Agenda for Montserrat Played Out' (Browne, *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*, January/February 1995: 1-5).

<sup>77</sup> This diary narrative is a précis of events, a précis taken from the 'Post Mortem' section of the article 'Seamen Union Smashed With A Whimper - Continuing Saga of Britain's Agenda for Montserrat Played Out' (Browne, *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*, January/February 1995: 1-5).

<sup>78</sup> (Browne, *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*, January/February 1995: 5).

<sup>79</sup> Transcript of an interview between Chedmond Browne and Jonathan Skinner (10th July 1995: 3).

<sup>80</sup> (Anon., *The Montserrat Reporter*, 5th May 1995: 10, no other references available).

<sup>81</sup> Transcript of an interview between Chedmond Browne and Jonathan Skinner (10th July 1995: 8-9).

## EMERALD ISLE TAKEN BY STORM

### Montserrat makes much of its Irish heritage. But Lucretia Stewart found the similarities nowadays limited to insouciance when the volcano rumbles

THE DAY before I left Montserrat, the Chief Minister, the Honourable Reuben Meade, declared a state of emergency and ordered a phased evacuation of the capital. The volcano had been acting up for months, since July 1995, and Plymouth, the island's toy-town capital, and the surrounding villages had already been evacuated more than once. When the news broke on the radio I was at the other end of the island in the far north at Carr's Bay. I had gone there to see the oldest burial ground in Montserrat - Theodore, my guide from the tourist board, used that term rather than "cemetery". No sooner had the Chief Minister finished speaking than Theodore was on the telephone to the mother of his children telling her to pack; we cut short our tour and drove back towards the capital.

A low cloud of black smoke lay over the Soufriere Hills and the roads were choked with cars and trucks taking people and possessions to the safe north. On the way into Plymouth, we passed a street preacher bellowing, "The wrath of god shall fall upon the island". Theodore dropped me at the Montserrat National Trust where you could get a T-shirt bearing the words "Now she puffs/But will she Blow/Trust In the Lord/And Pray it's No". I bought the local paper, the *Montserrat Herald*. The leader writers were having a field day:

"Fire in the mountain  
Run Montserratians, run!  
The brave ones shall sound the alarm  
At the sound of the alarm, the faint-hearted will run  
Fire in the mountain  
Run! Run, Montserratians, run!"

People were already queuing in the banks and supermarkets; from the next day, everything would close down for four weeks.

The taxi driver who took me to my hotel had gone to Antigua for a month when the volcano first started acting-up three months earlier. Now he was staying put, perhaps in response to the example set by Arrow, the local calypso star, who had just released a song called "Ah Just Can't Run Away" from an album chirpily entitled *Arrow Phat*.

Montserrat, one of Britain's six remaining Caribbean colonies (now known as Dependent Territories), has the distinction of being the Caribbean's only "Irish" island; the Tourist Board makes much play of the Irish connection, distributing leaflets revealing that Montserrat, the self-styled "Emerald Isle of the West", is 3,000 miles west of Ireland and lists some 73 Irish surnames to be found on the island: Fagan, Farrell, Maloney, O'Brien, O'Donoghue, Reilly, Ryan and so on. Catholicism is the main religion. "Present-day natives of Montserrat have retained many Irish customs and beliefs," continues the shamrock-festooned pamphlet. "A popular folk dance, the 'heel and toe', has been attributed to Irish customs as well as the national dish, goatwater, which is believed to be a popular Irish stew." The island's crest depicts Erin with her harp; as you come through immigration, your passport is stamped with a shamrock, and 17th March, St. Patrick's Day, is a public holiday.

There are many apparent similarities between Ireland and the Caribbean: both share a casual, anything-goes, what-the-hell attitude to life; they have in common an enthusiasm for religion and a passion for music and poetry, for debate and rhetoric, and for drinking and dancing. West Indians, like Irishmen, are big talkers and full of charm. But is there any more to Montserrat's Irishness?

In the 17th century Montserrat became a sanctuary for victims of religious persecution. Protestant intolerance in St. Kitts caused the first wave of Irish Catholic settlers and Catholics from Virginia made up the second. "Montserrat was unique among the Caribbean English colonies in having freedom of religion as a dominant motive for its establishment," wrote Dr. Howard Fergus, the island's Deputy Governor, in his history of Montserrat. Cromwell dispatched more Irish Catholics to Montserrat as political prisoners, following his victory at Drogheda in 1649.

Dr. Fergus is senior lecturer in Caribbean history and education at the University of the West Indies and the author of an essay entitled Montserrat 'Colony of Ireland': The Myth and the Reality. He was less than enthusiastic about the Irish connection when I went to see him on the island one afternoon.

"It is now used as a means of attracting tourists," he said. "We get a number of Irish people making



enquiries about their roots, some from North America, some from Ireland. Montserratian leaders have gone to Ireland to cement the relationship. I am one of the few people who try to play down the Irishness of Montserrat. The Irish did not influence greatly the life and culture of Montserrat - they themselves were discriminated against. Their main legacy is Catholicism. The Irish came here seeking freedom of worship, but during the heyday of plantation life in Montserrat, most were only a few removes from slavery." And the 17th March celebration in Montserrat has nothing to do with the Irish saint; it commemorates the nine leaders of a slave rebellion executed in 1768.

I had asked if there were any Irish Montserratians for me to talk to and, somewhat to my surprise, one was found. Miss Teresa Sweeney lives out in the countryside in St. Peter's parish (where no Roman Catholic church has ever been built; if the ancestors of the people there were Irish, the landlords were Protestant). The day was overcast, presaging rain; we drove through villages with curious names: Weeks and Salem and Frith. The island was all velvety hills and valleys scattered with ruined houses of dark volcanic stone.

Miss Sweeney was a light-skinned woman with "soft" hair (as opposed to African hair, which is called "hard"), but she seemed about as Irish as reggae music or rum punch. Had she perhaps answered an advertisement in the *Montserrat Herald* for an Irish person? Did she perhaps think that all light-skinned people qualified as Irish? She told me that her maternal grandparents were from Ireland, that they were white overseers. She said her mother was "like" a white woman and that her father was a "brown-skin man" from Montserrat. One uncle had been married to an Irishwoman in the United States. She tried to be helpful but knew little of her forebears. I thanked her for her time and took her photograph.

The Montserrat Tourist Board also claims that the island is "The Way The Caribbean Used To Be". This seems to have about as much basis in reality as the Irish connection, though Montserratians have a reputation for friendliness. The island, however, is pretty sophisticated. I was staying at the Isles Bay Plantation, a lavish development of houses each with a 40ft swimming pool, overlooking a golf course. There is no shortage of luxury villas for rent or sale in Montserrat; the most torpid island in the Eastern Caribbean with a population of only 11,000, it is also remarkably free of the shanty-town appearance that characterises much of the region. There are only two hotels; most of the tourism is in villas. Rock stars such as Sting appreciate the island's tranquillity; George Martin has a house here. It is a favourite retirement spot and the streets of Plymouth are littered with elderly white men in shorts and socks. Many of them have built beautiful houses on Montserrat's emerald slopes. Other islands have cricket; Montserrat has golf.

But Montserrat's placid exterior can be deceptive; the volcano has been providing excitement for months now and the first time I went there, in 1993, I was bitten by a dog and attacked - well, accosted anyway - by a man with a machete. All in the space of two days.

The dog bite happened as I was concluding an almost certainly illegal transaction to hire a car from a friend of the hotel barman; it was Sunday and more conventional outlets were closed. The dog had been barking hysterically at the end of a chain throughout the negotiations and finally managed to bite me on the calf. I insisted on going to the hospital where a nurse glanced at my bruised and swollen leg, said that there was nothing they could do for me, but not to worry, there was no rabies on Montserrat.

The encounter with the machete-wielding maniac occurred when I went to photograph the Philatelic Society, whose roof had been blown off by Hurricane Hugo in 1989. Montserrat was badly hit by Hugo, which rendered more than 2,500 people homeless. No part of the island was untouched by the storm. In the harbour at Plymouth, the 180ft quay completely disappeared.

As I aimed my camera at the decapitated building, a man waving a cutlass lurched towards me, shouting and screaming. I tried to explain that I was photographing the building, not him, but he could not or would not hear. He came so close that I could feel his spittle on my face and brandished the machete under my nose. Two school-girls walking by came to my rescue. "Leave de white woman alone, man," they said, and he went away.

Carved round the doorway at Andy's Village Place in Salem were the words *Céad Mile Fáilte*, "One Hundred Thousand Welcomes" in Gaelic. But inside was the Caribbean at its most laid-back. Andy, muttering darkly about "woman-mongering", was planning a special menu to lure people to "safe-zone Salem". Despite the government newsletter headline "Montserrat Volcano Crisis Unfolds", nobody seemed too bothered. As a friend back in Antigua put it: "That volcano bin jerkin' off for years and he ain't ever come yet."

## TRAVEL NOTES

**GETTING THERE:** Transatlantic Wings (0171 602 4021) has flights to Antigua from Gatwick with Caledonian Airways. Prices start from £330 and go up to £540 depending on travel dates. From Antigua return flights with Liat cost \$144 (£95) to St. Martin and \$68 (£45) to Montserrat. Other companies that arrange holidays and flights to the area include Caribbean Gold (0181 742 8491) and Carib-tours (0171 581 3517). Harlequin Worldwide (01708 852 780) organises tailor-made luxury holidays to 59 Caribbean islands. Prices, including flights, start at £880 for a week in Montserrat or £1,200 for a week in a deluxe garden room in St. Martin. Harlequin can also arrange bookings at Isles Bay Plantation.

**GETTING AROUND:** Various Liat Air Passes are available through Transatlantic Wings (0171 602 4021). For \$199 (£130) the Liat Explorer, valid for 21 days, offers three stopovers from a selection of 23 islands (including St. Martin and Montserrat). The pass must be purchased outside the Caribbean. Carib Express (0171 730 2214) operates a limited service between islands and also offers a Caribbean pass. The minimum of two island hops costs \$98 (£65) and the maximum costs \$392 (£260). All Caribbean airports have a charter company on call. Montserrat Airways (001 809 491 6494) offers sightseeing tours, day trips and shopping excursions.

**MONTSERRAT HOUSES:** To buy or build, contact Isles Bay Plantation (0171 482 1418), 12 Stucley Place, London NW1 8NS.

**FURTHER INFORMATION:** Montserrat Tourist Office (0171 242 3131), Suite 433, 52-54 High Holborn, London WC1V 6RB. French Government Tourist Office (0171 629 2869), 178 Piccadilly, London W1V 0AL. Caribbean Tourism Organisation (0171 233 8382), Vigilant House, 120 Wilton Road, London SW1V 1JZ.

**FURTHER READING:** *The Weather Prophet: A Caribbean Journey* by Lucretia Stewart (Vintage) will be published in paperback in March.

(Stewart, *The Independent on Sunday*, 4th February 1996: 51-52)



## Chapter Six - 'The Way The Caribbean Used To Be'? St. Patrick's Day and the 'Black Irish' of the 'other' Emerald Isle

A tourist reading about Caribbean islands may peruse the many travel brochures, trying to distinguish the differences between the many islands. Because each island shares the same sun, sea and sand with the others; because so many of the beaches are indistinguishable from each other; and because, for the undiscerning tourist, all the indigenous West Indians look the same - tourist promotion in the Caribbean has sought to facilitate the tourist's choice, helping the tourist to distinguish one island from another. Tourist Boards' distinctions have become the tourist's expectations. And, in turn, much of the tourist literature has been internalised by the inhabitants of the islands. This chapter is a case study of these shifting local and foreign realities. Marketing by dissimilarity, Antigua is marketed as 'the island with 365 beaches' - one for every day of the year; St. Lucia is known for its volcanic Pitons which tower over the island; Jamaica is associated with reggae - the birthplace of Bob Marley; Guyana is the land of rivers and gold; Trinidad is the home of calypso and carnival. Each tourist destination is known for its tourist signs - semiotic tourist attractions which the tourist has to experience to complete their visit, so Dean MacCannell argues.<sup>1</sup> A visit to the island of Montserrat is a visit to a little sparkling version of Ireland ('The Emerald Isle of the Caribbean'),<sup>2</sup> a colonial haven ('The Way The Caribbean Used To Be'),<sup>3</sup> with specific, structured activities for the tourist. In my opinion, it is the aim of the islands' Tourist Boards to affect the tourist's reality in a controlled fashion. In attempting this, Montserrat tries to appeal to a range of different tourists, from British monarchists to American republicans.

Such Caribbean islands as Antigua, St. Lucia, Jamaica, Guyana and Trinidad are all heavily reliant upon the tourist industry, the fluctuations of fair-weather visitors. For these islands, the tourist figures are well-calculated: in 1993 they were running at 484,700 for Antigua; 318,768 for St. Lucia; 1,340,506 for Jamaica; 67,394 for Guyana; and 246,291 for Trinidad. The islands unite to attract tourists to the Caribbean Basin, but so too do they compete amongst themselves for foreign currency revenue. A small island such as Montserrat receives a smaller share of the tourists to

the Caribbean, approximately 30,301 in 1993, barely 2% of Jamaica's number of visitors.<sup>4</sup> In competition with the larger islands, Montserrat is forced to promote herself, billing all of her assets: a volcanic island with black sand beaches, a Soufriere, a bird sanctuary, the 'Great Alps' waterfall, a bamboo forest where the Montserrat Oriole makes its nest, and several sugar plantation ruins (Galway's, Waterwork's, Trant's Estates), and her friendly people with their unusual connection with Ireland.

Tranquil, colonial, up-market and exclusive resort island, rather than package holiday site, Montserrat is, 'The Best Place On Planet Earth' - 'What you dreamed a CARIBBEAN ISLAND would be' according to West Indies Real Estate,<sup>5</sup> certainly not suited to back-packers. Such adverts attract 'white' British, Canadian and North American long- and short- term tourists, and American medical students. For all these visitors, Montserrat is the ideal Caribbean study location: 'English-speaking', 'mild' in climate and with 'political stability' as a British colony.<sup>6</sup> But do these tourist statistics and descriptions possess any understanding of local and foreign realities? What are the feelings and responses to the marketing of Montserrat as 'The Way The Caribbean Used To Be'? Has Montserrat grown too close to this label, or not close enough? This chapter addresses these questions by looking at some of the consensus and variety of meaning(s) given by visitors, and residents of Montserrat, to the past, present and future celebration or commemoration of St. Patrick's Day (17th March) on Montserrat.<sup>7</sup> In so doing, I hope to bring together some of the previous references in this thesis about Dr. Fergus, Cherrie, and Cheddy amongst others; I will also continue the theme of inter-subjective contest which I raised in the last chapter and Chapter Three; and I will interrogate the nature of Montserratian identity according to the writings of the anthropologist John Messenger.

This chapter complements previous chapters by illustrating the partial and relative nature of history, and the heterogeneous nature of the historical event which men such as Dr. Fergus seek to order. However, I believe that it is important to foreground my presentation of St. Patrick's Day on Montserrat in this chapter with some general information about the connections between Montserrat - 'the Emerald Isle' - and Eire which predominates in every tourist piece promoting the island, the people, their history and culture. For example, during the winter season, the Montserrat Springs

Hotel offers a two bedroom suite for 'the Quiet escape'. For \$335 (US), excluding tax, a couple can share a ladle full of a unique island which is simultaneously a replica of Ireland, a Caribbean original, and an authentic Imperial outpost:

Montserrat's Irish heritage comes alive with a shamrock stamped in your passport, places with names like Fogarty Hill and Kinsale, rolling green hills and valleys that rival those of the original "Emerald Isle," and warm friendly people.

But our Emerald Isle has a distinctively Caribbean flavour, with beaches ranging from golden to shimmering black, bubbling sulphur springs and spectacular waterfalls, and landscapes dotted with centuries-old sugar mills and cannons.<sup>8</sup>

But there is more to Montserrat's Irish connection than a marooned shamrock stamped in the tourist's passport, or the tourist emblem of an emerald shamrock inset with a Caribbean palm tree.

Some Irish-Americans are attracted to an island that is 'four thousand miles south west of Cork'<sup>9</sup> because their impression of Montserrat is that it is an anachronistic part of their 'old sod': according to their history, Montserrat was settled by Irish refugees in the seventeenth century when their ancestors settled in North America, so, to some extent, they feel that they 'belong' on Montserrat. Indeed, it is the Irish connection which attracts many tourists to Montserrat, a point raised in an article by Brian McGinn in the 1994 edition of the magazine *Irish Roots*. His article is entitled 'How Irish is Montserrat?' and it explores Montserrat's curious status:

[i]t is a British Crown Colony that calls itself the Emerald Isle of the Caribbean. A carved green shamrock adorns the centre gable of Government House, overlooking the Union Jack that flutters from a nearby flagpole. It observes St. Patrick's Day with one public holiday, and three months later the Queen's Birthday is another.<sup>10</sup>

Like McGinn, Dr. Fergus also seems preoccupied by the Irish legacy which he summarises in the 1993/4 Tourist Board brochure:

[t]he Irish legacy lives on in goat water, a national stew, in music, an Irish drum, the bodhran, and in names of people and places such as Farrells, Cork Hill, Kinsale, O'Garro, Galway, Blake's, Rileys, O'Brien and St. Patrick's; and Erin of Irish legend still poses on the national crest and flag.<sup>11</sup>

In light of Dr. Fergus's poetry and his articles about nationalism on Montserrat, we can surmise that Fergus laments this Irishness on Montserrat (just as Cheddy laments the cultivation of Irish symbols and emblems on Montserrat): the adoption of Irish names from the Estates following slave emancipation (1834); the Irish bodhran and Irish heel-toe jigs found on Montserrat; the 'Black Irish' families with light skin colour and red hair; The Montserrat Tourist Board's involvement in the St. Patrick's Day national holiday.

Significantly, Dr. Fergus notes that it was not until 1971 that 'local scholars rediscovered the day',<sup>12</sup> referring to 17th March, St. Patrick's Day. Ever since then, Dr. Fergus has campaigned relentlessly, in his poetry and newspaper articles, for St. Patrick's Day to become a national holiday on Montserrat - not as a celebration of Montserrat's Irish connection, but as a commemoration of one St. Patrick's Day celebration (1768) when the slaves on Montserrat attempted to overthrow their Irish and British masters.<sup>13</sup> Cheddy admires this aspect of Fergus's work for it culminated in the establishment of a national holiday in 1985. This is recorded in the final paragraph of Fergus's Montserrat - History of a Caribbean Colony:

[t]he decision in 1985 to make St. Patrick's Day a national holiday and to celebrate Montserratian heroes past and present with activities rooted in creole culture, is contributing to the development of a national and cultural identity.<sup>14</sup>

Ideally, the 17th March would be known as Heroes Day, commemorating those who died in the failed slave insurrection - a psychological statement for the present that Montserratian ancestors were noble and dedicated in their resistance of slavery. However, a recent Government suggestion that is being mooted is to establish an August national holiday to combine with emancipation celebrations (1st August is Emancipation Day throughout the Caribbean and August Monday is the national holiday on Montserrat) called Montserratian Achiever Day. This would 'free up' St. Patrick's Day, leaving it as a national holiday to attract tourists interested in the Irish connection during the tourist season, leaving the August celebrations of Montserratians past and present, for Montserratians; of course the August event would emphasise the present successes on a modern colony, rather than dwell upon the colony's oppressive past which the authorities would prefer to remain buried.

Speaking in the same interview which featured in the last chapter, Cheddy vehemently points out the Governor and Government's errors and problem with blurring the commemoration of the St. Patrick's day rebellion with a new Montserratian Achievers August celebration:

j     Could you point out the mistakes?

c     Tell you how it goes?

j     When you talk about Chris Patten and

c     Tell that, this is, the Governor has the whole thing backwards and I don't know who explained it to him, OK. But there's two clear and distinct dates. Emancipation Day in Montserrat, was, has always been, from the year 1834 to the present the first of August, and not just in Montserrat. In the entire English-speaking Caribbean the 1st August 1834, the Emancipation Act - I can show you a copy if you want -

j     Aha, I've seen it

c     declared all former slaves to be no longer named slaves. It was a trick in legislative writing but the reality is, the way we have interpreted it that we were no longer slaves, we were set free on that day. That has been a traditional holiday in the entire Caribbean since the year 1834. Don't confuse the issue whatsoever. The 17th March in Montserrat in the year 1768, on the 17th



March - there was a plan by the slaves of Montserrat to destroy the colonial masters because they celebrated, a Irish holiday of St. Patrick's Day, OK. And they planned, the slaves planned to kill all the white people in Montserrat because they know that they would meet at Government House on that day and they would drink and be drunk and they would be celebrating and they would catch them in a position where they could destroy all of them. So the 17th March to us - which is St. Patrick's day to the Irish around the world - is a day where we celebrate our capacity to rebel against oppression. A'right. That, again, was confused again by the Tourist Department and the British Government to be turned into a traditional St. Patrick's Holiday to lure Irish tourists back into this country on that day. We did not create it for that day. We have been demanding the change of the name of that day from St. Patrick's Day in Montserrat to Heroes Day or Slave Rebellions Day or some Day that allows us to understand why we rebelled under the conditions that we lived under. But there's two distinct things altogether. No, they're mixing it up. They're going to confuse the issue by putting an Emancipation Day - another holiday called Montserratian Achievement Day - you understand, which is then going to totally remove from the minds of the younger generations the implications and the huge impact of Emancipation Day and the contributions that our forefathers made over two hundred and fifty years to make that their reality. So what the Governor is saying makes absolutely no sense at all, and whoever gave him the foundation or the background for what he says, totally confuse him and they have absolutely no idea what it is they're saying or doing.

j There were other mistakes though in what the Governor was talking about.

c Well, there's a lot of flaws in what he's saying. But I mean this is British diplomacy I would imagine.<sup>15</sup>

Cheddy is explicit about his harsh impressions of Britain's diplomatic management of Montserrat, impressions which converge with those of Dr. Fergus, but diverge with others such as the American anthropologist John Messenger who has written about the St. Patrick's Day Festival. This chapter, then, hinges upon a narrative sketched from my fieldnotes and the local media (local radio and press), which incorporates the complexity and synchronicity of a lived through experience of the St. Patrick's Day



festivities with side-events such as the commemorative Freedom Run from the Plymouth capital to St. Patrick's village. It turns, first, to a stream of consciousness account. Then, second, to a selection of different impressions of the festivities and St. Patrick's Day itself - to understandings of St. Patrick's Day other than my own (Cheddy, Dr. Fergus and others). Third, I detail and criticise an academic's impressions of St. Patrick's Day festivities from my postmodern anthropological position: namely, I reveal the shortcomings of another anthropologist's 'work' (John Messenger), the results of which he understandably concealed from his 'respondents'. Drawn together, the fourth - and final - part of this chapter links the various competing histories and impressions of Montserrat to the various interest groups which will continue to agitate for control of St. Patrick's Day, sending the thesis forward to the final substantive chapter of various travel writers' impressions of Montserrat.

### **Celebrating or commemorating St. Patrick's Day, 1995?**

*"When it comes to news, information and entertainment, there's simply one place to turn, ZJB Radio, 885AM, 92.5FM. We are 10,000 watts of pure and living energy. Get to know us and you'll know why!"<sup>16</sup>*

Morning, afternoon, evening, the island is tuned to the local radio, one of the key media elements for preparing the people of Montserrat for St. Patrick's Day and the St. Patrick's Day tourists.

**Mid-February:** a school-child reads over the radio a series of short information bulletins throughout the day: "*[...] many years ago. It is observed here more in the context of bringing home to us the significance of St. Patrick's Day in our history, our culture and our evolution from bondsmen to people who are truly free. Modern celebrations of St. Patrick's actually began in the 1970s. At that time most of the activities centred around the University Centre with lectures on aspects of Montserrat's history and a display of the creative arts with the Emerald Community*

*Singers singing patriotic - and slave - songs. [...] More recently, however, activities became focused in St. Patrick's. Be listening for more on St. Patrick's Day - another important aspect of our cultural heritage."*

**Early March:** Prior to St. Patrick's day, the radio bulletins gain in length and detail. The listening public are geared up for the 17th March St. Patrick's Day week of social and cultural activities, just one of 11 Official Holidays on Montserrat which occur every year.<sup>17</sup> Just before the St. Patrick's Day 'week', The Official St. Patrick's Day Programme 1995 is on sale in the streets via the news vendors.<sup>18</sup> Emerald green, it is headed with the outline of a palm inset within a shamrock on the side of an emerald silhouette of the Emerald Isle. In-between adverts from local businesses and hotels, there is a message from H.E. The Governor F.J. Savage who stresses the 're-emergence of cultural ties with Ireland': Savage has forged close ties between Ireland and Montserrat, arranging for the twinning of Kinsale (Montserrat) with Kinsale (Ireland) to help business links, and for the Chief Minister to meet Irish Ministers in the British Embassy in Dublin.<sup>19</sup> On the opposite page in the programme, the Vue Pointe Hotel advertises traditional menus of goatwater and mountain chicken with the addition of corned beef and cabbage, and a barbecue accompanied by '*Danny Boy*' on the steel pans.<sup>20</sup> There then follows a message from the Chief Minister which emphasises the St. Patrick's community and their contribution to the annual celebration. Reuben Meade's message ends:

[i]t is our hope that all our visitors will have an enjoyable stay. We hope that they will share *our sense of history* and appreciate that this occasion signifies a rich cultural tradition of which we are proud.<sup>21</sup>

The last message is a 'Celebration of Achievement' by Dr. Howard Fergus which discusses how Dr. Fergus successfully pressured the Government into changing the name of the airport from Blackburne Airport to W.H. Bramble Airport - a campaign which he had begun in the early 1980s. Dr. Fergus also makes the point of returning to the original reason for the St. Patrick's Day celebration and he notes that the re-naming of the airport will take place in August when the Caribbean is commemorating

Emancipation Day (August Monday), soon to be known as Achiever's Day on Montserrat. Marking this occasion, he writes that:

we must never lose sight of those martyrs of freedom, those who dared to take up arms, such as they had, against the perpetrators of slavery and oppression, on March 17, 1768. Their achievement (it was certainly a great triumph of the human spirit) will shine better in an environment in which our heroes are no longer imported and look a little more like ourselves. [...]

While it is politically safe to do so, let me congratulate Chief Minister Reuben T. Meade for his wise decision. My preference was for linking the honour with St. Patrick's Day, which I unofficially christened Heroes Day, but this is not the issue. Our people participated in their own emancipation in the nineteenth century and making emancipation day Achiever's Day will hopefully re-capture lost meaning for the anniversary of emancipation and re-invigorate our August festivities.<sup>22</sup>

The bulk of the St. Patrick's Day Programme advertises the local businesses such as Emerald Tours, the sole In-Bound Ground Tour operation which organises tours of the natural sites around the island. On the Wednesday and the Thursday the Tourist Board encourage all on an island-wide Pub Crawl: 'Join us as we celebrate Irish tradition and stop in at various bars all over the island. Music and drinks galore . . . FUN, FUN, FUN!'<sup>23</sup> And Island Bikes advertise themselves with their Fourth Annual St. Patrick's Day Bike Race.<sup>24</sup> At the end of the Programme there is a list of every surname (74) and place name (21) on the island which can be linked with names on Ireland.<sup>25</sup>

The radio completes the St. Patrick's Day build up with more limited information about the ('sense of') history of the occasion which has recently become a national holiday. Messages are reiterated and reinforced for public awareness and understanding of tourism and national identity:

*“St. Patrick’s Day: although it’s a public holiday on Montserrat, its observance here is tied in with our historical past. It was on this day, March 17th 1768, that the slaves on Montserrat revolted and planned the seeds for war by attacking Government House while their colonial master feted at that seat of power. In order to fully understand the slaves’ decision to do this, we must first know something of the conditions under which the slaves on Montserrat had to live. For instance, any black person or slave found stealing cattle or carrying away stock would suffer death. That was the law. Under that same law, slaves found guilty of stealing provisions worth twelve pence could receive a severe beating or have both ears cut off if this was a first offence. If a slave was found guilty of the same offence a second time, he would be put to death in such as manner prescribed by the Governor and Council in power. But we will tell you more of your cultural heritage another time, here, on your community radio station, ZJB.”*

The lead up to St. Patrick’s Day celebrations complete - the Montserratian and British Government departments (Meade and Savage), the island academics (Fergus and Cheddy), the local businesses (Piper *et al.*), the Montserrat Tourist Board, and the individual operators (street vendors, guides, taximen) all acknowledged and prepared for the occasion - the seven day event begins.

**Saturday 11th March:** The week incorporating 17th March carries a series of traditional events which begins with a ‘Roman Catholic Dinner’ held in the Catholic Church’s St. Joseph’s Hall on Saturday 11th March.<sup>26</sup> For \$25 (EC) ‘guests’ receive a meal of West Indian cuisine, serenaded by Irish songs.

**Sunday 12th March:** The following day a Semi-Classical Concert rounds off the Montserrat National Trust’s 25th Anniversary of events at the University Centre in Plymouth. They combine with the St. Patrick’s Day Celebrations: flute and singing performances and piano recitals are given by young students of the island’s piano teacher and National Museum Curator, Mr. Leslie Thomas.

Immediately following this concert the St. Patrick's Community Centre hosts a 'Cultural Concert'. Though on the official programme it is an impromptu, local affair of skits and verse by members of the community about other members of the community. The impersonations are lost on myself and the two Irish-American tourists.

**Monday 13th March:** Nothing is scheduled.

**Tuesday 14th March:** The annual St. Patrick's Lecture is scheduled to be given by Dr. Fergus. The lecture is cancelled without notice.

**Wednesday 15th March:** Whilst members of the expatriate and tourist public are engaged upon an organised Pub Crawl, a Cultural Concert is held in the University Centre for \$5. A family show is put on which includes performances by a children's steel band, the calypsonian Belonger singing Irish orientated calypsos, Sean 'Teknikal' Martin singing 'A News Dem A Look' and a song about the slave rebellion, and Marilyn 'Singing Maro' White singing about a free South Africa. Although only half full, the concert is a big success for tourists and locals alike, for the children telling stories on the stage, for the Nubian Dancers (a girls dance troupe organised by an expatriate), and the Emerald Community Singers (an adult singing troupe singing West Indian songs).

**Thursday 16th March:** There is a Street Fair on the Bay Front of the capital, next to the Port Quay. Belonger sings there and sells her calypsos at a stall. Other stalls sell jewellery and home-made Montserrat trinkets, cake desserts, local drinks, and takeaway barbecued chicken. A group of calypsonians liming on the Harbour wall invite me to an unofficial calypsonians' St. Patrick's Day celebration at the Inn on Sugar Bay for the evening.

**Early Thursday evening:** ZJB Radio news acts as a prelude to tomorrow's events. Political activist Chedmond Browne is interviewed about St. Patrick's Day on Montserrat. Contrasting with tourist-slanted broadcasts, Cheddy excludes tourists and



off-islanders in his comments. He speaks to Montserrat:

Newscaster: “ [...] *historian and social commentator Chedmond Browne says that March 17 should not be just a public holiday for Montserratians. Browne says that March 17 is an extremely significant day for people of African descent who now occupy the island called Montserrat or Alliouagana. On March 17, 1768, slaves on Montserrat staged an uprising, but the slave revolt was put down by their colonial masters after an informant leaked details of the plan.*”

Cheddy: “*The significance of this, this, particular rebellion is that at the same point in time, throughout the entire Caribbean region, throughout the Americas, anywhere the African man was held in physical slavery, he rebelled. Now, our history books would want us to believe that, that we sat through - we went through - slavery in a complacent manner and that our slave masters, our colonial masters, treated us benevolently. That is the whitemans’ history. That is the Europeans’ version of the history. The reality of the history is that we were brutally treated, we were dehumanised and in each and every instance that the Africans’ people got an opportunity to rebel against this type of treatment, they rebelled.*”

Newscaster: “*Browne, Dr. Howard Fergus, Clarice - Clarice Barnes and other like-minded Montserratians have been calling for St. Patrick’s Day to be renamed Heroes Day in commemoration of the slaves who lost their lives in the struggle for freedom.*”<sup>27</sup>

Over dinner, Cherrie complains about this news broadcast. She explains to me that no West Indians from other islands are likely to visit Montserrat to celebrate the honours of contemporary Montserratians, whereas they might be attracted by Montserrat’s exotic Irish connection whether or not they empathise with the slave insurrection of 1768.<sup>28</sup>

**Late Thursday evening:** At the Inn there are no tourists, but anyone buying more than three drinks is given a St. Patrick’s Day beaker which glows green when cold

liquid is poured into it. Whilst the Inn is set up for a night of calypso, drunken expatriates and tourists wearing shamrock T-shirts with 'Kiss me - I'm Irish' badges, and 'I love Ireland' caps arrive. They are escorted by members of the Montserrat Tourist Board who do not drink with them and apologise for their behaviour when they move on to the next port of call.

Sporting a sequined tailcoat and sparkling waistcoat, David 'Flying Dove' Willock - a construction worker at the new Government Headquarters site - starts off the evening of calypso. He is introduced by Owen 'Stud' Roach, ZJB DJ, new calypsonian, co-announcer for Cheddy's old 'Conscious Connection' programme, and compère for the evening. The local Montserrat Cable TV films the evening as one performance follows another. Singing Maro is there in a white turban to sing '*Tribute to Mandela*', with lines such as "wave your hand to Mandela, wave your hand to that freedom fighter". Each singer is introduced by the DJ, who includes information about their calypso successes, and jokes about where they are from on Montserrat. For example, a man in a black trilby, dark clothes and shades is introduced: "the man from the hill [...] Top Secret!"; and he jumps onto the stage to do a snappy rendition of '*Tropical Gal*'. He is followed by a Rastafarian from the East, from Long Ground village, who sings '*Jah Music*', pogo-sticking to turn his dreadlocks into a lion's mane. Eventually the stream of calypsonians runs dry and Stud performs his '*Bacchanal*' Road March number. Instead of beginning it with the usual lyrics, "It's Festival time", to suit the occasion, he changes it to "It's St. Patrick's time". He starts twice so that the band are together with his singing, and after a lively Carnival piece the audience is told that the show is pausing for 10 minutes. People disappear fast and the camera crew dismantles their equipment. "They killed the show. That's Montserrat for you," the cameramen tells me. "They won't let me sing. They're full of shit. There's no one else and they won't let me sing," Alfredo complains to me about the evening. "How about some spare change for a piece of bread?" he finishes.<sup>29</sup>

**Friday 17th March:** *The Montserrat News* rather gauchely notes that 'Montserrat and its African-Irish heritage is the subject of a cultural study by an Afro American magazine that is read by more than one quarter of a million black people and boasts

that its readers are regular travellers.<sup>30</sup> *Afrique News* is the magazine covering the cultural trinity of St. Patrick's Day activities, attracted by 'the triple heritage of Montserrat - Africa, Irish, and Caribbean'.<sup>31</sup>

In *The Montserrat Reporter*, however, there is a full report of Her Majesty the Queen's Commonwealth Day Message.<sup>32</sup> *The Montserrat Reporter* also contains Fergus's poem satirising the opening Assizes ceremony - 'When Justice Came to Church' (see Chapter Two);<sup>33</sup> and there is an Editorial on 'Good Manners' which begins with the tourist advertisement used by several islands in their self-promotion - 'the way the Caribbean used to be'. It decries the decay of respectful attitudes in the 15 to 35 generation. To build a 'meaningful tourism trade', it is important to tell tourists that although Montserrat is not completely crime free, the tourist visitor is guaranteed complete safety (or should be told as much). So the younger members of the island should learn to exercise maturity and restraint in their celebration of St. Patrick's Day with other Montserratians and tourists.<sup>34</sup>

Again, ZJB promote and celebrate St. Patrick's Day on the radio. Claude Hogan carries a broadcast in the daily news reports:

Newscaster: "*This is ZJB Reports: the national vision is to transform Montserrat's St. Patrick's Day celebrations into a major tourist attraction. Chief Minister, The Honourable Reuben Meade, has registered this hope. This year a number of journalists are on island to film and write about St. Patrick's Day. The Chief Minister believes this will increase interest of Montserrat's Irish heritage in other countries. Besides exploring the prospects of turning St. Patrick's Day into a tourist attraction, Chief Minister Meade also reminds Montserratians of the historical importance of the day.*"

Chief Minister: "*Greetings my Brothers and Sisters. Montserrat is the only island in the Caribbean to celebrate St. Patrick's Day as a public holiday. We continue to place emphasis on St. Patrick's Day as we remember the first European settlers who lived in Montserrat were Irish. St. Patrick, as you know, is the Patron Saint of Ireland. Most importantly however, St. Patrick's Day celebrations mark a March 17*

*slave revolt by our forefathers. It is a significant day because it underlines our struggle for freedom.*

*The St. Patrick's community has exhibited an unquestionable commitment to this observation over the years. Today it is realised that St. Patrick's Day celebrations must assume national attention and priority as we strive to build a nation called Montserrat. [...]*

*On behalf of the Government and People of Montserrat we hope that all our visitors will have an enjoyable stay. We hope that they will share our sense of history and appreciate that this occasion signifies a rich cultural tradition of which we are proud. Happy St. Patrick's Day to one and all."<sup>35</sup>*

Most of the message is broadcast over local radio, and presumably over Cable TV. Hogan continues:

*Newscaster: "Montserrat Chief Minister, The Honourable Reuben Meade. He was at the time addressing the nation in his 1995 St. Patrick's Day message.*

*The significance of St. Patrick's Day to Montserratians should be two-fold - that's the view of historian Dr. Howard Fergus. Dr. Fergus says the day should bring to mind the historical links between Montserrat and Ireland. Dr. Fergus says, in addition, Montserratians should remember what was done on St. Patrick's Day in 1768."*

*Dr. Fergus: "We, as a people, um, recognise those, er, those planners as freedom fighters. We salute them and we think that this is a good day to celebrate, um, what they did. And to use it, not just to vilify anybody, not just to talk about our, our oppressors, but to use it positively, to display our art and our culture - which is not just Irish certainly, but African, and, and creole, the whole mixture, the whole amalgam of Europe and Africa coming together. And I think, in essence, this is the reason why we celebrate it."*

*Newscaster: "Historian Dr. Fergus on St. Patrick's Day March 1768. A planned slave revolt against the Irish was put down. This after an informant leaked the plan. A new Freedom Run record highlights the start of activities on St. Patrick's Day today. Herman King Lewis finished the race in a time of 35 minutes and 35 seconds.*

*St. Patrick's Day activities have been ongoing throughout the day and they feature guided hikes to the Soufriere and Waterfalls. A planned cricket match and slave feast are to complement cultural entertainment in the village of St. Patrick's on the south coast of Montserrat.*

*Three Montserrattians have been formally invested with Royal and National Honours. Commander of the Order of the British Empire, the CBE medal has gone to Dr. Howard Fergus. Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, the MBE, has gone to Mrs. Rosanna Dyer Ennis. And the Montserrat Medal and Certificate of Honour to legendary sportsman Sir Fred Davis. His Excellency The Governor Frank Savage presided over last evening's investiture ceremony at Government House."*

*Savage: "Dr. Fergus has been honoured by Her Majesty The Queen for his sterling services to Montserrat as the Speaker of the House where he will shortly start his 21st year. The longest serving Speaker in the Commonwealth. He, he is also, in his 20th year, as Acting Governor which I am sure is also a record. [Applause] In both these positions Dr. Fergus has acted with great integrity, probity and impartiality."*

*Newscaster: "Governor of Montserrat, His Excellency Frank Savage. Mrs. Rosanna Dyer-Innis receives the MBE for feeding the needy and charting the way for Meals on Wheels Montserrat."*

*Savage: "There's not really the meal that's important. It obviously is. But it's the five or ten minutes contact, probably the only contact they have that day, or perhaps that week, with the cheerful face from outside."*

*Newscaster: "His Excellency The Governor, Frank Savage. A legendary sportsman has received the National Honours at last night's investiture ceremony. Mr. Fred Davis has received the Montserrat Badge and Certificate of Honour."*

*Savage: "Fred's great feat was in 1951 when he made a chanceless 97 runs not-out, and captured 7 wickets, becoming one of the great all-rounders in Leeward Island cricket. Mr. Davis, more than anyone else on the island, who was instrumental in*



*giving the island it's first away win in Leeward Island cricket. Mr. Davis, we applaud you and I hope that the award presented to you will encourage all the young Montserratians who might be watching, and those who might be thinking about defecting to basketball to go back to cricket, er, which is a great cultural heritage of the West Indies, and we need more men like him."*

*Newscaster: "Frank Savage, Governor of Montserrat. Mr. Davis, um, helped Montserrat secure that victory in Leeward Islands cricket in 1951. More news when we return in just a moment."*

*ZJB Advert: "ZJB Reports is coming to you in association with Victor's Grocery Store. [...]"*

*Newscaster: "This is ZJB Reports. A subtle call for greater output for public output to sports on Montserrat. The appeal is coming from Sports Minister and Chief Minister the Honourable Reuben Meade. A widely held view is that poor public support contributes to national losses at sports in general. [...] And to round off now: hundreds of residents are converging in the south of Montserrat. ZJB's Herman Sargeant has the latest on activities in St. Patrick's."*

*Sargeant: "The action heats up a lot more, later, when we have, um, the, the er, cultural entertainment - string band music, masquerade, steel band, and all that, all in the village of St. Patrick's, all in the centre square area. The slave feast, it features lots of traditional foods, and that's a major attraction as well, and sure to attract a lotta people, not only Montserratians, but Irish folks as well. A lotta Irish people on Montserrat. I've seen a few in the village. I've talked to one or two of them and they're very excited to be in St. Patrick's and they're milling around and talking with the villagers here in St. Patrick's. Well, that's, that's coming up for later."*

*Newscaster: "Herman Sargeant in St. Patrick's. That's the news tonight as Montserrat celebrates history and pride in the island's oldest fight for freedom. I'm Claude Hogan reporting for ZJB News. The next news from our news desk is the*

*morning report at 7.15, Monday morning."*

**Friday afternoon:** In the south of the island, St. Patrick's village is set up on dry, rocky hills with cliffs overlooking the shore. Less sheltered, more windy, there are windmill remains on the cliff tops which the single road winds around; goats scrape for food in the dust and rubble; crops are scarce. A huge 'Welcome to St. Patrick's' sign is suspended from telegraph poles on the final ascent into St. Patrick's, a village (population estimated at 361 inhabitants) in a dip and curve of the landscape, with huts, shacks and houses following the road.<sup>36</sup>

The St. Patrick's Day schedule of festivities lists a morning Freedom Run from Plymouth around to St. Patrick's in blistering heat followed by a local cricket match, a noonday slave feast of St. Patrick's, and cultural entertainment through the evening. Throughout the day, Guided Hikes (\$45EC) are organised by the Tourist Board for tourists to visit the ruins of Galway's Estate, a Soufriere above, and the Great Alps Waterfall and a bamboo forest which the Montserrat Oriole inhabits at the top of Mount Chance.<sup>37</sup>

At noon, St. Patrick's is quiet. The Freedom Run is over and only a dozen North Americans, dressed in Irish Shamrock caps and T-shirts, are left to either pan video cameras about the streets or practice the intricacies of the 'black' handshakes that they've learned. Some chairs are set out in the shade of the Protestant church. Several St. Patrick's women are cooking up goatwater and barbecued fish and chicken by the sides of the road. Leaving the village, a Rasta-woman sells T-shirts and trinkets at the doorstep of the Catholic Church. Rumour has it that the Slave Feast will be held near the church, a selection of national and Caribbean foods - souse, goatwater, mountain chicken, plantains, conch. But there is little activity. The main concern is the cricket match on the side of the hill. A few locals sit in the bars or in their porch. One bar on the corner, where the two sides of the valley intersect, plays music from stacked speakers - the start of a Jump Up in the road. Less than half a dozen dancers, with Carib and Heineken beers, enjoy the liming-light.

After returning to a deserted Plymouth, I hang around Wapping and Emilia tells me that because her skin is pale, she must be Irish. Prof, admirably named Joseph Galloway, also has his own connection with the south of the island, the ruins of Galways Estate in particular.

**Friday night:** Back in St. Patrick's, and Nan, Cherrie's cleaning lady tells me that St. Patrick's Day is celebrated because, during the slave rebellion, a slave called Patrick helped free the other slaves and the Irish on the island. The Montserrat String Band is playing under a tent to the bystanders, a few Irish and North American tourists self-consciously sitting on chairs provided for the performance. For another half-mile the streets are crowded with people greeting each other, drinking, dancing by the various music centres, or simply following or joining the masquerade dancers clearing a path for cars or blocking cars to perform and collect change. AUC students; development workers (several from Ireland trying not to get roped into performing jigs); villagers from the north, south, east, and west; tourists and expats - all are in St. Patrick's:- all are plunged into a dark mass of moving bodies as the extra street-lighting fails, leaving the music centres, with their own generators, to pump to the St. Patrick's Day posse.

I return to a temporarily quiet Plymouth before it is shattered by Prof, barefoot, driving his brother's pickup, giving Teknikal a lift south and on to St. Patrick's. "Arribba, Arribba, Arribba," Teknikal screams, almost jumping out of the passenger window. I spend the rest of the evening at the local youth Maranatha Church Meeting: an outreach mission hell-bent upon evangelising and baptising all islanders, whether Christian or not, Protestant or Catholic, whether illegal or not.<sup>38</sup> After dominoes there follows an hour of sermon-related prayer:

"Father we humbly beseech you in all your magnificence. We pray for the nation of Montserrat. We pray for nationalism on this nation. Turn these people. Loose them from evil. Loose them. Loose them. Let them walk with the Lord. We pray for the group here. Kuraba, calesse. Cramantha. Kuabo la shaikan. [...]"<sup>39</sup>

Their evening finishes at ten o'clock.

**Saturday 18th March:** Only six people turn out to the cycle races: the co-owner of Island Bikes (a mountain bike hire and trail guiding company), his two mechanics, an AUC student, and two British development workers who cycle together regularly. The meet is cancelled.

### **Diverse impressions of St. Patrick's Day**

St. Patrick's Day is the recent product of a cultural elite, what Hobsbawm would refer to as an 'invented tradition' - a constructed and formally instituted set of practices claiming a link with the immemorial past.<sup>40</sup> For me, this recent tradition is highly diverse. Undoubtedly, there is pressure from the Government and Tourist Board to downplay the commemoration of an historical event of seeds of discontent and roots of revolution in favour of a celebration of Irish-African, quirky, quaint, inter-racial brotherhood. Certainly, there are also a variety of local and non-local understandings of St. Patrick's Day, different realities held by people. Even the tourists enticed to the island from Ireland and North America, particularly those with the feeling of a strong Irish ancestry, are told that the Irish and the African were fellow slaves, equally mistreated by the English. This is what the 'Irish' tourists want to hear and to believe on an island where they want to feel welcome. This becomes their St. Patrick's Day reality. So too, the islanders understand that they need tourists for their economy and growing dependency upon the tourist industry. But for many islanders, the St. Patrick's celebrations are simply another opportunity to jump up and party in the streets of another village: several of the other villages already have a day in the year to celebrate their community, there is a St. John's Day for the village of St. John's, so it is inevitable that the village of St. Patrick's should celebrate a St. Patrick's Day. In this way we can see a contest to command the national holiday between the Montserrat Government and the Montserrat Tourist Board on the one hand, and the cultural and intellectual elite on the other. In my account, this contest is manifested as a contest for

realities. Both sides wish to raise the sense of identity, of what it is to be Montserratian, but the former are concerned with tourist revenue and tourist representations - theirs is dictated by economic pragmatism, hence their aim to turn the August Emancipation holiday into a Montserrat Achievers Day. However, the latter group - led by the likes of Cheddy, Dr. Fergus and Clarice Barnes - would like to reify 17th March as National Heroes Day. For them, the Irish 'refugees' on Montserrat were slave owners on a par with the other colonists. It is this factioning of St. Patrick's Day which I would like to explore in this section. I will do this by considering some of the various impressions and histories of St. Patrick's Day; in particular, I make available a new and evocative anthropological history of the rebellion which is described in Michael Mullin's Africa in America.<sup>41</sup>

Throughout St. Patrick's Day, celebrations incorporate tourists by mentioning how Montserratian and Irish ancestors suffered the same situation under the English. Though viewed very differently across the island, the occasion touches every Montserratian. For Nan, the cleaning lady, St. Patrick's Day celebrates a slave's victory in the 1768 revolt. For Prof, St. Patrick's Day is a time for additional airport work during the day and partying during the night. For Teknikal, St. Patrick's Day is a party and a calypso topic. For Belonger, St. Patrick's Day is a chance to perform for a good cause. For Emilia, St. Patrick's Day part explains her light skin (butterskin) colour and ancestry. For the Irish-American tourists visiting Montserrat, St. Patrick's Day can at last be celebrated in a hot and sunny climate. For the Irish development workers, St. Patrick's Day is to be avoided with an inter-island break. For the AUC students, St. Patrick's Day is a party and a cycle race. For the anthropologist, St. Patrick's Day is a diverse and fiercely contested heterogeneous event with a partial history. For Cherrie, St. Patrick's Day is a black celebration which attracts tourists to Montserrat. For the Tourist Board and the Governor, St. Patrick's Day is a tourism marketing blessing. For the Government, St. Patrick's Day is a marketing opportunity combined with community and nation celebration. For Cheddy, Dr. Fergus, Clarice Barnes, St. Patrick's Day is not retaining its national significance in reminding Montserratians as to how the Caribbean used to be, instead, it is becoming a holiday for North Americans to lose their worries by getting drunk on green beer on an island idyll. For Claude Hogan, the newscaster, St. Patrick's Day is a social movement and a



news report. And for the journalists, St. Patrick's Day is just another story.

St. Patrick's Day means different things to different people. But, more than that, St. Patrick's Day has a different reality for different people. Much like the expat and Montserratian constellations mentioned in Chapter Three, people generally subscribe to an inter-subjective understanding of St. Patrick's Day as a commemoration deriving from the 1768 uprising "event", or a celebration of the Irish connection; Nan shows us in an outstanding way that the St. Patrick's Day reality can be more diverse than simply a commemoration or a celebration or both. Such inter-subjectivity has been researched, taught and written about by the likes of Dr. Fergus and Chedmond Browne, the anthropologist John Messenger and countless travel writers covering Montserrat. In addition to my presentation of a collage of experiences and impressions of St. Patrick's Day, I will take this opportunity to expose John Messenger's St. Patrick's Day - a poor example of anthropology according to my criteria for a postmodern impressionistic anthropology; in other words, in this chapter I will also show that my postmodern impressionistic anthropology is not necessarily precluded, by its relativism, from making academic criticisms.

In his examination of traditions as disparate as May Day holidays, boy scout songs, national anthems and flags, and public school *esprit de corps* practices, Hobsbawm identifies three overlapping types of invented tradition:

- a) those establishing or symbolising social cohesion or membership of groups, real or artificial communities, b) those establishing or legitimising institutions, status or relations of authority, and c) those whose main purpose was socialisation, the inculcation of beliefs, value systems and conventions of behaviour.<sup>42</sup>

As a historian, Hobsbawm's interest is in hunting down the origins and facts - the history - of contemporary understandings. I believe that Howard Fergus seeks the same historical ends. My attention, however, is more to the contemporary understandings of St. Patrick's Day, not to their historical specificity or roots, but to their present-day meanings and uses. These contemporary understandings are, of

course, often legitimated and justified by what I would refer to as 'historical impressions' - impressions of past lived experiences, and impressions of historical readings and teachings (the socialisation of history in society). For Fergus and Cheddy, their historical impressions are historical realities, a process which we can trace back to 1985 (St. Patrick's Day becomes a national holiday on Montserrat) and 1971 (rediscovery of St. Patrick's Day rebellion).

Many Montserratians and tourists are under the impression that St. Patrick's Day has been celebrated since 'way, way back', and Dr. Fergus has already made the connection between St. Patrick's Day and Montserratian national and cultural identity in his history of Montserrat.<sup>43</sup> Set before a chapter on African and Irish emancipation, Fergus refers to the rebellion planned for 17th March 1768:

a day conveniently chosen since the people of the island unusually assembled to commemorate it. The Irish Roman Catholics were discriminated against, but the Irish connection was celebrated. The slaves working within Government House were to seize the swords of the gentlemen while those outside were to fire into the house using whatever missiles were at their disposal. They evidently had some arms because the plan was revealed when a **white** seamstress, noted for her drunkenness, heard two of the leaders discussing the disposition of their arms.<sup>44</sup>

The colour of the woman has as much present-day psychological significance as the slave insurrection itself. According to Fergus's historical reality, it was not a black woman who ruined the conspiracy; a significant - if little known - point which I can corroborate with an extract from the *Georgia Gazette* (1768).<sup>45</sup>

As Sinn Fein supporters, the Irish-American tourists I sat next to at the St. Patrick's Cultural Show were keen to point out that "one person's freedom fighter is another person's terrorist", and that more people had died from British soldiers than IRA activity. For the British colonisers on Montserrat, those involved in the uprising had to

be punished as slaves guilty of transgressing laws of conduct and action against their masters, actions which are now commemorated in all former slave societies. Again, taking his account from Watkins,<sup>46</sup> Fergus gives us 'the' results of the trial:

[o]n 6th October 1768, Vice-Admiral Pye, Commander-in-Chief of His Majesty's ships in the Leeward Islands, reported to the Governor that the insurrection was totally suppressed. Nine of the ring-leaders were brutally executed, and some 30 were imprisoned pending banishment at the earliest opportunity.<sup>47</sup>

This is all that is contained in Fergus's account. Montserratians commemorate the execution of the nine, but as Cheddy once commented to me, Fergus does not tell us anything about them, their names, the Estates that they worked on, or where they were executed. Cheddy further noted that Fergus knew where executions were held in Plymouth town, and he wondered why such details were omitted from his account. One suggestion could be that the possible lack of specificity surrounding the slave uprising strengthens its mythic status. Either the names and details of the event were not historically recorded, or, by withholding the names of the slaves executed in the uprising, Fergus could be furthering a nationalist agenda which concentrates upon the present - rather than the past. Whatever the situation, Fergus retains strong control over his historical reality:

[t]he participation in the abortive uprising registered in blood the slaves' love of freedom and unsettled the whites somewhat. It was not until 1985 that the slaves who were involved came to be regarded as national freedom-fighters for their attempt, and Montserratians began to celebrate St. Patrick's day annually as a public holiday. This came about after a few nationalist scholars popularised the event by staging cultural activities around the theme on the date and canvassed John Osborne's Government to recognise the day officially.<sup>48</sup>

He concludes his comments by impersonally reiterating his involvement with the history of the event, his national comments in the papers about St. Patrick's Day,<sup>49</sup> and

his disapproval at the direction in which the ceremony is turning - sentiments which were reiterated during the 1995 proceedings:

[t]his author had an occasion recently to warn against incipient distortion in the significance and celebration of the holiday. It was, in his view, beginning to resemble the style in which the Irish diaspora in the United States celebrate St Patrick's Day. The holiday was intended to honour our slave ancestors who bravely essayed to overthrow their oppressive European overlords - and these were English, Scottish and Irish.<sup>50</sup>

Michael Mullin's more detailed, if inflammatory, account of the 1768 rebellion blends anthropological technique with historical fragments to evoke and provide insight into the life of slave and master on Montserrat, before, during and after the St. Patrick's Day rebellion. Mullin is interested in the relationship between slave acculturation and the changing nature of slave resistance. Mullin makes extensive use of newspapers, Government and missionary records, diaries and plantation records, census and judicial archives to represent the outlook of individual actors, and to allow the reader to realise why most slaves never rebelled and to appreciate the perspective of the creole leaders of rebellions trying to gain support. This stance differs from that of Dr. Fergus and Mr. Chedmond Browne who persist with the theory that the relationship between slaves and masters was *always* a relationship of tension, struggle and revolt - the St. Patrick's rebellion being just one such instance.

Mullin articulates three phases of resistance by the new negroes of the New World. The new negroes - Africans bartered and sold into slavery between 1730 and 1760 - had to be taught how to be slaves by the seasoned survivors of the process; they 'enjoyed' a liminal period of time following a slave around his duties, learning how to live as a slave.<sup>51</sup> Of all the plantation slaves, it was 'the assimilateds' who led the most vigorous and organised resistance against the planters.<sup>52</sup> For almost a hundred years, from 1760 to 1850, these second generation creoles of the Caribbean resisted their slave masters, determined to resist the one-way street of assimilation, 'the

abandonment of tradition and the acquisition of white customs'.<sup>53</sup> From Trinidad to Montserrat, rebellions were mounted, but only the campaigns mounted by the Maroons of St. Vincent can be regarded as successful. Despite the many failures, it is crucial - to reiterate Cheddy - to record the many instances of resistance, to show West Indians and Afro-Americans of today that the conditions of slavery yesterday were not passively tolerated, but were actively resisted and confronted. One of the failures Mullin uses as a case study of the first of the creole conspiracies is the 1768 rebellion on Montserrat on St. Patrick's Day. His use of the Montserrat example substantiates recent commemorations of the event, and contrasts with much expatriate scholarship on Montserrat which is sceptical of the idea that there was a such a conspiracy at all.

In the 1760s, Mullin records a population on Montserrat of 9,000 slaves and 1,300 whites, many of whom were Irish; a total population of whites which was to decline to 434 by 1788. Mullin begins by setting the scene, and establishing the need for the 1768 conspiracy:

[t]he presence of three Dutch vessels anchored offshore had inspired blacks to organise a mass escape by seizing a ship and sailing, perhaps, to Puerto Rico. The conspirators chose as their password a popular song, "Fire in the Mountains", which when played by the black fiddler at the whites' St. Patrick's dance was to signal the beginning of the revolt.<sup>54</sup>

Mullin declares the St. Patrick's Day conspiracy to be one of the first major slave conspiracies in the Caribbean, 'the first of a series of conspiracies formed by organisations of creoles'.<sup>55</sup> The plan for the uprising was as follows:

[t]o attack first at the dance, the conspirators reasoned, was to catch the white elite when it was concentrated, distracted, and could be taken in a rush. At the same time, house servants would secure their owners' swords, and slaves who were positioned outside would shoot the whites as they fled. News of the rising would run from ballroom to town then to the ridges above, where slaves would then light real fire in the



mountains.<sup>56</sup>

However, the 'reality' of the rebellion, according to Mullin, was very different:

[t]he plan unravelled disastrously as the slaves prepared for their own celebration. This party apparently revolved around a new dance that had been introduced by Antigua blacks and was at the moment 'the rage' in Montserrat. When a conspirator returned to a **colored** seamstress and was told his costume for the fete was unfinished, he reproached her angrily, "the thing I was going to do tonight, now I cannot do." For her turn, the seamstress went to the authorities, who matched her account with others they had heard and soon uncovered the whole.<sup>57</sup>

The issue of the seamstress's colour is very important when we bear in mind the meaning attached to this failed rebellion. In this historical version of the St. Patrick's Day conspiracy, a coloured seamstress causes its failure; the onus of blame, in this example falls upon the coloured (free)slave rather than a colonial. The implications of this 'other' historical account undermine Cheddy's and Fergus's nationalist use of the St. Patrick's Day commemoration.

Uncovering the uprising from reports in North American gazettes and colonial office records of British Government letters, Mullin has pieced together a very colourful narrative of the uprising, one far more detailed than any other previous account.<sup>58</sup>

[a]s the plot broke the whites went berserk. They hacked, quartered, hanged, and starved in gibbets any suspects whose owners were foolish enough to send them to town for 'trials'. The belief is that the plot is part of a 'general rebellion', wrote a Methodist missionary, who also described the arrival during the emergency of the commander of the Leeward Islands. In the atmosphere of murderous hysteria, the slaves received this officer as a deliverer. Streaming out to the beach and into

the surf, pulling off their clothing so he would not have to touch the cobblestones as he came into town, they cried: "Dadce God has come he an we! Dadce God has come he an we!" The commander also took the conspiracy seriously. Reporting that it was 'deep laid' and 'long projected', he posted when he left a detachment of fifty men and a man-of-war to intimidate and prevent further attempts. Yet his account leaves mixed impressions of the rebels' real objectives. After mentioning the uncovering of a 'great Store of Arms and Ammunition' concealed in the mountains, he said the conspirators, 'though Savages ... were not insensible to the power of Beauty' for they had cast lots for the white 'Ladies' they would take with them to Puerto Rico.<sup>59</sup>

Except for the colour of the seamstress, such an account of the St. Patrick's Day conspiracy assists the likes of Dr. Fergus and Chedmond Browne with their ambition of an independent Montserratian national identity. Can we verify the intentional or unintentional historical accuracies of Fergus and Mullin's accounts by tracking down their sources? For me, what is important here is not what they declare to be the historical truth of the rebellion or the seamstress's skin colour, but the way in which the rebellion and the seamstress's colour is understood and used and becomes, diversely, Fergus's and Mullin's, the Montserrat Government's and the Montserrat Tourist Board's historical reality. My postmodern impressionistic anthropological approach also means that my work differs from the approach and work of the anthropologist John Messenger which I consider and criticise in the next, penultimate, section in this chapter.

### **Exposed - John Messenger's 'Black Irish' of Montserrat**

Using similar historical analyses, Messenger casts his doubts upon both Cheddy's and Dr. Fergus's support for the St. Patrick's Day commemoration. Messenger does this when he appeals to an unpublished manuscript written in 1930 by Mr. T. Savage English (no relation to the present Governor Frank Savage). A colonial agricultural

worker from Britain, English wrote a history of the island pieced together from a search through 10,000 or more uncited manuscripts which were housed in the Plymouth Court House, many of which have since been lost or destroyed. Out of a document 300 pages long, English pays but a brief mention to the St. Patrick's Day conspiracy:

[i]n 1768 there was a negro conspiracy, given away, as almost always seems to have happened in such cases anywhere in the West Indies, by too much talking on the part of the conspirators. The story goes, that "the plot was discovered by a woman who heard two of the leaders disputing about the disposition of their arms. The plan was to have been carried into execution on St. Patrick's day, which the inhabitants usually assembled to commemorate. The slaves within Government House were to have secured the swords of the gentleman, and those without to have fired into the house."<sup>60</sup>

Controversially, Messenger uses English's account in a flawed article in the journal *Eire - Ireland* called 'St. Patrick's Day in "The Other Emerald Isle"', where he questions even the historical occurrence of any conspiracy in 1768.<sup>61</sup> He describes the conspiracy as a possible legend, and an untrustworthy and questionable effort by 'Afrophiles' (presumably those such as Cheddy, Dr. Fergus and George Irish). Following his quotation of Savage English, Messenger writes:

[t]his may be a legend collected by English or a predecessor, and implied in it is that on this day the Irish would be vulnerable because of the drink customarily imbibed. To some locals, basing a festival on an unsuccessful slave revolt, *possibly recorded only in untrustworthy legend*, is as questionable as the effort by Afrophiles to change the name of the island [...].<sup>62</sup>

Messenger refers to the work of these Afrophiles as a 'counter-racism' in which his own anthropological writings are hijacked. Messenger's sympathy, here, is with the

Irish who are stereotyped by the legend, a sympathy well received by the Irish readers of the journal. Yet Messenger is guilty of far worse stereotypes than that:

[t]he Irish heritage is manifested in the phenotype of most islanders; in the English and possibly in the creole that they speak; in place-names and surnames which are still employed; and in certain customs characteristic of, but not limited to, the Black Irish. Irish "cultural imponderables" revealed in motor habits, musical styles, systems of values, and codes of etiquette - prevail among the Black Irish, but are difficult to describe and can only be sensed (*verstehen*) by researchers who have resided for long periods in both Ireland and Africa.<sup>63</sup>

Messenger draws upon his research experience in Africa and Ireland to justify his conclusions. According to Messenger, there are about a thousand of these in-bred Black Irish living in the north of the island, 'descendants of marriages between Irish and slaves [...] to maintain the Caucasoid phenotype and, for a few, the Irish tradition.'<sup>64</sup> However, despite the Irish names around Montserrat and the occasional 'redskin' (light skinned West Indian) in the north with an Irish surname, these findings do not concur with my findings on Montserrat. Nor do I agree with Messenger's claim that the Carnival/Festival period only can be called 'Jump-up'.<sup>65</sup>

Messenger is guilty of the same elitism with which he criticises the West Indian elite on Montserrat - those who led the nativist St. Patrick's Day revitalization movement. To paraphrase Messenger, a revitalization movement is an attempt to revive or perpetuate valued cultural traditions to create a more satisfying culture (to draw also, political, social, economic and tourist attention to the south of the island).<sup>66</sup> Such institutionalisation by Afrophiles is not without its own internal factions and struggles, as Messenger notes. He also makes reference to the suggestion that 1st August be the date to honour slave resistance and emancipation:

[s]ince the slaves were emancipated on August 1, 1834, and since Jump-up has lost its original significance, several islanders suggested to us that the Afrocentric interpretation of St. Patrick's Day be abandoned

and an additional festival be added to the calendar on the first of August.<sup>67</sup>

At this time, Messenger's thoughts concern the future of St. Patrick's Day, thoughts derived from his experience of the 1993 St. Patrick's Day events and the Official Programme which stressed the martyrdom of those:

'first Montserratians - Negro Slaves - who fought for the freedom of our people [...] faced death to rid themselves of oppression, and were brave enough to stand against the forces that sought to break the human spirit and create a society where freedom was for the few'.<sup>68</sup>

Messenger's summary of the 1993 six-day period of festivities also includes a calypso contest (held in St. Patrick's), the annual Catholic St. Patrick's Day dinner, dawn masses, a cultural concert at the University Centre, masquerade dancing, and an 'Oldy Goldy Party' featuring music from between the 1930s and 1960s. There a mass on the morning of several days, and one day was designated as 'National Heroes Day'. In the same year, Dr. Fergus delivered a public lecture on the history and culture of Montserrat, there was a Pub Crawl, a 'Freedom Run' from Plymouth to St. Patrick's, a 'Slave Feast' of West Indian and Montserratian dishes, an arts and crafts sale in St. Patrick's village, and a village cricket match - all under the Gaelic banner '*Céad Mile Fáilte*'.<sup>69</sup>

In sum, Messenger agrees with his respondents that the St. Patrick's Day celebrations were often faltering and misunderstood, lacking enthusiasm and local participation: the Pageant Parade failed to take place, the steel bands didn't show up, the Freedom Race was convincingly won by an American AUC student, radio celebrations of Montserratian personalities were delayed, and many locals misunderstood - or were not concerned - with the purpose of the celebrations (one respondent thought the Irish green and white colours symbolised the green flash seen on the horizon at sunset; another claimed that 'the slave rebellion of 1768 was successful and led to the immediate emancipation of slaves').<sup>70</sup> This state of disarray is reminiscent of my experiences of the St. Patrick's Day celebrations, and my collection of diverse



impressions of St. Patrick's Day detailed in the first and second sections of this chapter.

Mr. and Mrs. Messenger are both professional anthropologists who have used their periods of study in Africa,<sup>71</sup> and Ireland,<sup>72</sup> to inform Mr. Messenger's pronouncements upon the Black Irish of Montserrat. Their first piece of work about Montserrat is a documented excerpt held in the Montserrat Plymouth Library, 'Excerpts from John Messenger's essay on "The Irish of Montserrat" (1965)', which chronicles the history of the island.<sup>73</sup> Eight years later, Messenger published 'African Retentions in Montserrat' in the journal *African Arts*, a four page piece with Carnival photographs of masquerade dancers and their band, including the fife player 'Black' Sam Aymer whom Fergus has written poetry about.<sup>74</sup> The article describes his research on Montserrat as an investigation into 'the history of Irish settlement there and the impact of Irish and African cultures on that of the West Indians of today.'<sup>75</sup> He cites work by the Irish historian and religious man, Father Aubrey Gwynn, which the Messengers found in old editions of the journals *Studies* and *Analecta Hibernica* in the late 1920s from which John Messenger found Gwynn's much-coined line describing Montserrat: 'the most distinctively Irish settlement in the New World'.<sup>76</sup> Indeed, Gwynn, Messenger and Fergus all agree that Oliver Cromwell expelled so many 'Irish tories' from Ireland to the West Indies that there were more Irish than English, Scottish, or slaves on Montserrat in the seventeenth century.<sup>77</sup>

Messenger's historically reconstructed reality shows that Montserrat has a past of Irish beginnings (seventeenth century), and a present of Black Irish imaginings (twentieth century). Three hundred years later, two hundred years after most white settlers left the island to 'freed' slaves,<sup>78</sup> and the residents of Montserrat are being examined and marketed and written about as 'the Black Irish'.<sup>79</sup> Messenger also perpetuates Irish/English differences, feeding the belief that Irish colonisers treated their slaves far better than the English colonisers because they empathised with the experience of exploitative discrimination:

[i]t is a widely held view in Montserrat that Irish landowners treated their slaves with more care and kindness than did their English and

Scottish counterparts [...]<sup>80</sup>

Fergus, however, makes a different point about the relationship between the slaves and the Irish on Montserrat:

[t]here was really no comparison between the horrors of black slavery and the discrimination against Irish Catholics in Montserrat, but both groups in their different ways hankered after freedom.<sup>81</sup>

This would have been particularly apparent in the village of St. Patrick's - one of the southern most villages on the island, site of one of the largest concentrations of Irish settlers, indentured servants and freemen, Catholics, second-class citizens living as 'a colony within a colony'.<sup>82</sup>

Messenger is describing the descendants of a few of these Anglo-Irish settlers, and the descendants of the freed slaves who took the names of the estates which they were working on. According to a 1946 demographic survey of the island's population, these hybridised blacks, Messenger's 'Montserrat Irish',<sup>83</sup> are the 6% "Mixed or Coloured" in the survey, where another 93% of the population are classified as 'Negro' (the largest percentage of any country in the Western hemisphere). But there are more than just phylogenetic reasons for identifying Montserrat's 'Black Irish'. Messenger's impressions of Montserrat report far more than Fergus's 'touch of Ireland':<sup>84</sup>

[i]t is apparent to anyone well acquainted with both African tribal and Irish peasant cultural milieus that most of Montserratian culture today is a composite of African and Irish retentions, regional borrowings and internal innovations, of which Irish retentions and reinterpretations with African forms make up but a limited portion.<sup>85</sup>

The Montserratian creole, is one example of 'a syncretism of English and African elements'.<sup>86</sup> Messenger vivisects other vestiges of Ireland out of Montserratian culture: 'music, song, dance, verbal art and the supernatural' (the use of a large

tambourine which resembles the Irish bodhran, 'country dances' which resemble Irish sets and jigs where 'African music played with Western instruments serves dancers whose feet trace Irish patterns but whose bodies express African motor habits'); tales of mermaids, fairies, witches and omens resemble Irish pagan beliefs; storytelling and the use of proverbs as illustrations.<sup>87</sup> In short, Messenger finds an Irish connection under every Montserratian rainbow.<sup>88</sup>

Doubtless there are some leftovers of the Irish settler's stew on Montserrat, but so many of Messenger's claims are tenuous and speculative. Messenger pays little heed to his respondents, his proof lies with his anthropological *verstehen* in Nigeria and Ireland. Yet nothing stopped Messenger from reworking and lengthening the 'African Retentions' article into 'Montserrat: The Most Distinctively Irish Settlement in the New World',<sup>89</sup> an oft-cited article popularising the Black Irish connection for all tourist, academic, travel writer and Montserratian readers. It was in this article that Messenger repeated his claim that the Irish landowners 'treated their slaves with more care and kindness than did their English and Scottish counterparts', and that 'the Irish and other Europeans left an indelible genetic and cultural imprint on their former slaves.'<sup>90</sup> The article ends with the statistics and anecdotes which are now used in the St. Patrick's Day Programme and other Montserrat Tourist Board publications,<sup>91</sup> and points to some obscure similarities between Ireland and Montserrat such as the practice of wakes, the ingredients of goatwater stew, the high number of rum houses, and the high rainfall levels.<sup>92</sup>

Comparing these commentaries with my St. Patrick's Day experience of 1995, and my conversation with Nan and other Montserratians, leads me to the belief that local understandings have changed little. The events are Government and Department of Tourism ventures for tourists involving members of the local communities and calypsonians concerned with local culture and local traditions.<sup>93</sup> The majority of the population appears to treat St. Patrick's week as a break from their routine of work and rest, an opportunity to extend the weekend's activities into the week. Most appear to be happy to let the events be harnessed in whatever direction - for the growth of tourism on the island as Cherrie Taylor mentioned, for national pride after Dr. Fergus, for independence from colonialism as both he and Mr. Chedmond Browne desire.

Dr. Fergus and Mr. Chedmond Browne are both united against the intended changes to the St. Patrick's Day celebrations, a drift away from a celebration of an invented, nativist tradition - Messenger's 'revitalization movement',<sup>94</sup> towards a mythical tourist celebration for Irish-Americans. At the moment, St. Patrick's Day remains an example of contestation, of colonial and slave impressionistic histories, of Tourist Board control and local dependence upon tourism, of political and social and economic influence over the islanders and the tourists. In this chapter I have sought to show that there is an agenda for each person involved with the Irish connection on Montserrat, not least the academic such as Fergus or Messenger. Working through the materials, it becomes apparent that there are but positions and impressions - just as Thesiger and Waugh saw and experienced different impressionistic realities of Haile Selassie's coronation: each position is used, suppressed, manipulated, interpreted and re-interpreted as impressionistic positions of Maurice Bloch's 'past and the present in the present'.<sup>95</sup> Messenger's fault, here, is to privilege his historical reality at the expense of other respective positions and native realities.

### **The future of St. Patrick's Day and the 'Black Irish'**

Certainly, the St. Patrick's Day celebrations do attract excursionists and tourists to Montserrat, but figures are too inconsistent across the years to be able to work out a trend for tourist activity on the island.<sup>96</sup> It is the next chapter which assesses the island and the islanders' connections with tourism. The rest of this chapter concludes with comments and indications as to the direction of the struggle to save or alter St. Patrick's Day celebrations as they are known and understood by people on Montserrat. It is my supposition that this tension amongst and between Montserratians (Nan, Prof, Cherrie), Afrophiles (Fergus, Cheddy, Irish) and anthropologists (Messenger, Mullin, Skinner), the Montserrat Tourist Board and tourists visiting Montserrat, and the British and Montserratian Governments will remain. Each different interest group (casual, academic, economic) has a different historical reality and understanding (personal, national, financial, anthropological) of St. Patrick's Day. Let me finish this chapter with a sample of the directions which the debate seems to be heading in,

notably, for some of the Afrophiles and the anthropologists, and some of the Government and newspaper representatives.

I have presented a sample of the various directions that people would like to take the St. Patrick's Day celebrations, including John Messenger's presentation of unsubstantiated 'Irish imponderables', his reification of a 'Black-Irish' ethnicity, and his spiteful comments directed to the 'Afrophiles' - the West Indian elite on Montserrat. Messenger was writing about Montserratians, responding to their national causes, especially those cultural activists of the 1970s such as Dr. Fergus and his colleague Dr. George Irish (University of the West Indies resident tutor on Montserrat prior to Fergus). Along with Fergus, Irish also printed articles and pamphlets explaining why Montserratians should celebrate 17th March: Irish publicised the belief that 'Montserratian Negroes were among the front-line freedom-fighters of the New World',<sup>97</sup> and that those involved in the St. Patrick's Day conspiracy were 'noble warriors, lovers of freedom and self-determination.'<sup>98</sup> Irish's work is a Montserratian consciousness-raising enterprise by way of changing the way Montserratians think about themselves, others, their history, and the history of others.<sup>99</sup> Irish seeks to reclaim 'the collective identity' of the freedom-fighters, to establish their impress upon St. Patrick's Day celebrations so that they further not their anonymous individual sacrificed lives but 'the broader prospects of [the] collective endeavour' - 'total liberation'.<sup>100</sup>

United in stance with Fergus and Irish, eight years later, Cheddy still continues his agitation. In stark opposition to Messenger's social anthropological proselytising, Cheddy shares Irish's sentiments that '[t]he Irish imprint is more titular than real; the landmarks are more topographical than cultural or spiritual'.<sup>101</sup> In his article, 'Burying the Irish Myth', Cheddy asserts that there was little social movement between levels of the plantocratic social structure: English landholders remained at the top, Irish farmers in the middle, 'Afrikan' slaves at the bottom.<sup>102</sup> Cheddy disagrees with the notion that Irish landowners were kinder to their slaves than English landowners. For Cheddy, one slave owner was as inhumane as another. And, though he admits that the 1787 census marked down 260 coloureds, he condemns any local belief in the Irish connection:



[a]t no point in time throughout the 360 years of european occupation in the island of Montserrat is there any indication that the two ethnic groups merged, amalgamated, and formed a creole Afrikan-Irish society. If there's any doubt in your mind, just look at the faces around you.<sup>103</sup>

Another history, this piece of writing attempts to dispel the basis of Messenger's 'Black Irish' - that is, voluntary inter-ethnic marriages between slaves or freed slaves and Irish indentured labourers, freemen and landholders. Historically, Messenger is not able to support his claim of legally sanctioned marriages - an unlikely occurrence given seventeenth and eighteenth century social attitudes. As his historical reality, Cheddy declares that the first coloureds to appear or be acknowledged in any island census were 'the offspring of Afrikan women taken against their will by the european slave master'.<sup>104</sup>

The Government Information Unit recites a different account for the Irish influence on Montserrat. Beginning with the history of St. Patrick, their leaflet mentions that the white race of Irish settlers were in the majority on Montserrat, and so, '[i]t is natural therefore, that they would bring with them their customs, feast days, religion and culture, and these things would become an integral part of the society of those times.'<sup>105</sup> At issue, then, is the extent of those customs, feasts, religion, and this culture in Montserratian society. 'Natural' qualities mentioned by the Information Board, and Messenger's 'imponderables', are not the same as Fergus's brief examination of the 'legacy' of these second class citizens. Rather than reiterate Messenger's 'Black Irish' message, Fergus mentions, in his tourist guidebook, that any cultural retentions are not distinctly Irish or African but an amalgam,<sup>106</sup> a cultural stew of Old World and New World. But Fergus's message can change to suit the situation: elsewhere, Fergus positions himself as an articulate Caliban, writing poetry praising black pride and consciousness, warning off white settlers and tourists. And on other occasions Fergus can be found criticising the British Government in his West Indian history lessons in the afternoon, accepting a CBE from the Governor in the evening. Or he might be the neutral Speaker of the House in local Government by day, Queen's representative on Montserrat (Deputy Governor) by night.<sup>107</sup>

This chapter has been a case study of public, private, and personal historical realities; a fluid discourse of representation and representations aimed at the undiscerning islanders and visitors. It is considered to be the task of the Montserrat Government and Montserrat Tourist Board to promote and publicise Montserrat, both at home and abroad. To a large extent, the members of both institutions have to comply with the promotion of their island nation to resist their detractors and maintain the small-island economy. Accountable to the public, the Tourist Board maintains a tourism campaign throughout the year. Whilst the next chapter details the tourist year, here, in line with the Tourist Board publicity campaign for St. Patrick's Day, I cite - Taoiseach of Ireland - John Bruton's diplomatic letter of greeting which was published in *The Montserrat News*:<sup>108</sup>

I am delighted to extend St. Patrick's Day greetings to His Excellency, Mr. Frank Savage, Governor of Montserrat and to the people of Montserrat.

On St. Patrick's day, people of Irish birth and descent throughout the world join in a celebration of our collective sense of Irishness. We recall with pride the accomplishments of our ancestors and the richness of Ireland's cultural heritage.

The island of Montserrat symbolises in a very potent way the strong historical connections between Ireland and the rest of the world. The Irish immigrants who settled there in the late 18th century have given Montserrat's culture a distinctively Irish dimension as symbolised by the adoption of the shamrock as the island's national emblem.

I extend my best wishes in your celebrations of St. Patrick's Day

John Bruton<sup>109</sup>

It is this 'collective sense of Irishness' which will bring tourists to Montserrat and allow Montserrattians to trade with their European cousins. This shared reality is reinforced by emblems signifying Montserrat: the Montserrat Tourist Board's palm tree with a shamrock background; the ceremonial flag of Montserrat, 'the Lady and the Cross'; 'the badge of the colony', a blue flag with the flag of the Union in the top left

quarter and a picture of Erin, wife of the first king of Ireland dressed in green holding a brown cross and a golden harp, in the centre of the right half of the flag.<sup>110</sup>

These various representations of an emerald identity are all aspects of the Government's promotion of tourism which hinder Fergus's call for Montserratian nationalism, Irish's move for linguistic independence, and Cheddy's cry for self-determination. Obviously, the Government-sanctioned, and Tourist Board-sponsored, move of the St. Patrick's Day commemorations to 1st August is an attempt to affect the Africentric commemoration of St. Patrick's Day, to open up the day for the establishment of a celebratory tourist reality. This move was noted by Messenger in his St. Patrick's Day article.<sup>111</sup> I would, however, suggest that like the media hounds who covered the 1995 St. Patrick's Day events,<sup>112</sup> like Fallon, McGinn and other travel writers who have written about Montserrat, Messenger also sensationalises his reporting, writing up vivid impressions of his fieldwork as though it were an authoritative and neutral academic historical reality. His conclusions are as controversial as a comment made by a member of an Irish-American conference group exploring the Irish-African connection on Montserrat:

“[t]he Union Jack should fly at half mast every St. Patrick's Day. This would indicate the British have some sense of shame for having done such injustices to the Irish.”<sup>113</sup>

Following their visit to Montserrat, the conference group delegates all agreed that Montserratians, Irish-Americans, and American blacks are all bonded together, and that the Irish-Americans in particular should be more aware of their Irish history. They also hoped that they could influence the islanders with their particular versions and visions of Irish, African, West Indian and American history and heritage.

The already contested histories on the island are complicated by the Irish-American visitors to the island. Like the expatriate residents on the island, they make suggestions as to the commemoration of St. Patrick's Day, and they demote Fergus's and Cheddy's promotion of national solidarity. They, too, evoke connections with the past. One final example comes from when Fallon twists and puts his spin onto his

report on the history of the island, an alien history from Ireland, as colonial for the Montserratians as the English history which they are taught in their classrooms.

[A] *man named Fergus*, a local historian and a University of West Indies professor, *said he thinks* St. Patrick's Day is celebrated not only to commemorate the island's Irish history, but also to remember the March 1768 slave rebellion.<sup>114</sup>

It is no small wonder, then, that the local Montserratian academics show such resilience in the face of their implicated dependence upon the tourist and the British. Only by continually persuading others of their alternative impressions of Montserrat's contested history are they able to impress their versions upon other more powerful interest groups with their own historical realities.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> (MacCannell 1989: 39-56, and especially 109).
- <sup>2</sup> Incidentally, the title of Fergus's Caribbean Guide, Montserrat - Emerald Isle of the Caribbean (London: Macmillan, 1992), suggests Montserrat's connection with Ireland, whilst the title of Fergus's other publication, Montserrat - History of a Caribbean Colony (London: Macmillan, 1994), enrolls rather than challenges Montserrat's colonial status.
- <sup>3</sup> See for example, Holiday Montserrat - The Way The Caribbean Used To Be: An Official Tourist Guide of the Montserrat Dep.t of Tourism (Montserrat Dep.t of Tourism 1993), the tourist guide for 1993/4 which opens with a welcome from H.E. Governor Savage (1993: 1), and an historical and cultural overview of the island by Dr. Fergus which stresses the Irish legacy as 'an intriguing historical variant' (Fergus 1993[b]: 1, 2).
- <sup>4</sup> All figures are taken from the 'Caribbean Basin Profile at a Glance' (Anon., 1993, no other references available).
- <sup>5</sup> See the flyer for the West Indies Real Estate and Advertisement Brochure used throughout 1994/5 (Anon. [d], no other references available).
- <sup>6</sup> See 'The Place, Montserrat' section in the American University of the Caribbean (AUC) - School of Medicine - Bulletin (Anon. [c]: 4, no other references available).
- <sup>7</sup> My work here is an extension upon Fernandez's investigation into symbolic consensus amongst the Bwiti, a Fang reformatory cult in northern Gabon which established 'congeries of meanings' attached to symbols (*American Anthropologist*, 1965: 908), what I would consider to be alternative realities.
- <sup>8</sup> The Montserrat Springs Hotel brochure with prices 1994/5 (Anon., 1994: 2, no other references available).
- <sup>9</sup> (Beattie: 11, no other references available). Mr. Beattie is an independent television producer who filmed a documentary about the 'black Irish' of Caribbean for Channel Four.
- <sup>10</sup> (McGinn, *Irish Roots*, 1994: 20). McGinn goes on to note that page after page of the local telephone directory is filled with Irish names: there are '132 families of Allens, 91 Ryans, 81 Daleys, 68 Tuitts, 57 Farrells, 42 Rileys, 38 Skerretts, 35 Sweeneys'. And McGinn has not recorded the significance of the large 'Irish' surname which has 37 entries in the 1993 telephone directory (Cable & Wireless, 1993: 43).
- <sup>11</sup> (Fergus 1993[b]: 2).
- <sup>12</sup> (Fergus 1992: 43).
- <sup>13</sup> See Fergus's poem 'March of Death' (Fergus, *The Montserrat Times*, 19th March 1982: 5) and his newspaper articles: 'A window on our history' (*The Montserrat Mirror*, 28th January 1972: 8); 'St. Patrick's Day, March 17' (*The Montserrat Mirror*, 14th March 1975: 7-8); 'Why Celebrate St. Patrick's Day?' (*The Montserrat Reporter*, 28th February 1986: 5).
- <sup>14</sup> (Fergus 1994: 266).
- <sup>15</sup> Transcript of an interview between Chedmond Browne and Jonathan Skinner (10th July 1995: 1-2).
- <sup>16</sup> Transcript from ZJB Radio broadcasts (13th February 1995, no other references available).
- <sup>17</sup> On all but two holidays, Christmas Day and Good Friday, there are organised local events: Boxing Day (26th December), Festival Day (31st December) and New Year's Day (1st January), the Festival Committee arranges the Boxing Day cultural Show, the Festival Costumed Bands Competition and the Parade of Festival Costumed Bands; St. Patrick's Day (17th March), a Bicycle Road Race is organised and there are a series of St. Patrick's Day celebrations which last an entire week; Easter Sunday (16th April), the Miss Tropical Isle Beauty Pageant; Easter Monday (17th April), the Round the Island Road Relay; Whit Monday (22nd May), a Fair; the Queen's Birthday (10th June), the Queen's Birthday Parade (see next chapter); August Monday (7th August), a Fair (Government Release 1995). Note that the August Monday international Slave Emancipation commemoration is described as a Fair.
- <sup>18</sup> The Official St. Patrick's Day Programme 1995, 20 page pamphlet edited by George James (1995).
- <sup>19</sup> (Savage, 1995: 4). Part of the text reads:  
the Irish Government joined with the Government of Montserrat and the British Government in successfully seeking a derogation from the European Union of components manufactured in Montserrat to enter Ireland at a lower rate of duty. This enabled W & W Electronics to create a significant number of additional jobs as a result of trade arrangements with US/Irish companies.
- <sup>20</sup> Vue Pointe Hotel advertisement (Anon., 1995: 5, no other references available).



<sup>21</sup> (Meade 1995: 6, my emphasis).

<sup>22</sup> (Fergus 1995[b]: 7).

<sup>23</sup> (James 1995: 9).

<sup>24</sup> (Island Bikes 1995: 19).

<sup>25</sup> 'Irish Surnames on Montserrat' (James 1995: 17):

Allen, Arthurton, Aymer, Baker, Blake, Brade, Bradshaw, Browne, Burns, Butler, Cabey, Cadogan, Carr, Carty, Cassell, Collins, Corbett, Daley, Daniel, Davis, Dowdye, Dyer, Edwards, Fagan, Farrell, Fenton, Fergus, Fox, Furlonge, Frith, Galloway, Greer, Griffith, Harney, Harris, Hogan, Howe, Hussey, Johnson, Kelly, Lindsay, Lynch, Maginley, Maloney, Mathew, Meade, Mercer, Molyneaux, Moore, Mulcare, Murraine, Neale, O'Brien, O'Donoghue, O'Garro, Payne, Piper, Reid, Reilly, Roche, Roberts, Roach, Ryan, Sweeney, Taylor, Thompson, Trant, Tuitt, Wade, Walker, Wall, West, White, Wilkins.

'Places with Irish Names' (James 1995: 17):

Delvins, Baker Hill, Carr's Bay, Barzey's, Roches Estate, Galways Estate, Kinsale, Cork Hill, Banks, Davy Hill, Blakes, O'Garros's, Reids Hill, Joe Morgan Hill, Fogarty, Brades, Sweeney's, Mulcares, Fergus Mountain, Brodericks, Trants Estate.

The 'Irishness' criteria for these lists is not known. Certainly, there are several hundred 'other' supposedly non-Irish names found on the island.

<sup>26</sup> According to 'Table 7.1: Population by Sex, Religion and Age Group', Roman Catholicism is the third largest Christian denomination on Montserrat (approximately 1,368 people, compared to 3,676 Anglicans, 2,742 Methodists, and 1,503 Pentecostals) (Anon., 1981: 84). The 'Roman Catholic Dinner' is open to all paying guests and is attended by tourists and local dignitaries of no particular denomination.

<sup>27</sup> Transcript from ZJB Radio broadcasts (13th February 1995, no other references available).

<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, Cherrie is reported to have said the following to Brian McGinn (McGinn, *Irish Roots*, 1994: 22):

'[n]o people', says Montserratian Cherrie Taylor, 'can come in those numbers without leaving a legacy'. But beyond the obvious place and family names, the precise nature of Montserrat's Irish heritage proves difficult to pin down. For Ms Taylor, a retired civil servant and newspaper columnist, the Irish legacy lives on in the northern part of the island, among a group of related families with names like Allen, Daley, Gibbons, Ryan and Sweeney.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>29</sup> This account of 16th March 1995 is summarised from extensive personal fieldnotes. There is no second half, but across the road at the Yacht Club, the AUC students are having a post-examination celebration. There, Flying Dove and Lord Alfredo are encouraged to sing and play the guitar: Alfredo sings his Road March Song and 'Alabama', and Dove sings about *wining* the body; some of the students pretend to *wine* whilst two drunk local women *wine* each other, one rubbing her breasts and crotch to the music ('Wining' is formally defined by the anthropologist Daniel Miller as 'a dance movement based on gyrations of the hips and waist, which may be performed by individuals, or upon another person, or in a line of dancers' (Miller 1994: 113)). Alfredo and I leave to walk up Wapping. He tells me that he is always drumming complex rhythms on the walls and houses that he passes to practice for when he plays to hotel tourists on Wednesday nights. It is only when he is singing and playing that he is able to steady his shaking and trembling hands.

<sup>30</sup> (Anon., *The Montserrat News*, 16th March 1995: 7, no other references available). The papers also carry news of the Governor's suspension of the Permanent Secretary for hampering police investigations; the opening of the March Criminal Assizes; Abraham 'Booga' Greenaway guilty plea to a shocking and unheard-of double murder, and St. Clair Boatswain's guilty plea to a single murder on the island (Anon., *The Montserrat News*, 16th March 1995: 3, no other references available). This is unusual news on Montserrat which has a very low crime rate compared to other islands.

<sup>31</sup> (Anon., *The Montserrat News*, 16th March 1995: 7, no other references available).

<sup>32</sup> (H.R.H. Elizabeth II, *The Montserrat News*, 16th March 1995: 16).

<sup>33</sup> 'When Justice Came To Church' (Fergus, *The Montserrat Reporter*, 17th March 1995: 8).

<sup>34</sup> (Anon., *The Montserrat Reporter*, 17th March 1995: 4, no other references available).

<sup>35</sup> (Meade, 17th March 1995: no other references available).

<sup>36</sup> Statistics indicate that there are 181 males and 180 females at St. Patrick's. Although figures correspond with visual estimations, other village statistics are possibly no longer accurate (Government Statistics 1995).

<sup>37</sup> (Fergus 1994: 36-59, especially 58-59).

<sup>38</sup> It is generally understood that one of the island's laws forbids a person enticing a person from their family's religious denomination to another. This ruling is to prevent poaching, the break-up of families, the competition for congregation on a small island.

<sup>39</sup> Tape transcript of a Maranatha youth group prayer meeting with Pastor Raymond praying and speaking in tongues (17th March 1995).

<sup>40</sup> (Hobsbawm 1992: 1).

<sup>41</sup> (Mullin 1992). Mullin works both as an anthropologist and a historian. He writes in a very immediate and accessible fashion.

<sup>42</sup> (Hobsbawm 1992: 9).

<sup>43</sup> (Fergus 1994: 266). In the same paragraph Fergus mentions the national song competition and the renaming of the Blackburne Airport as other moves towards an emancipated mentality, if not an independent constitution.

<sup>44</sup> (Fergus 1994: 75, my emphasis).

<sup>45</sup> (Anon., *Georgia Gazette*, 18th May 1768: 3).

<sup>46</sup> (Watkins 1924).

<sup>47</sup> (Fergus 1994: 75).

<sup>48</sup> (Fergus 1994: 75). George Irish joined Fergus in pressing for the establishment of a St. Patrick's Day national commemoration in his various articles: 'Reflections on March 17' (*The Montserrat Mirror*, 17th February 1978: 5); 'Reflections on March 17' (*The Montserrat Mirror*, 24th February 1979: 8); 'Reflections on St. Patrick's' (*The Montserrat Reporter*, 15th March 1985: 6-7).

<sup>49</sup> (Fergus, *The Montserrat Reporter*, 27th March 1992).

<sup>50</sup> (Fergus 1994: 76).

<sup>51</sup> Religion and language survived as pockets of identity scattered about the plantations: to avoid deculturation - a loss of identity - tribal scarification continued as a practice, ancestral spirits were invoked and symbolic names were taken in reaction to the planters' tribal objectification of their slaves. On Montserrat, slaves working on estates in and around St. Patrick's met on Saturday nights at Palmetto Point for dances, role-play and mimicry, re-enacting scenes of slave society and its administration, 'psychic satisfaction' from creative acts which, according to Fergus, 'kept the flame of freedom burning in their breasts' (Fergus 1994: 76).

<sup>52</sup> (Mullin 1992: 215-281).

<sup>53</sup> (Mullin 1992: 221).

<sup>54</sup> (Mullin 1992: 219). The folk song is still known throughout the island, though it is not directly associated with the St. Patrick's conspiracy.

<sup>55</sup> (Mullin 1992: 223). The St. Patrick's Day conspiracy was followed by major conspiracies in Jamaica (1776, 1791, 1806) and other islands of the British Caribbean. Perhaps the Montserrat rebellion prefaced the 1805 conspiracy in Trinidad which was planned around slave dancing societies, 'convoys' which became 'regiments', now today's carnival troupes? (Mullin 1992: 223). Here, I take Mullin's account of Trinidad conspiracies which follows on from Montserrat, and link the two together and into the present.

<sup>56</sup> (Mullin 1992: 220-221).

<sup>57</sup> (Mullin 1992: 221, my emphasis). Mullin's sources are particularly useful, especially the reference to the Methodist Missionary Society Archives held at the School of Oriental and African Studies library (SOAS), University of London.

<sup>58</sup> The sources which Mullin utilises in his notes (1992: 366) comprise of the following: 'Female Status and Male Dominance in Montserrat, West Indies', PhD dissertation by Yolanda Moses (1976); a missionary manuscript, 'a Natural, Civil, and Religious History of Montserrat in the West-Indies, Including a Particular Account of the Struggles of the Free Coloured Inhabitants ... by a Wesleyan Missionary who Resided Five Years in the Island' (Anon. [a]: 46-47, no other references available); letter from Montserrat (Anon., *Georgia Gazette*, 18th May 1768: 3); military reports of the situation by Governor William Woodley to the Secretary of State, Antigua (22nd April, and 21st June 1768: no other references available). I do not know why Mullin declares the seamstress to be coloured, despite access to the same archives as myself, in particular the *Georgia Gazette*.

<sup>59</sup> (Mullin 1992: 221; see also Mullin's sources: 366). I am unable to find a translation of 'Dadce' which might be a corruption of 'Daddy', such as an appeal to the 'Great Father'?

<sup>60</sup> (English 1930: 229). I do not know where English's quote comes from, but following this section is a mysterious sentence: '[w]hat actually did happen was;- No.179', possibly referring to some numbered historical record of the event.

<sup>61</sup> 'St. Patrick's Day in "The Other Emerald Isle"' (Messenger, *Eire - Ireland*, Earrach - Spring 1994: 12-23). Unlike Messenger's previous articles, he keeps this one out of circulation on Montserrat.

<sup>62</sup> (Messenger, *Eire - Ireland*, Earrach - Spring 1994: 16, my emphasis).

<sup>63</sup> (Messenger, *Eire - Ireland*, Earrach - Spring 1994: 13).

<sup>64</sup> (Messenger, *Eire - Ireland*, Earrach - Spring 1994: 13). The full text reads as follows:

[a]lthough the Catholic population has always been concentrated in St. Patrick's and Kinsale Villages in the south, about a thousand "Black" or "Montserrat Irish" are located in the north of Montserrat, mostly descendants of marriages between Irish and slaves and mostly Protestant. [...] The surnames Gibbons, Sweeney, and Allen predominate among the Black Irish, among whom there is also considerable intermarriage - even between first cousins - to maintain the Caucasoid phenotype and, for a few, the Irish tradition.

<sup>65</sup> True, New Year's Day parades used to contain parades of weightlifters carrying chains 'with which they 'jumped-up' to symbolise breaking the bonds of slavery' (Messenger, *Eire - Ireland*, Earrach - Spring 1994: 14), but that does not occur now, and the accepted understanding for the 'jump-up' is for a party at home, in the street, or in a night club.

<sup>66</sup> (Messenger, *Eire - Ireland*, Earrach - Spring 1994: 15)

<sup>67</sup> (Messenger, *Eire - Ireland*, Earrach - Spring 1994: 17).

<sup>68</sup> (Messenger, *Eire - Ireland*, Earrach - Spring 1994: 17, cited from Government Information Unit, 'St. Patrick's Day', Government Information Unit: 2).

<sup>69</sup> (Messenger, *Eire - Ireland*, Earrach - Spring 1994: 17-21).

<sup>70</sup> (Messenger, *Eire - Ireland*, Earrach - Spring 1994: 22-23, especially p.23).

<sup>71</sup> (Messenger 1984: 63-75).

<sup>72</sup> (Messenger 1969).

<sup>73</sup> This is an unpublished, four page document with many typographical errors, possibly copied from an original text, the quote being taken from page two (Messenger 1965).

<sup>74</sup> (Messenger, *African Arts*, 1973: 54-57).

<sup>75</sup> (Messenger, *African Arts*, 1973: 54).

<sup>76</sup> (Gwynn, *Studies*, September 1929: 393). However, the article Messenger refers to concentrates upon other settlement expeditions to Guyana (Robert Harcourt, 1609), Virginia (Sir Walter Raleigh and Captain John Smith from 1606), St. Christophers (Captain Thomas Warner 1624) and Nevis (Anthony Hilton, 1628)(Gwynn, *Studies*, September 1929: 378, 385, 391). The complete article contains no reference to Montserrat bar the final enigmatic paragraph which continues from an account of Hilton's voyages (Gwynn, *Studies*, September 1929: 393):

[F]ive or six years later we get our first glimpse of what was to prove the most distinctively Irish settlement in the New World, the Irish Catholic colony of Montserrat, founded in or about the year 1634. But that is a story that must be reserved for a further article.

<sup>77</sup> Part two of Gwynn's article, continued in the December edition of *Studies* (Gwynn, *Studies*, December 1929: 648-663), mentions that the first plantation on Montserrat was governed by Captain Anthony Briskett, a surveyor from Virginia, and an Irish landlord 'removed' from Ireland in 1613 (Gwynn, *Studies*, December 1929: 650-653). Colonial Office records further reveal that Irish Catholics - many banned from the Protestant colony of Virginia - would have followed Briskett to Montserrat (Gwynn, *Studies*, June 1932: 220-221), along with the 'Irish Tories' who were expelled from Ireland under Oliver Cromwell's policy of prisoner transportation (Gwynn, *Studies*, December 1930: 607-623). It is also interesting to note the spelling of Barbados, and the inclusion of Virginia plantations in with the plantations of the West Indies: Mullin's work (1992) goes on to examine the differences between these plantations (the incidence of slave uprisings was far greater in the West Indian islands than in America, whereas there was greater opportunity for a successful uprising in America) (Skinner, *Ethnic & Racial Studies*, April 1996: 489-490). The sequel to this article 'Cromwell's Policy of Transportation - Part II', by Aubrey Gwynn (*Studies*, June 1931: 291-305)



contains only passing reference to Montserrat. Diplomacy ruled in those formative years for the colony when the Governors on Montserrat had all been appointed from Anglo-Irish Protestant families: Anthony Briskett (1632-1649) was dispossessed from his Irish lands; and both Roger Osborne (1649-1665) and William Stapleton (1668-1672) (Governor to the Leeward Islands) were Irishmen (Gwynn, *Studies*, December 1929: 648-650). Even Fergus notes that during Stapleton's Governorship of Montserrat a census of the population of the island (1678-1679) revealed there to be twice as many Irish than all the Englishmen and Scottish, certainly more Irish than blacks on the island. Fergus cites Colonial Office records in his book (1994: 21):

English - 346 Men, 175 Women, 240 Children, 761 Total;

Irish - 769 Men, 410 Women, 690 Children, 1869 Total;

Scottish - 33 Men, 6 Women, 13 Children, 52 Total;

Whites - 1148 Men, 591 Women, 943 Children, 2682 Total;

Blacks - 400 Men, 300 Women, Children 292, 992 Total.

<sup>78</sup> It is a moot point as to how 'free' an emancipated slave really was in a white colonial society with planters as landholders. To return to population statistics, by 1729, Fergus (1994: 52) quotes a change in black/white people: 5858 blacks and 1050 whites out of a total of 6908, a ratio of 5:1 as opposed to 1:2.8 in Stapleton's 1668/9 survey.

<sup>79</sup> The curiosity value of the Irish connection ranges from academic to tourist interest. Reported by Jim Fallon in the *Irish Echo* (27th July - 3rd August 1993: 18) are the Florida Unity Conference Group findings of their exploration of Montserrat's Irish-African connection, 'The Black Irish'.

<sup>80</sup> (Messenger, *African Arts*, 1973: 55).

<sup>81</sup> (Fergus 1994: 77).

<sup>82</sup> (Fergus 1994: 22).

<sup>83</sup> (Messenger 1973: 54).

<sup>84</sup> (Fergus 1992: 17).

<sup>85</sup> (Messenger, *African Arts*, 1973: 55-56).

<sup>86</sup> (Messenger, *African Arts*, 1973: 56).

<sup>87</sup> (Messenger, *African Arts*, 1973: 56-57). Messenger also maintains that despite the possibility that 'negroes' on Montserrat acquired their surnames with slave emancipation, the Black Irish on Montserrat 'obtained their surnames as a result of legal marriages between whites and Negroes during the eighteenth century' (Messenger, *African Arts*, 1973: 56).

<sup>88</sup> In much the same way, the Messengers have written articles about 'Brendan', an Irish *leipreachán* which followed them from Eire back to the United States (Messenger, *American Anthropologist*, April 1962: 367-373; see also, Messenger, *Anthropology and Humanism Quarterly*, 1991: 63-68).

<sup>89</sup> (Messenger, *Ethnicity*, 1975: 281-303).

<sup>90</sup> (Messenger, *Ethnicity*, 1975: 290).

<sup>91</sup> (Messenger, *Ethnicity*, 1975: 296). There are 44 Montserratian place-names of possible Irish derivation; eighteen of the 48 estates have Irish names, as well as 14 of the 41 villages, five heights, five shoreline locations, one valley, one Soufriere; and 169 Irish surnames have been used on Montserrat, 90% of which are still carried by West Indians.

<sup>92</sup> (Messenger, *Ethnicity*, 1975: 301-302).

<sup>93</sup> Recall Belonger and her calypso 'Buy Local' (1989), her other songs, and Arrow's calypso, 'Montserrat Culture', which are all mentioned in Chapter Three. Teknikal is known to have a calypso about the St. Patrick's Day rebellion, and Keithroy 'Bear' Morson one about the history of Montserrat called 'The Time Has Come' (no other references available).

<sup>94</sup> (Messenger, *Eire - Ireland*, Earrach - Spring 1994: 15).

<sup>95</sup> (Bloch, *Man*, 1977).

<sup>96</sup> With 46,812 arrivals to the island in 1994, approximately half of them tourists (23,613) according to the Ministry of Economic Development on Montserrat, accounting for \$50 million in tourism receipts, it is no small wonder that the Government continues to promote and encourage tourism, and to reject criticism and comment that might intimidate and/or scare-off visitors to the island. On Montserrat, the tourist season - the time of the snowbirds (tourists escaping the winter months of North America) - is between late October and late February, and the quiet months for tourism are over the summer, from May to August. This impression is given not by the fortnightly tourists - tourist figures on Montserrat in 1994 remained between 3,318 (December) and 1,512 (October). It is the day excursionist flying in from Antigua that accounts for the loss of tourism in the summer, as figures

drop from a high of 1,986 in March down to as low as 299 in September (Tourist Statistics 1995: 1, 13).

<sup>97</sup> (Irish 1974).

<sup>98</sup> (Irish 1993: 12).

<sup>99</sup> See Chapter Two, 'Reflections on March 17' (Irish 1993: 9-16). Initially this article was in *The Montserrat Reporter* (15th March 1985: no other references available).

<sup>100</sup> (Irish 1993: 15).

<sup>101</sup> (Irish 1993: 11).

<sup>102</sup> (Browne, *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*, June 1993: 4, author's emphasis). The article covers the entire newsletter, and has been written:

*by the author to dispel once and for all the myth that is being perpetrated by a minor sector of our society which have lead us and the world to believe that Montserratians have an Irish heritage. Montserratians are Afrikans.*

<sup>103</sup> (Browne, *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*, June 1993: 4).

<sup>104</sup> (Browne, *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator*, June 1993: 3).

<sup>105</sup> (Government Information Unit: 1, no other references available).

<sup>106</sup> See Chapter Three, 'The Irish Legacy' where Fergus describes the amalgam as 'a "New World" interpretation' (Fergus 1992: 14-17, especially 14, 17).

<sup>107</sup> Perhaps this is also done by myself, Messenger and others as an inevitable aspect of daily social interaction. On Montserrat, Messenger maintains several positions: the unassuming anthropologist joining local conversations, socialising and vacationing, disseminating Gwynn's articles and his revision of them, whilst at the same time producing a critique of the St. Patrick's Day celebrations which is not for local consumption but for a journal of Irish studies. So too, I befriend expatriates, and belongers, recording Maranatha prayers and radio broadcasts for my thesis on Montserrat.

<sup>108</sup> 'St. Patrick's Day' letters for the occasion by John Bruton - Taoiseach (*The Montserrat News*, 24th March 1995: 12); Councillor John Gormley - Lord Mayor of Dublin (*The Montserrat News*, 24th March 1995: 12); Michael Higgins - Minister of Arts, Culture and Gaeltacht (*The Montserrat News*, 24th March 1995: 13); and Mary Robinson - President of Ireland (*The Montserrat News*, 24th March 1995: 13).

<sup>109</sup> (Bruton, *The Montserrat News*, 24th March 1995: 12).

<sup>110</sup> Tourists, travel writers, expatriates and Montserratians all see these distinctive symbols of Irish identity, symbols repeated on school uniforms and popular colours and designs. The crest is used as an example of the Irish-Montserrat connection, along with the shamrock above the entrance to the Governor's residence - Government House. History, however, dates the establishment of the Montserrat badge to 10th April, 1909, when the design was approved by Royal Warrant. The crest came about as the result of a design competition in England in 1907 for the best design for the Coat of Arms for the Leeward Islands (Wheeler, 2nd July 1984: no other references available; see also 'The Montserrat Crest', Montserrat Library Archives: no other references available). A Mrs. Goodwin designed the badge using traditional Irish and Christian symbols for the Leewards, but the design was adopted by Montserrat instead. (Chedmond Browne refused to let his children wear such overtly colonial symbols on their school uniforms. The school's reaction to the loss of their badges was to turn them away from the school premises until they were restored). Like the celebration of St. Patrick's Day, it, too, has become an officially sanctioned invented tradition, one that has varied subtly across the century, one that Fergus has lyricalised and contested with his commemoration of Willy Bramble which I discussed in Chapter Two.

<sup>111</sup> (Messenger, *Eire - Ireland*, Earrach - Spring 1994: 17, 23).

<sup>112</sup> (Anon., *The Montserrat Reporter*, 17th March 1995: 1, no other references available). I am referring, in particular, to Central Broadcasting Systems (CBS), an American television cable channel; writers for the Chicago-based *Afrique* news magazine; and an Irish television crew who all came to Montserrat to cover St. Patrick's Day 1995.

Writing for *Caribbean Week*, Robert Smith tells us that the St. Patrick's Day celebrations are becoming an island-wide event (Smith, *Caribbean Week*, 1st-14th April 1995: 45):

St. Patrick's Day is a national holiday in Montserrat, where all people celebrate their African, Irish and Caribbean heritage. Traditionally, this affair has consisted of a three day celebration based mostly in the village of St. Patrick's in the East.



However this year, through the efforts of The Montserrat Tourist Board, the festivities are becoming more national in scope.

<sup>113</sup> (Fallon, *Irish Echo*, 28th July - 3rd August 1993: 18). Richard Denton made this comment to the reporter Jim Fallon. The group, an educational branch of the Irish-American Unity Foundation, is presided over by Bob Linnon. Linnon stated to Fallon:

[O]ur mission was to investigate and explore the Irish connection. We came away with a treasure trove of information which clearly indicates the black Irish are part of our heritage.

As is so common with the travel writers, Fallon reports all the various Irish symbols found around the island. Fallon also provides the reader with several examples of Montserradians who are conscious of their Irish ancestry: he reports the work of Marie Tiernay Smith, a travel agent, who interviewed and questioned dozens of other inhabitants about their Irish ancestry. One such interview went like this (Fallon, *Irish Echo*, 28th July - 3rd August 1993: 18):

"[a]re you Irish? Are you a descendant of the Irish slaves?" Marie Tiernay Smith [...] asked Sam Corbett, a taxi driver.

"I didn't know there were any Irish slaves," he said.

"There were and they had hard time and suffered just like the black slaves," Smith said. "With an Irish name like Corbett you could be a descendant of one of the slaves."

Taken aback, Corbett thought for a while. Then he told a story about his brother's child.

"The baby was light-skinned and had blue eyes," he said. "My brother thought his girlfriend had been with one of the white sailors. But then my grandmother told him that my great-grandfather was Irish. And that his baby was probably light-skinned because of our great grandfather."

Such interviews attest to the dialectical relationship between island hosts and island guests as both influence each other's realities.

<sup>114</sup> (Fallon, *Irish Echo*, 28th July - 3rd August 1993: 18, my emphasis).

# Dust settles but future is bleak

**Polly Patullo** reports from Montserrat on the grey, ash-ridden aftermath of a deadly eruption that has left those remaining on the island even more fearful and confused

A PICK-UP truck packed with silent young men lurched up the hill away from the stricken flatlands of eastern Montserrat. "You don't see them?" someone called from the road. The men shook their heads, their eyes brimming with tears.

They had gone to search for relatives in Farm's village, which was devastated by Wednesday's eruption of the Soufriere Hills volcano. Ash poured over the crater rim down one of the ravines and into the river valleys, submerging villages as it did so.

Further down the road at a police checkpoint, groups of people stared down the coast towards the now empty airport. "He took everything. A whole village wiped out," said a taxi driver in disbelief. He was looking at a flat, grey steaming ash deposit where, 24 hours earlier, the community of Trants had stood.

Six people were killed and 15 are missing after the worst day for this tiny seven by 11 mile British Dependent Territory, whose population has fallen from 11,000 to under 7,000 since the volcano started its current activity in April 1995.

The dead and missing - 40 were rescued by helicopter - were caught in one of the two "no-access" zones that stretch from coast to coast across the southern half of the island, taking in the capital, Plymouth.

Most residents were long ago evacuated to the north. But some insisted on staying, despite many warnings and what Governor Frank Savage called "strenuous" efforts to persuade them to leave. Others returned to the no-go areas to work their fields or tend their animals. For these once-green slopes were the agricultural heartland of Montserrat, home to many of the staunchly independent small farmers who till the volcanic soil.

"It will take courage to continue," Robert Allen said outside the hospital, itself relocated to a school in the safe north. Mr. Allen, a part-time farmer who produced a bouquet of fresh herbs from his car, was trying to visit his stepfather, who was burnt in the ash flow. "We're scared now," he admitted.

Down the west coast the classic greenery of a Caribbean landscape now gives way to uniform greyness. People wear dust masks to protect themselves from the swirling ash as they struggle to school or work.

In recent months a new capital has emerged around the small town of Salem to replace the boarded up, ghost-grey Plymouth. In Salem, businesses have re-opened. The internationally renowned calypso star Arrow has his Arrow Manshop in a neat row of wooden buildings, while government offices and banks have colonised smart villas owned by absentee expatriates.

But the uncertainty is becoming more acute, with the possibility of more evacuations in the face of further volcanic activity. The island remains cut off, the airport and port closed.

As the HMS Liverpool sails towards Montserrat to offer support, Montserratians can only hope that some day the volcano will go back to sleep.

- The Royal Fleet Auxiliary tanker Black Rover has been diverted from duties in the Caribbean to help HMS Liverpool on Montserrat. The vessel, with a crew of 53, is due to arrive on Sunday afternoon.

## Chapter Seven - Travel writing or ethnography: unmentionable glimpses into the author's personality

If there is a diversity of impressions, histories and versions of Montserrat, so too is there a diversity of impressions, histories and versions of academic disciplines such as anthropology, history, and English literature. The last chapter presented just some of the histories of Montserrat and the St. Patrick's Day rebellion, including its nationalist commemoration and tourist celebration. There, I also dwelt upon the many Irish symbols which are used, variously, by the different interest groups - the tourists, the academics, the lay belongers, the Montserrat Tourist Board, the businessmen. In addition, at the end of the last chapter I briefly touched upon some travel writing. Here, I concentrate upon the non-belongers' written impressions of Montserrat - their article advertisements for the island, and their passing references to the island in their books and letters. Travel writings or ethnographic examples? Suffice it to say that these are two blurred genres of writing, conveniently accepted by their audiences. As a consequence of this, I use my examples not to distinguish between the two genres but to further an understanding of the readers and writers themselves. This is possible because, as Leach has observed, 'we can read a text with the set purpose of discovering projections of the author's personality, of finding a record of how he or she reacted to what was going on',<sup>1</sup> whether that be turning to humour - as in the case of Evelyn Waugh's comic coronation of Haile Selassie, or turning a blind eye - as in the case of Wilfred Thesiger's colonial coronation of his acquaintance Ras Tafari. My aim, then, in this chapter, is to treat travel writing as ethnography so that I might examine some travel writers' written impressions of Montserrat, to read them as indeterminate texts, and to use my partial readings to write a partial commentary about the writers themselves (and their assumed audience). Before I do this, let me explain and illustrate my reasons for this approach.

I find it difficult to preserve a distinction between anthropological ethnography and travel writing, just as Wendy Vacani found it difficult to distinguish between literature and travel writing in her assessment of D.H. Lawrence's writings.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, when Levi-Strauss's *Tristes Tropiques* (an autobiographical travelogue of fieldwork anthropology

in South America)<sup>3</sup> and Colin Turnbull's *The Forest People* (an examination of 'pygmy' life in the forests of the Congo)<sup>4</sup> appear alongside each other in the travel writing section of local bookstores, I feel threatened and think of A.R. Louch's reminder that 'anthropology is only a collection of traveller's tales with no particular scientific significance'.<sup>5</sup> By this, Louch means that anthropology is not a source of scientific explanation, rather, anthropology contributes to human knowledge 'as a 'means of explaining'.<sup>6</sup> However, other anthropologists than myself are seriously threatened by this issue of reading and writing anthropology. Whereas I have tried, in keeping with my uncertain and indeterminate anthropology, to maintain a loose and shifting constellation of inter-subjectivity, others such as Signe Howell argue differently. To re-stake academic territory, Howell recently invoked the work of Stanley Fish to argue that anthropologists have a "reading culture", one which is inescapably distinct from other genres and disciplines: in her words, '[a]s practising anthropologists we all belong to one or another interpretive community whether we acknowledge this or not.'<sup>7</sup> Elsewhere, Bill Watson exports the productive differentiation between fact and fiction to distinguish between ethnography and the novel, the consciousness of the novelist and the consciousness of the anthropologist.<sup>8</sup> And, despite his utterances, even Louch distinguishes between the travel writer and the ethnographic writer; between the 'moral convictions' of the visiting writer such as Robert Ruark, and the 'moral explanations' of the experienced sojourner such as Laurens van der Post: the one describing from 'the rituals of his own culture', the other explaining from 'what might be called the moral ecology within which the practice is observed.'<sup>9</sup> Moral explanation from "the native's point of view" might well be the way in which Louch rephrases Malinowski.

Despite all this, such a distinction between anthropology and travel writing is downplayed when I make the travel writers my natives in this chapter. A brief comparison of D.H. Lawrence's "The Hopi Snake Dance"<sup>10</sup> and Clifford Geertz's 'Deep Play: Notes on a Balinese Cockfight'<sup>11</sup> illustrates the confusions between the two genres, anthropology and literature. Both texts contain descriptions of the author's observations, their impressions of the land: Lawrence, the writer, situates his account in Arizona, in the village of Walpi which he translates as 'first mesa' for his readers; Geertz, the anthropologist, locates himself in 'a Balinese village',<sup>12</sup> where he

aims to write about and translate local practices for his readers. Lawrence describes an aboriginal American event at which men dance with poisonous snakes dangling from their mouths. He explains his observations - the American-Indian practice - in terms of their understanding of the cosmos. Likewise, after observing a number of cockfights in the Balinese village, Geertz describes an ideal version of a Balinese cockfight, declaring the cockfight an art form, a grand metaphor for Balinese social organisation, a drama of status hierarchy, and a meta-commentary which can be referred to as 'a Balinese reading of Balinese experience, a story they tell the natives about themselves.'<sup>13</sup>

In effect, both Lawrence and Geertz are writers who seek cultural 'meaning', treating it as an artefact of the culture under study. As objects of study, Balinese culture is reached through the cockfight, and the Hopi cosmivision - their shared system of intersubjective symbols and meanings - is penetrated via the Snake Dance. Both writers attempt to grasp the meaning of the social structures and practices before them, and then to render that meaning in terms understandable to the uninitiated observers, the impressionable readers. Their aims are to present descriptions of life in the host culture, to explain the inexplicable, to make the strange familiar.<sup>14</sup> And in their desire to understand and explain, each writer 'shows that a highly puzzling act is the done thing, he exhibits the beliefs which provide the rationale for such conventions or ceremonies' - fulfilling Louch's understanding of what the anthropologist does.<sup>15</sup> This mode of inquiry takes place in what Mary Louise Pratt describes as the 'contact zone' ('the space of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other').<sup>16</sup> Whether ethnography or travel writing, for Geertz, his work is intended:

not to answer our deepest questions, but to make available to us answers that others [...] have given, and thus to include them in the consultable record of what man has said.<sup>17</sup>

Here Geertz echoes Louch, blurring the anthropological course, diluting disciplinary boundaries, challenging what some would perceive to be anthropology's scientific precepts. In effect, Geertz relativizes and equates the belief-systems, the world-views,



the fundamental philosophies and the ideologies of all cultures, turning them into a global anthology of traveller's tales.

For me, travel writing is a blurred genre of writing with boundaries a-blur. For others, such as Barry Curtis and Claire Pajaczkowska, it has been defined as 'the retrospective reconstruction of experience in epistolary or journal form, often addressed to an absent interlocutor'.<sup>18</sup> It is both a substitute for the travel experience, and a promotion of the travel experience. Genre-ally, travel writing is about movement, about journeys and the voy-ag-euristic experiences of Paul Theroux travelling though the Pacific islands,<sup>19</sup> John Steinbeck travelling across North America with his dog,<sup>20</sup> Evelyn Waugh cruising the Mediterranean,<sup>21</sup> and Patrick Leigh Fermor exploring the Caribbean islands.<sup>22</sup> Some texts, though, are more static and sedentary accounts of travel to a particular country such as D.H. Lawrence's years in the mid-1920s spent in Mexico,<sup>23</sup> or E.M. Forster's lengthy visits to the state of Dewas in India in 1912 and 1921,<sup>24</sup> or even Lucretia Stewart's recent visit to Montserrat.<sup>25</sup>

For Pratt, travel writing approximates colonial travelogue; travel writing is colonisation by writing, the creation of a European 'planetary consciousness' - a European vision of the world as a unified taxonomy of differences and similarities within which all people and places can be described, captured and situated in relation to one another.<sup>26</sup> According to Pratt, one feature apparent in many examples of the travel writing genre is that of 'survival': told from the viewpoint that the teller has returned, the travel writing text presupposes that the writer survived the experience and has been reintegrated into their home society.<sup>27</sup> Inspired to embark upon a perilous journey along the ancient Silk trade routes of Asia on foot and by local means, the travel writer Nick Danziger might be described as one such survivalist. For him:

the essence of travel, especially to remote places, is precisely that you are on your own. There are no printed guides and maps to help you, and so the only way to see the place you are visiting is through the eyes and with the help of the people who live there. True travel doesn't just involve visiting a place, and seeing its monuments; it involves getting to know its inhabitants.<sup>28</sup>

A lone travel writer claiming to visit through the eyes of the inhabitants, Danziger tries to depart from the customary model of travel writers and travel writings which seek to entertain the reader with exotic tales of alien practices rather than familiarise and explain to the reader the others' justifiable customs. Danziger claims an inter-subjective relationship with the inhabitants of the places he wanders through based upon his experiences. But this is at the same time as maintaining an aloof solitude. This is just one incongruity which would not endear his travel writings to either Valerie Wheeler's blanket pronouncements ('[t]he traveller expresses judgements about phenomena that violate the values of traveller and audience and thus entertain, stimulate, and by contrast reaffirm those values'),<sup>29</sup> or Justin Stagl and Christopher Pinney's sweeping declarations ('although lay travellers and professional anthropologists gather in their experience of alterity in fundamentally the same way, they communicate them to different reference groups. The traveller normally addresses himself to his own socio-cultural group. The anthropologist, by contrast, appeals to a cross-cultural scholarly community').<sup>30</sup> Despite the observation that neither Lawrence, nor Danziger, conform to these facile anthropological impressions about travel writers, we can impute from these academic positions, that, for them, no professional culture-free anthropologists, not even John Messenger, would make the error of criticising, ridiculing, or sensationalising their subjects. Stagl and Pinney admit to their denial of cultural relativism in their assumption that the trained anthropologist, unlike the lay traveller, is free from the prejudices of his own society and culture.<sup>31</sup> Naturally, I disagree with them.

I would also like to include even the volcano reports at the beginning of each chapter in this thesis as impressions of Montserrat written by travel writers, 'non-belongers' in Montserratian terms. Published in newspapers, many of these accounts would appear at the bottom of Curtis and Pajaczowska's hierarchy of tourism literature which places exploration and travel before tourism, and rates degrees of commitment, levels of danger and values of experience accrued.<sup>32</sup> In fact, the majority of the various examples in the rest of this chapter - drawn from books, letters, newspapers and magazines - do, indeed, seek to describe, exoticise and then to allure readers to the host culture, rather than understand, interpret and explain the host culture to the reader. They do exhibit many of Louch's, Stagl and Pinney's and Watson's criteria for

travel writing as opposed to ethnography. However, in this chapter, I resist these anthropologists' essentialist categorisings and facile distinctions of what I consider to be blurred genres of writing. The various texts I use below are legitimate texts for investigation, for a 'tropological 'writing about writing-about-travel''';<sup>33</sup> in just some of the readings I make of them, they reveal not just the tourist's gaze, but also the tourist's desire.<sup>34</sup> The next section presents two such travel writing pieces featuring Montserrat, one with which I was party to the process of its writing, and one which was heavily influenced by the work of the Montserrat Tourist Board. Once I have examined the process of travel writing, I continue by exemplifying travel writing found in books, letters, and newspaper and magazine articles. I must, in accord with my postmodern theoretical outlook, accept that my reading of all the travel writing samples is a relative reading. Reading remains indeterminate, despite the strength (by representation) or weakness (by evocation) of the semiotic coil which I identified in the Preface to this thesis.

### **Fulfilling fantasies: the process of travel writing on Montserrat**

Whilst on Montserrat, I was fortunate to be privy to some of the exploits of Brighid McLaughlin, a young Irish travel writer visiting the island in preparation for an expedition to Redonda, an uninhabited rocky outcrop nineteen miles off Montserrat that was once surface-mined for guano. On June 25th 1995 one of her articles, 'Redonda Reclaimed', was published in the supplement section 'Living & Leisure' of the Irish newspaper *The Sunday Independent*.<sup>35</sup> In the supplement are an article and seven photographs of a young, blonde, white Irish correspondent in loose wraps posing for the paper: Brighid sitting in front of some exotic plants on Montserrat, Brighid at the front of a boat heading for Redonda, Brighid planting the Irish tricolour on Redonda, Brighid sheltering on a cliff-face on Redonda, a blown up Brighid planting the tricolour again, Brighid in a sun hat in front of a building on Montserrat, and Brighid standing beside a tall black man with a beard.<sup>36</sup>

A piece of verse about Redonda and a conversation about the literary significance of Redonda and Redonda's monarchy - lasting 'Five Ballgowans' - introduces the reader to a story told to McLaughlin in a pub in Ireland about a sea merchant, Mathew Dowdy Shiell, an Irishman living on Montserrat. To summarise, it was whilst Shiell sailed past the deserted volcanic rock, in 1865, that his free slave wife gave birth to his son Mathew Phipps Shiell. In a fit of delight he declared his son King of Redonda. At the age of fifteen, Mathew was later crowned Filipe the First on the island, an act which was acknowledged in good humour by the British Colonial Office in London. Mathew Shiell later dropped the second 'l' in his name to become Shiel,<sup>37</sup> departed for a literary life in the Bloomsbury area of London, wrote the best-selling fantasy *The Purple Cloud*, passing away after securing the royal Redondan line by making his poet friend John Gawsworth a blood brother. As next ruler, Gawsworth set about strengthening his monarchy and his constitution by bestowing noble titles to a non-resident population in return for food and drink to such an extent that former Redondans have included Virginia Woolf, Lawrence Durrell, Dylan Thomas, and Henry Miller. Hence, Redonda became "one of the last outposts of the once-great empire of Bohemia".<sup>38</sup>

Brigid explains that she is on a Bohemian quest to climb to the summit of Shiell's Redonda. 'As an Irishwoman, I wanted to honour Shiell's work and ancestry by planting the tricolour upon Redonda.'<sup>39</sup> She prepared her colonial campaign from Montserrat, a place which she describes by drawing upon Shiell's writings, using Shiell for her entrée as a travel writer and Bohemian:

Montserrat, a place of "hurricanes, earthquakes, brooks bubbling hot" [...] "soufrieres-sulphur-swamps-floods" (M.P. Shiell). The island was a vision so exquisite that I was almost afraid to open my eyes wide. As I trod the dry, dusty earth of its mountain paths, brushed by ferns, with hibiscus flaring in the hedges. I caught a fleeting glimpse of a goat, smelt the divine spiciness of the plants, and realised that this was what inspired Shiell's writing. But finding a seaman to bring me to Redonda was more difficult than I had expected.

I searched the bars and rum stores in vain. "Redonda?" Locals scratched their heads and simply said, "Oh Lawd!"<sup>40</sup>

The rest of her story records her expedition, the adversity she endured and survived along with a locally-hired photographer. Together, they endured rockfalls in their ascent and conquest of Redonda. Once at the peak, Brighid:

spotted the dried-out trunk of a gnarled Casuarina tree, the only one I saw on the island. It was the perfect flagpole, so I tied the Irish tricolour on to it. Naturally, this historic event was accompanied by the clicks of Kevin's camera, and the flag was shoved skywards with due ceremony. I jokingly read a proclamation re-enforcing Ireland's claims, and stressed that Mathew Dowdy Shiell was an Irishman first and last.<sup>41</sup>

On their return to Montserrat, the photographer had to swim out to the boat, carrying his cameras above the water before returning with the boathand to help Brighid swim the same distance.<sup>42</sup>

A re-creation of the exploration literature - Brighid the brave Bohemian resourcefully pursuing her literary quest to 'reclaim' Redonda for Ireland in Shiell's name - Brighid McLaughlin returns from her adventure having validated herself as an explorer but also as a true Bohemian, an impulsive thespian and poet. For me, however, McLaughlin's account contains echoes and traces of imperial and anthropological actions. A cultured white-woman seeks the assistance of locals who shake their heads in disbelief in response to her proposition to reclaim Redonda before guiding and assisting with her journey, and eventually rescuing her from her colonial rock.<sup>43</sup> Like Stanley who was sent abroad by his New York paper; like John Boot who was sent off to Evelyn Waugh's fictional African Republic of Ishmaelia<sup>44</sup> - McLaughlin was sent to Montserrat by her newspaper. McLaughlin rented a room in Marie's Guest House - accommodation which I nearly accepted - and she spent much of her time in The Bird's Nest Bar in Plymouth, which I too frequented. A quiet, local bar where local farmers play dominoes and yachting tourists sit and watch, The Bird's Nest Bar is an ideal social base for making contacts, for meeting locals on neutral ground, and for



swapping drinks for local information.<sup>45</sup>

Whilst I was attaining local knowledge, local understanding of what it is to lead a life on Montserrat, Brigid was also gaining local information which would lead to her travel writings. Bearing this in mind, the barwoman arranged a meeting as, from her point of view, we were both doing the same thing on Montserrat. For the barwoman, we were both gaining the same local information; though we used it very differently. And so, after almost a year as beneficiary of local understandings from Montserratian islanders, my turn came to become the benefactor of local information as McLaughlin bought me a drink and informally interviewed me about Montserrat. In effect, McLaughlin did to me what I was doing to many others on the island, though I did it for longer, and so gained a greater diversity to my impressions of Montserrat (I would like to add that I gained a greater "consistency", but I am not sure that I can say this; and I can only sift through the diversity of fleeting moments of inter-subjective concord).

It is important to understand the process of the acquisition of information which went into the writing of McLaughlin's article, just as it is important to understand how it is that the anthropologist becomes absorbed in the thoughts and 'habitus' of another culture.<sup>46</sup> It is also important to understand both the swirling context of the article and at whom the writing is targeted. Many Montserratians would know Joel and his boat, and Kevin the photographer, and they, like me, would be aware that it is Kevin standing with the white woman in one of the photographs. These connections with native realities do not prevent a visitor to the island from establishing Montserrat as a part of their reality. Many locals would recognise the backdrops and the landscapes in the photographs, but many would not recognise any of the Redonda landscapes, nor would many know who Shiell was, nor why anyone would wish to visit Redonda. The article is written about Montserrat and Redonda with the readers of *The Independent* in mind. The piece begins and ends with Irish Bohemianness, and contains references to Ballygowans which, we can only infer, is an Irish drink. And, like an ethnography, McLaughlin's travel writing exhibits what Geertz identifies as the persuasion of 'being here' and 'being there'.<sup>47</sup>

The local reader - the article was read at the bar - is not the intended reader of the article. The regulars are all too aware of Redonda, and life on Montserrat; in addition, the Montserrat Tourist Board makes sure that they are also aware that the tourism industry contributes at least 30% of Montserrat's GDP.<sup>48</sup> Not only does the Montserrat Tourist Board market Montserrat *externally* (the United States, Canada, Germany, England), they are also heavily involved in marketing tourism *internally* not least by arranging 'hospitality services' for those in contact with tourists.<sup>49</sup> On an island as small as Montserrat, where the tourist visitor may come in contact with any member of the population, it comes as no surprise that the entire island is sold as a holiday product.<sup>50</sup> Besides lobbying for runway expansion and more cruise ship facilities, the Montserrat Tourist Board operates a Tourism Awareness Program which culminates in a Tourism Week of activities celebrating tourism on Montserrat.<sup>51</sup> The slogan for the week is "Tourism is Everybody's Business", and for the 1994 week a catchy radio song was broadcast, reiterating this message. Leona Midgette, Director of Tourism, carefully explained this tourism drive to the public: "[w]e want to sensitise the public on the importance of tourism. [...] Directly or indirectly, everybody benefits from tourism, and each individual has a role to play in the development of a successful tourism industry."<sup>52</sup> Or, as Hensey Fenton, Chairman of the Montserrat Tourist Board and founding realtor for West Indies Real Estate, put it, "[w]e just cannot sit back any more and say Montserrat is a friendly place, we have to work on it."<sup>53</sup>

Another important activity of the Montserrat Tourist Board is its hosting of the many travel writers to the island. Many official travel writers are looked after courtesy of the Montserrat Tourist Board. They are usually given a free sample of the island's tourist attractions - the beaches, hiking, diving, mountain-biking, local cooking and local accommodation. In return for all these 'freebies', the travel writer files an article or feature in an American or European newspaper, or an international magazine, which is favourable to the tourism industry in Montserrat. Many of these articles reiterate the comments, suggestions, or slogans of the Montserrat Tourist Board, and copies of the pieces are sent to the Montserrat Tourist Board for file-keeping, or even publication in the local newspapers. With such a mutual-help relationship, it is unlikely that articles will be critical of Montserrat, this would damage the free-range activities of the travel writer.

Whether deliberately or not, Rick Sylvan wrote a favourable travel piece for *The Miami Herald* which was picked up by *The Montserrat News*.<sup>54</sup> The feature is noteworthy for it is an example of travel writing which repeats the slogans set by the Montserrat Tourist Board, and because it caused a ripple down in Wapping where it was read by all the neighbours of The Green Flash (Cherrie, Laine, myself, and the Muslim, Jamaal Jeffers, whose family let out a part of their building to the manager of The Green Flash). Entitled 'Fantasy Island', subtitled 'Montserrat has Irish roots', Rick Sylvan describes his visit to the island just as a tourist would be received:

#### Emerald Isle

Not for nothing is Montserrat called the Caribbean's Emerald Isle. Misty mountains and valleys are startlingly green and lush, ringed by bays and beaches and the limped waves of the Caribbean. Centuries-old sugar mills and canons dot the landscape.<sup>55</sup>

But the Emerald Isle is the 'other' Emerald Isle, a distinctive hybrid of Irish and West Indian:

[a]nd damned if this island doesn't have roots from that other Emerald Isle across the Atlantic. [...] Talk about "sure and begorra" meeting "no problem", Montserrat.<sup>56</sup>

Quiet, ethnic, authentic and uncorrupted, Montserrat 'is as rip-roaring exciting as it gets' when a game of dominoes is in full swing.<sup>57</sup> A cycle tour with Island Bikes is one of the 'rewarding' experiences on the island, 'an up-close way of getting to know the island, connecting with our surrounding', 'an experience that keeps on giving'.<sup>58</sup> The suggestion is that experiencing the island by bicycle is more than just a tourist activity because it allows for a degree of uncertainty, authenticity, and the possibility of an immediate interaction with the locality, all of which are not possible from the back of a taxi or through the looking-glass window of a coach. Again, as with the examples in previous chapters, we have writers presenting their impressions of Montserrat, what they consider to be "the" reality.

'Montserrat is as untouched as the clear waters surrounding it.'<sup>59</sup> A vacation on Montserrat, according to Sylvan, is a natural event, one which is open to disruptions and free of the tourist gaze.<sup>60</sup> A visit to Montserrat is more than a holiday, more than a tourist experience, more than the 'staged authenticity' of a tour, it is a meaningful, real-life experience.<sup>61</sup> For those seeking the exclusive holiday, something out of the ordinary, an escape from the package and the packages, Montserrat's quietness and quirkiness are her assets and attractions:

[c]harmingly, Montserrat hasn't quite got the hang of the slicker, more tourist-centred islands.

The golf course is 12 holes; on repeat holes, golfers play to a different length. Startled golfers are told the golf cart is on loan to the university.

And night-life, well, its hardly San Juan Condado area. On Saturday night in Plymouth, huge pounding banks of speakers played to a virtually empty town square.<sup>62</sup>

Unique and novel, touching and real, a touchstone with the past rather than a synthetic and modern plastic and neon joyride, Montserrat's gentility and propriety is only for the well-heeled thoroughbreds with their own character. And so, Sylvan, controversially, finishes his travel writing account down at The Green Flash in Wapping, the end of a life-fulfilling neo-colonial day on Montserrat:

[m]ore fun was the Green Flash. Ancient stone walls line this lively bar and restaurant run by a jovial German named Ludwig: it was a warehouse 170 years ago.

Guests are shown behind the bar, where there's a dance floor, tables for eating and - this is weird - a mosque. Bar hours are 7pm to whenever Ludwig throws everyone out ("we went to 6am a couple of nights ago").

Ludwig is enchantingly full of stories of the islands, of his years in Europe. Buy him a schnapps and be regaled.

On an island that is the Caribbean the way it used to be, he is truly a character and, undeniably, a find.<sup>63</sup>

Sylvan's travel writing piece contains several key elements of travel writing about Montserrat: Montserrat is the 'colonial' copy of Ireland; Montserrat is the exotic, exclusive, and authentic experience; Montserrat is written about not for the belongers of Montserrat such as Laine and Cherrie who have to live with the tourist clientele at The Green Flash and have to read in *The Montserrat News* about the tourists' careless lifestyle on Montserrat - 'the Caribbean the way it used to be'.<sup>64</sup>

### **With imperial eyes: the travel writer's gaze on Montserrat**

According to the cultural historian Robert Darnton:

[t]ravel and history books, a favourite category in eighteenth-century libraries, often provided a screen upon which Enlightenment authors projected criticisms of contemporary society.<sup>65</sup>

By re-reading travel journals or pieces of travel writing, by disinterring a literary past, Darnton argues that we can build up an accurate picture of past cultural norms, values and interests, all reflected and refracted through the popular narratives. In this section I will give a range of travel writers' impressions of Montserrat, textual examples of the writers' colonial and imperial gaze upon the island and the islanders. As with other examples of Montserrat, each one has its own agenda (hidden or not), its contextual voice, its own perspective or aim, a shared or an independent reality. This sample spans the centuries but is exclusively 'non-belonger', to use a Montserratian distinction. The sample is drawn from books, published journals, letters and finally newspaper/magazine articles like McLaughlin's and Sylvan's. They show that different travel writers visit and experience Montserrat and communicate their impressions of Montserrat as individually and distinctively as possible. Just as Thesiger used straightforward descriptions to express the reality of his colonial coronation of Ras



Tafari, and Waugh wrote differently about his experiences of a different - comical - coronation, so too, the various travel writers presented here experienced slightly different realities when visiting Montserrat, and expressed their visits slightly differently. Having said this, many of the travel writings do, however, share some similarities, and in these respects, they become shared constellations of travel writers' impressions of Montserrat. Unfortunately, for the following travel writings, I am unable to write as much about the process of their construction as I did for the McLaughlin article, though I disinter from my readings some of the interests, values and attitudes of the writers. Finally, at the end of this chapter, I discuss some of the implications of these samples in a more general discussion of anthropology and travel writing on Montserrat.

### **D) Books**

I would like to consider the references to Montserrat in books chronologically, from the earliest mentions to the latest. One of the earliest sketches of Montserrat was cited by John Messenger. It is by the historian Bryan Edwards in 1793, taken from his The History, Civil and Commercial, of the British Colonies in the West Indies:

[t]he civil history of this little island contains nothing very remarkable. [...] Montserrat is about three leagues in length, and as many in breadth, and is supposed to contain about thirty thousand acres of land of which almost two-thirds are very mountainous, or very barren. The land in cultivation is appropriated as follows. In sugar, six thousand acres; in cotton, provisions, and pasturage, two thousand each. None other of the tropical staples are raised. [...] The exports [...] are produced by the labour of one thousand three hundred whites and about ten thousand negroes.<sup>66</sup>

Edwards's history is a history of the colonising of Montserrat, and his gaze is a mercantile appraisal of the island. He writes a feasibility report for colonisation where

the land is measured in terms of acres 'in cultivation', and the exports are measured against the labour force used. This piece is a record of Montserrat, an inventory by a businessman as opposed to that of Thomas Richardson - a Methodist Missionary who was touring some of the islands a decade later in 1803 and described the island according to the needs of the colonists:

[t]he climate of Montserrat must be considered favourable to the health of Europeans, as compared with the other British West India Islands. The exportable produce of the islands consists wholly of sugar, molasses, and rum. [...] A majority of the white inhabitants are Irish, or the descendants of Irishmen.<sup>67</sup>

One interesting journal was written for publication by 'the Rheumatic Traveller', Henry Nelson Coleridge.<sup>68</sup> Groaning 'at one and the same time under rheumatism proper, rheumatic gout, gout proper, and an affection in the spinous process',<sup>69</sup> Mr. Coleridge took himself off for a grand tour of the West Indies, resulting in Six Months in the West Indies in 1825 with a chapter about Montserrat. From Coleridge's charming, but lengthy, introduction we learn as much about himself as his travels:

I am in perfect charity with all mankind, that is to say, I care infinitely nothing about any of them, except some dozen and a half good folks of my own sort. I bow to the African Institution, [...] they do their work, as is fitting, in a truly African manner; I bend as low to the Planters, [...] they are a trifle choleric or so, but I remember that the nerves become excessively irritable under the rays of a vertical sun. I protest in print that I had not the honor to travel as an agent of either of these amicable societies. I went simply and sheerly on my own account, or rather on account of the aforesaid rheumatism; for as every other sort of chemical action had failed, I was willing to try if fusion would succeed. This was my main reason for going abroad, to which perhaps I must add a certain vagabond humor which I inherited from my mother. If Yorick had written after me, he would have mentioned the Rheumatic Traveller.

This book is rheumatic from beginning to end; all its peculiarities, its diverse affections, its irregular spirits flow from that respectable source. I picked up so plentiful a lack of science at Eton, the first of all schools, and at Cambridge, the first of all universities, except the London, that no one need be of my opinion unless he likes it. I rarely argue a matter unless my shoulders or knees ache; and if I should have the misfortune upon any such occasion to be over-earnest with any of my readers, I trust they will think it is my rheumatism that chides, leave me so, and peacefully pass on to the next chapter.<sup>70</sup>

As 'the Rheumatic Traveller', Coleridge's grand tour is a recuperative tour of the West Indies. And the aim of his writings is to sell his account, and to declare his educational neutrality and his high social status. Just as McLaughlin uses her travel writings to become a Bohemian, Coleridge uses his travel writings to demonstrate his gentility - one which turns a neutral eye to the 'African Institution' of slavery.

Coleridge's arrival on Montserrat was, however, hardly genteel. In his account, Coleridge recalls trying to get off the boat - the *Eden*<sup>71</sup> - and onto dry land:

[h]ere's a pretty thing! They call their island the Montpelier of the West Indies, (in verity no great compliment,) and when invalides, rheumatics and others, lured by the name, come for relief to breathe its air, the first thing that have to undergo is a forcible anabaptism in salt water [...].<sup>72</sup>

Despite his discourse on duckings and convalescence, Coleridge did get ashore for a meal and an interesting visit to the island's Soufriere. Coleridge's ride up to the ridge of the Soufriere in the south of the island allows him to observe and lyricalise, comparing the route with one of his 'native Devonshire lanes',<sup>73</sup> and the breeze with the wind of his native England:

[t]he air was as cool as on a May morning in England, but so inexpressibly soft, so rare and subtle to the senses that I think the ether

which angels breathe cannot be purer stuff than this. O! Temples twain,  
Middle and Inner. O! Courts, together with all houses and outhouses  
thereunto appertaining, even then did I think of you!<sup>74</sup>

Coleridge is unable to extricate himself from his Devonshire lanes and London law courts, even on his journey to Montserrat's Soufriere. He carries a part of himself with him wherever he goes, just as later, when he falls, again, into a dry gully, it reminds him of a series of steps at Eton, despite being 'in the midst of the impenetrable virgin woods of tropical regions.'<sup>75</sup>

At last Coleridge reaches the Soufriere, and is able to describe his view and how the view affects him:

[t]he view was beautiful [...] to the north Redonda shone like an emerald in the midst of the blue waves, and beyond it stood the great pyramid of Nevis cut off from sight at one third from its summit by an ever resting canopy of clouds. The wind was so fresh, the air so cool, the morning dew so healthy and spangling, that I might have forgotten, but for the deep beauty that was around me, that I was still within the tropics.<sup>76</sup>

The last sentence is particularly telling of Coleridge's feelings. It is ironic that - like Lawrence who leaves England to live amongst the Indians of New Mexico and ends up writing about England and the English as much as the Hopi or the Navajo<sup>77</sup> - Coleridge leaves England for the tropics to alleviate his rheumatism and projects his longing for home upon Montserrat.

Despite the constant reminders that he is four thousand miles away from home, Coleridge continues:

I seemed to have left all languor and listlessness below, and really felt for a season the strength, the spirits and the elasticity of youthful life in England.<sup>78</sup>

The way that he sees and pictures Montserrat is as though he were an Englishman abroad. He uses patriotism to preserve and continually reaffirm his identity, and he uses his writing to shape the readers' impressions of him as a casual, relaxed man, educated, an explorer who justifiably loses his cool when this picture of himself is indignantly shattered. Throughout the account, he pictures himself as 'friend' to '[t]he people of Montserrat',<sup>79</sup> meaning the planter society rather than the slave majority who 'remain on the brink of civilisation'.<sup>80</sup>

As with McLaughlin's article which is rounded off as a discrete travel event, Coleridge finishes his account of himself and Montserrat, though he uses the firing of the ship's gun which calls everyone back to the ship:

[b]ut enough of this matter at present, for the Eden is under weigh and has fired a gun and the Captain's gig is waiting for us a cable's length from the shore. So we will shake hands, pretty island; and now for another launch in a canoe!<sup>81</sup>

After scarcely a morning and a lunch on Montserrat, Coleridge feels entitled to his own parting shot travel account for his readers.<sup>82</sup>

These travel writers, Richardson, Edwards, the rheumatic traveller Coleridge, McLaughlin and Sylvan, are all writing and recording more than a simple snapshot of their present, their writings reveal their own interests and the interests of their readers; their impressions of Montserrat reflect their values and attitudes, and those of their writing audience. Though similar in intent, these travel accounts can and do vary greatly from individual writer to individual writer. What unites these diverse pieces is Leach's and Darnton's thesis: the writer's projection onto his written impressions.

Another impression of Montserrat through what Pratt refers to as 'imperial eyes'<sup>83</sup> comes from a collection of articles by Joseph Sturge.<sup>84</sup> In his colonially entitled article, 'Was West Indian Slavery Harmless?', Sturge draws upon his personal experiences as a West Indian sugar planter in the 1860s on Montserrat to describe his friendly little island.<sup>85</sup>



[i]n the island which I know best, Montserrat, the early settlers - probably largely Cromwell's Irish prisoners of war - would appear to have become prosperous yeomen; the cultivated part of the island being divided into small farms. For a mile or two on the road to the North out of the town at mid-day, a hospitable house with a punch bowl on the table might be found at a distance of every two hundred yards.<sup>86</sup>

Sixty years later, in 1919, an agriculturalist mentioned in the previous chapter, T. Savage English, arrived on Montserrat from Britain. He settled on Montserrat and wrote a comprehensive, unpublished document - Records of Montserrat<sup>87</sup> - based upon manuscripts lying in the Plymouth Court House, many now lost to fire, flood and decay. Constructed out of official records, the document describes the island and details its history through the years of slavery and emancipation up to the hurricane of 1928. Despite its official background, the author's gaze remains fixed on England, as surely as his name is English: Montserrat is 'a land of mountains' where 'in only a very few places is there a really level stretch which would be large enough for a cricket field'.<sup>88</sup>

It would appear that even the long term settler on Montserrat persists in viewing and comparing the island from their accustomed perspective - cricket's colonial lens for English, for example. Years later, another expatriate settler wrote another history of Montserrat but with very different results. In the 1960s, a hundred years after Sturge's writings, a retired North American, Delores L. Somerville, occupied herself on the island by writing a 'factional' account of the history of Montserrat pieced together from historically recorded fragments.<sup>89</sup> Like English's manuscript, Somerville's The Early Years of Montserrat - A Chronicle of the People Who Settled this Island remains unpublished; possibly it was her testimony 'TO The People of Montserrat'<sup>90</sup> to whom she dedicates her text, and with whom she identifies. Her-story opens:

[i]t is the year of our Lord 1632. The island of Montserrat, set in the lovely chain of the Lesser Antilles, is green and forested from the tops of its many mountains right down to its wide sand beaches. [...] Peace

and quiet seem to rule this apparently uninhabited island; although on 20th July 1631 an English adventurer, Sir Henry Colt, in passing Montserrat stopped to investigate. His diary says the island was 'high, rownd, montaynous and full of woods, with noe inhabitants; yet weer ye footsteppes seen of some naked men'.

Suddenly sails appear from the northwest. Migration from the nearby island of St. Christopher has begun. Peace and quiet cease as civilisation moves in.<sup>91</sup>

The style is romantic, the words deliberately archaic, as Montserrat, the Eden of tranquillity and nature, the preserve of Robinson Crusoe, is bumped by the prow of ye goode shippe "*Civilisation*".

At the end of the manuscript Somerville leaves us with the final paragraph which shows the reader that her interests, sympathies and concerns are for the (colonial) settlers rather than slaves:

[t]he concern of this book has been with the people who settled this island, and their descendants who carried on the good work. Despite all their woes and struggles they had done a brave and commendable job, and it is well to remember that had it not been for them, whatever their colour, we would not be here today.<sup>92</sup>

These are ironic words from a modern-day North American 'settler'. Any reference to the forced detention of the slaves on the island is veiled in her inclusion of settlers 'whatever their colour'.<sup>93</sup> This suggests that Somerville was either writing as though she were a colonial narrator, a member of the plantocracy in a past century (her account stops at the end of the eighteenth century, acknowledging that this 'chronicle [...] should usher out the eighteenth century and leave the nineteenth century for someone else to record');<sup>94</sup> or she may have been writing a fictional parody on the English and English's work.<sup>95</sup> Somerville's testimonial work is a courtly chronicle of the settlement of Montserrat, a satire with fantastic impressions of Montserrat - stories, glimpses of 'hilarious tale[s] of skullduggery',<sup>96</sup> planter relations, British colonialism,

gun-running, and imagined conversations between ships' Captains.<sup>97</sup> Her account ends by ushering out the eighteenth century, and in so doing, she again reveals her planter perspective, her imperial eyes oblivious to the slave position:

[t]he wars for island possession were nearly over now, leaving only a few forays here and there. Business was looking up - but on the whole, life was not too bad.<sup>98</sup>

Somerville ends her history in the heyday of plantation slavery, her imperial eyes fixated upon 'the way the [colonial] Caribbean used to be'.

## **II) Letters**

Other travellers have written shorter pieces about Montserrat even though many of them stayed longer than the few days of Coleridge, or the few years of English and Somerville. From a chronology of imperial impressions of Montserrat, I now turn to a brief sample of recent letters *from* Montserrat and letters *about* Montserrat, most of which were addressed to the Editor of one of the local newspapers. Not only do they tell us much about the authors, but they also contain the same schizophrenic travel writing qualities of identification and distance which feature in the ethnographic genre of writing. Surprisingly, the American anthropologist Margaret Mead worked on Montserrat in the 1960s (comparing the relationship people have with the land on Montserrat and New Guinea),<sup>99</sup> but all her published correspondence points out is that the island has become 'a quiet tourist area and retirement spot for English, American and Canadian visitors'.<sup>100</sup> Interestingly enough, in this case, her anthropologist's field letter becomes a travel text, blurring the distinction between Geertz and Lawrence.

At New Year's 1994/5, the Chandler family suffered delays with their luggage and with a shipment at the Port docks.<sup>101</sup> Together, Ralph Chandler (originally from the Virgin Islands) and Lucy Chandler (originally from Montserrat) document this in a letter to *The Montserrat News*. 'Friends of Montserrat', they write to the Editor and

'the people of Montserrat', describing and complimenting the island and islanders:

[f]or the nine days that we have been here we find that the people of Montserrat are some of the most friendly and courteous people you can find anywhere and we have been to quite a few places.

They show a very high respect and humbleness for visitors to the island. We were never bothered by anyone as we toured the island and walked the streets day and night. The scenery, the views are breathtaking and the lush greenery and various fruits and vegetables are second to none.<sup>102</sup>

Their comments are back-handed compliments made public by the newspaper. Though the letter was written to the Montserratian Editor of the paper, and Mrs. Chandler is from Montserrat, Montserratians are referred to at a distance: 'they' - the local Montserratians - have the potential to bother but have too much 'respect and humbleness' to disturb the visitors. In this example, Lucy Chandler - the experienced traveller - establishes herself as a non-belonger, applauding the servile ingratiating of not just the *femmes de chambre* and the *chefs de cuisine*, but also the general population of subordinate lackeys, the slaves to tourism, to share words with Cheddy.

The respect given to tourists visiting Montserrat is similarly praised in a letter by Jeff, Cameron and Saige Lewis of Puerto Rico. Addressed '[t]o the People of Montserrat' (like Somerville's dedication of her history of Montserrat), they were surprised by 'all of the friendly people [they] encountered during [their] stay Easter week.'<sup>103</sup> Their 'encounter', their unexpected meeting, stresses how safe they felt on Montserrat: their thanks go out to all the 'friendly shop owners' and the 'people who practically became family [...] and treated [...] [them] like old friends.'<sup>104</sup> However, these friendly people turn out to be none other than 'Mr. Charles Roberts and his staff at The Montserrat Springs Hotel, Mrs. Carol Osborne at the Vue Pointe Hotel, and Greg and Sheila Bennett of Aquatic Discoveries'; in other words, those whose livelihood on Montserrat depends upon tourism.

The Lewises go on to explain that Montserrat is a 'get away from the troubles of today's problematic societies'.<sup>105</sup> And, at the end of the letter, Mr. Lewis, the author of the letter, signs off with a very telling social comment:

Montserratians are truly blessed people in the pure simplicity of their lives! I only hope that when the temptations of "progress" come, you will have the courage to keep your culture intact. I have seen the process of progress on other Islands. I only pray that Montserrat will always be the last hold-out in the name of tranquillity.<sup>106</sup>

The tourist imperative, the holiday objective, the visitor's expectations, are all satisfied as Montserrat fulfils and surpasses what they expect and desire, and come ready to pay for. For the Lewises, their advice to 'Montserrat' - the people who are happy to receive their (uninstitutionalised) custom - is to maintain their undeveloped and simple ways. With imperial eyes, the Lewis family along with the Chandler family, Coleridge, Somerville and English all fall foul to what I refer to as the Ozymandias impulse,<sup>107</sup> the imperative to write, to detail, and to impress their impressions upon posterity. Let mighty ethnographers also beware!

### III) Newspaper and magazine articles

For most travel writers, writing is their livelihood: travel writers are paid to write the promise of tourist realities; and, as I have shown above, travel writers receive well-costed 'freebies' for their endeavours. In this final section about travel writers' impressions of Montserrat - a 'three-humped whale of an island'<sup>108</sup> according to one travel writer - I provide a lengthy selection of excerpts from travel pieces about Montserrat. As with the chronologies of the histories of Montserrat and the sample of letters from and about Montserrat, the texts about Montserrat which feature in newspapers and magazines tell us as much about the writers as about Montserrat, if not more. Valid impressions of Montserrat, in the following selection of travel writings, I hope to point out what some readers might consider to be the imperial



arrogance of the travel writer's gaze and penned thoughts. Though paid - in cash and in kind - to promote tourism on the island, to present Montserrat as an exotic and interesting holiday location, the travel writers often write about Montserrat through their experiences of the island and the islanders. By disinterring their travel writings, I suggest that we obtain partial glimpses into their own personalities: by highlighting and humourising what the writers consider to be noteworthy and unusual, the travel writers inadvertently reveal their opinions and attitudes, and their assumptions and expectations of normality. It was the anthropologist Susan Laffey who first caught glimpses of the author from a limited selection of brochures and articles about Montserrat.<sup>109</sup> I, too, seek glimpses of what Leach refers to as the unmentionable, but I do so whilst bearing in mind the context and process of travel writing. As with the other examples of travel writing in this chapter, I maintain that there is an authorial hereness/thereness in the pieces typified by Bob Morris's description of Montserrat as the future location for '*Jurassic Park II*'.<sup>110</sup> 'There' is viewed from 'here'. To facilitate my writing about travel writers and travel writing, I have grouped my readings of the many travel writings according to content: articles describing the physical nature of Montserrat - the Emerald Isle; Montserrat's relationship with Ireland as the 'other' Emerald Isle with a population of 'other' Irish; Montserrat as a British colony, 'one of the last few remaining old-world islands';<sup>111</sup> and Montserrat, a bizarre example of ethnic tourism where 'ethnicity' has become the humorous mainstay of the tourist attraction.

After visiting Montserrat, Charles Totten, a university Professor of English and American freelance writer, felt deeply impelled to write a piece about the island which he subsequently sent to the Montserrat Tourist Board in the hope that they would publish his impressions of their island.<sup>112</sup> 'Impressions: Montserrat' is a lyrical adjective-ridden piece beginning with an explanation of Montserrat's second name.

Tiny, verdant Montserrat. Middle pearl in the archipelago necklace of Eastern Caribbean islands known as the Leeward Islands of the Lesser Antilles. [...] Settled a century-and-a-half later by restless Irish Catholics whose presence - joined to the year-round tropical green of the volcanic mountain slopes - yielded Montserrat's epithet, "Emerald

Isle of the Caribbean.”<sup>113</sup>

Totten was on Montserrat for one week,<sup>114</sup> and from what he saw, ‘natives and expatriates blend comfortably.’<sup>115</sup> At the bars and restaurants, there is a healthy blend of tourists and locals:

[h]ere a top British musician might share a table with a group of American med students taking a Friday night break from anatomy texts, while at an adjoining table might be found a novelist, a retired couple from Missouri, a Canadian journalist, a visiting medical professor from Harvard, and a native Montserratian windsurfing instructor.<sup>116</sup>

Totten’s article is an example of the tension in many travel writers’ accounts as they try to write on a fine line between a keen desire for the exotic, and a constant fear of the exotic. Significantly, in Totten’s account of the nightlife on Montserrat, the only ‘native’ Montserratian present works for the holidaymakers, euphemistically creolised by the journalist: blackened by references to indigency, the Montserratian is bleached by his work and the company he keeps. As with other travel pieces, references to race come about indirectly, through allusion, by euphemism, a presence by way of an absence of a mention. Certainly, many of the Montserrat travel writings feature an island where less is more: without commerce, without ‘holiday “musts”’ and hamburger joints,<sup>117</sup> Montserrat is a natural island with natural islanders - a place without artifice:

[t]he very factors which combine to keep the package tourist away are the ones which make the place attractive for the more discriminating traveller and for the retired person.<sup>118</sup>

Travel writers, such as Hugh O-Shaughnessy of *The Financial Times*, persuade their readers that, on Montserrat, the lack of any institutionalised tourism is a positive asset. From the interfering anthropologist’s postmodern impressionistic world-view, it curiously appears that they are convinced that the tourists’ desire - and travel writers include themselves as tourists - is for a natural island without a man-made lifestyle.

Montserrat is also an island tagged with 'the Emerald Isle' epithet, as Edna Fortescue gladly explains:

Montserrat is known as "the Emerald Isle" for two reasons, one of which is immediately obvious. It is the greenest place I have ever seen. [...] The less tangible aspect - and perhaps one which contributes to the magic - is the strong affiliation with Ireland. [...] There is a charm about everybody you meet which is inborn and natural, to which is added humour, warmth and curiosity.<sup>119</sup>

Montserrat is officially advertised as 'The Emerald Isle of the Caribbean', or 'The Caribbean's Emerald Isle', but according to some travel writers, Montserrat is not The Emerald Isle, rather, she is a Caribbean version of The - Ireland - Emerald Isle; she is a poor copy of Ireland (relying upon promotion such as that gained from employing Irish hotel workers in their off-season).<sup>120</sup> Besides the official label, 'The Emerald Isle of the Caribbean', many official press clippings describe Montserrat as 'The Other Emerald Isle'<sup>121</sup> - Montserrat - 'A reflection of Old Ireland in the Caribbean sunshine' as Martie Sterling puts it.<sup>122</sup> 'Montserrat - A wee bit o' Ireland in the Caribbean'<sup>123</sup> is how Arthur Solomon sees Montserrat; as an unusual island tourist attraction; as an island capitalising upon its semiotic and symbolic likeness with Ireland:

[i]t [...] has a nickname - "The Emerald Isle" - and this likeness to Ireland is but one of the *oddities* that make Montserrat so different from other islands of the Caribbean.<sup>124</sup>

Here, the 'Emerald Isle' epithet can only become an unusual nickname. As I remarked in Chapter Six, one particularly potent symbol found around Montserrat is the shamrock which is carved into the façade of Government House, and is stamped in green ink in visitors' passports - an action which has led to imaginatively entitled travel articles such as Ted Larsen's 'Montserrat: Caribbean isle stamped with a shamrock'.<sup>125</sup>

The moment you land on Montserrat, you realise *something is different* in this tropical land. The immigration officer stamps your passport with

green ink. That may not strike you as strange, so look closer. You'll notice a tourist visa in the shape of a shamrock. This is worth some explanation. Even though tiny Montserrat is deep in the heart of the Caribbean, its heritage is very much in the heart of Dublin, Galway or Kilarney. This lush outcropping of green, scant miles from better-known Antigua, was a haven for Irish immigrants much like the United States, but many years sooner. The *so-called* "Emerald Isle" of the Caribbean also is a perfect place for a very special visit or vacation.<sup>126</sup>

Whereas other travel writers zigzag between Montserrat and Ireland,<sup>127</sup> Larsen carefully draws correspondences, for his New England Irish-American audience, between the Irish of The Emerald Isle - the benchmark, and the Irish of the 'so-called "Emerald Isle"' - the 'Black Irish' version. It is also evident, from this extract, that he assumes that his interests are the same as his readers.

Very few travel articles get away from Montserrat's Irish connection, they are encouraged not to do so by the Montserrat Tourist Board fearing a loss of control over the tourist's expected reality.<sup>128</sup> As well as this ungovernable Irish connection, Montserrat has a British connection as a British Dependent Territory - though in the tourism literature the term "British colony" has more cachet. These two connections, Republican Irish and Colonial British, sit awkwardly together, and, when juxtaposed, have drawn forth comment (such as the suggested lowering of the Union Jack on St. Patrick's Day which I mentioned in the previous chapter).<sup>129</sup> Travel writers make the connections to suit their own interests, the vested interest groups, or their reading audiences. English television presenter John Stapleton took his family to Montserrat and found that aspects of life on this island struck a chord with him because of its Englishness.<sup>130</sup>

[t]he scene was quintessentially English. On a cricket ground ladies in white pleated skirts and floral blouses, sporting huge paper-plate rosettes, were officiating at the local dog show.

Men in straw sunhats handed out tickets for tea, old-fashioned lemonade and cakes, while proud owners paraded their pets around a

roped enclosure.

English to a tea - except that I, my wife Lynn Faulds Wood and our son Nicholas were on the Caribbean island of Montserrat, 27 miles south-west of Antigua, but still very much a British colony.<sup>131</sup>

Stapleton found Montserrat a civilised place to holiday on; he praises himself and his homeland by presenting the line that the English brought civilisation to Montserrat, and the English are those who know how to savour civilisation's gentilities. For Stapleton, the appeal of Montserrat is the colonialness that the island retains, despite the island also being unexpectedly 'awash with ethnic Montserradians called Murphy, Farrell and Sweeney'.<sup>132</sup> '[J]ustifiably described in brochures as "the way the Caribbean used to be"',<sup>133</sup> Stapleton uses his impressions of Montserrat to insinuate his romantic connection with an English gentility, finishing his text - 'it was delightful and thought-provoking to go to the Caribbean and be reminded how life at home used to be'.<sup>134</sup> Perhaps, here, he is also tinged with regret for the passing of the way England used to be, and for his mixed-race marriage to a Scot, and their subsequent production of hybrid children?

Whether British or 'Black Irish', travel writers are in accord with Alex Hamilton's comment that 'the principal asset of Montserrat is Montserradians.'<sup>135</sup> This is even acknowledged by the Montserrat Tourist Board in their advertisements:

Montserrat: Emerald Isle *of the Caribbean* - Do you see the pleasure of unwinding from the stresses and strains of a busy life, in the cool breezes of a green peaceful tropical island among friendly people?<sup>136</sup>

The 'innate friendliness' of the Montserradians mentioned in some travel writing pieces is no doubt an island attraction for holiday visitors and expatriate settlers.<sup>137</sup> Still, an article by Bill Hallowell reveals that though the friendliness of the Montserradians is an island resource, expatriates maintain a simultaneous cognitive identification with the island Montserrat and a physical dis-identification with the islander Montserradians:



[t]he most remarkable part of our Island is the wonderful people, the natives who live here and are our friends, and those like ourselves to whom it is home. This is a beautiful, quiet and peaceful Island, away from the rush and turmoil and pressures that many of us knew - it is indeed our "Island in the sun."<sup>138</sup>

In Mr. Hallowell's own words the island is 'our island', but the islanders are only 'our friends'. Writing as a settler on Montserrat, Mr. Hallowell separates the islanders from the settlers' island, and by doing so, refutes Judy Lord's impression that on Montserrat there is now a harmonious "New Breed" - natives of Montserrat and newcomers who are forging a quietly enlightened society in the Renaissance tradition.<sup>139</sup>

Montserrat: an emerald, an-other emerald, a blackened emerald; Montserratians: Irish, British, colonial - and nothing if not comical. Montserrat is full of distinctive oddities, to recall the words of Arthur Solomon, most of them amusing. The comic side of ethnic tourism, then, is my final theme in this selection of newspaper and magazine travel writings about Montserrat. Turning an experience or an encounter into a comical moment is a coping strategy for travel writers forced to deal with, what for them is, the unexpected and the unusual - the unfamiliar; the situation which causes the tourist to reappraise their reality. Mr. Solomon is more explicit than most travel writers in his depiction of the 'oddities' of Montserrat; the differences between Montserrat and his home society - which are alluded to in many travel writers' explanations of the Irish connection - are, for Solomon, a reassuring source of humour:

[e]vidence of the Irish is everywhere - from the bright green shamrock stamped on the visitor's passports, to the names of the places like Kinsale, Cork Hill and Galway, to the Irish accents in the native's speech. And, of course, the surnames, Ryans and Sullivans and names beginning with "O" are common. In a predominantly black population, taken out of context, these names are somewhat humorous: a visitor might encounter a Rastafarian man with waist-length "dreadlocks" who will proudly proclaim that his name is Ras O'Reilly.<sup>140</sup>

This revealing comment, along with other more implicit travel writing fascinations with the 'Black-Irish' tourist attraction reveals, for Susan Laffey, 'the racist assumptions of Euro-American travel writers and their audiences' which transform 'Montserratian people into a Euro-American ethnic fantasy.'<sup>141</sup> Regarding Solomon's slip (of the pen), Laffey continues:

[s]uch names seem humorous to Euro-Americans only because they reflect the combination of presumably incompatible and mutually exclusive categories, in this case Irish culture and black skin. For Solomon, the irony of this combination is heightened by the fact that "Ras O'Reilly" "proudly" states his name, for the man does not even know that his name should evoke something other than pride in a white, Euro-American world-view.<sup>142</sup>

Bluntly put, Laffey explains that 'the unexpected coupling of Irish culture traits with a black population' distinguishes and exoticises Montserrat's ethnicity, appealing to tourist desires for an 'ethnic spectacle', 'a sort of cultural freak-show' which marks out the freak and normalises the viewer.<sup>143</sup> Though born out of political correctness, Laffey's point is an important one to make, that travel writings such as Solomon's bear anachronistic ethnic claims. The 'humour' which Solomon articulates reveals an essentialising attitude towards racial categories, categories which Laffey, herself, does not dispute. She takes issue with Solomon's assumptions and reactions wherein lies his humour. Laffey would also, probably, take offence with Dennis Hamill's work -

"O.J. is innocent, mon," whispers dreadlocked Murphy staring at his tea leaves after a dissertation on bush teas and American flu strains<sup>144</sup>

- which forms part of a report on the travel writer's astonishment at finding the inhabitants of a small West Indian island in touch with the latest international news. His tourist reality and impressions of Montserrat are curtly reorientated. This comment, by an articulate and well-informed 'Rastafarian', highlights what Hamill suggests is an incongruity between his expectations and his experiences. Murphy's

foreign knowledge (and his decision about O.J.'s innocence), destroys Hamill's il/delusion about paradise - a paradise shattered by the intrusion of a corrupting serpent, cable TV.

Solomon and Hamill's work are probably the more extreme examples of travel writers writing about their unexpectedly changing impressions of Montserrat, using humour to confirm their stereotypical categories rather than attempting to collapse them. Other travel writers such as 'Irishman' Norman Monaghan deal with similar reality-threatening circumstances in a more curtailed fashion:<sup>145</sup>

Her Majesty's Customs Officer didn't bat an eyelid when I handed him my Irish passport. After all, the last of the Irish had only left the island in 1850 - just yesterday really. Maybe he thought I was dropping by to pick up something I'd forgotten.<sup>146</sup>

Despite the Irish connection, for Monaghan, the Irish have left Montserrat. All that is left is an 'Irish connection that [Montserratians] don't notice [...] anymore [...] an indelible genetic and cultural mark on "the other Emerald Isle."<sup>147</sup> Like Monaghan's Montserratians, Bill Mauldin - another satirical travel writer and a former World War II cartoonist - visited the 'last outpost of Empire' and failed to even notice any Irish connection on Montserrat.<sup>148</sup> Mauldin's impressions of Montserrat are of a place where the kids can cavort barefoot and shirtless with the local children whilst he can draw caricatures of a Montserratian man he saw riding backwards on the rump of a donkey.<sup>149</sup> Lacking any consideration as to the consequences of his own tourist invasion, Mauldin happily revisits Montserrat, fearful of the damage which tourism might have done to the island. As a tourist, consciously trying to escape from tourism, Mauldin is relieved that 'the island seems still primarily a community of farmers, not yet a reservoir of cheap domestic help.'<sup>150</sup> He rues the construction of new expatriate houses, but finds the island's charms unspoiled - the inhabitants still greet him as they used to, allowing him to feel as though he is not a tourist. Their holiday is enriched by the return wave of the man on the donkey, and by the instigation of a greeting with a smile and a wave from a lady with a bale of clothes on her head.<sup>151</sup> This signifies to Mauldin that, 'unjaded' by tourism,<sup>152</sup> Montserratians 'still treat white folks as equals

down there'.<sup>153</sup>

Like other travel writers, Mauldin recognises the poverty of the island and acknowledges the harm worked by tourism, but he persists in touring the island, seeking out anecdotes and cartoon fodder for his readers.<sup>154</sup> Another brief anecdote illustrates his perspective: Mauldin recounts their departure from Montserrat because he accidentally left his ball-point pen with the man at the Blackburne airport control tower and the airport official saw fit to chase after him to return the dime-store pen. Mauldin finds humour lying between what he considers next-to worthless and what the control tower man considers worth a dash across the runway field. The same theme emerges from a slightly different cultural encounter recounted by Les Stoodley:

[t]he natives say that time has gone to sleep in Montserrat and it is so. The housing, by our standards, is below the poverty line, but an old farmer had this pondering answer to the question: "Are you poor?" "I'm very rich," he said with a gleaming smile, "I have a garden. It grows everything I need. My goats give milk. We now have electricity, a new fridge and things grow anytime. No, I am not poor - I am a very rich man."<sup>155</sup>

Read together, the last three tales suggest a "relativity of worth" according to the individual tourist or Montserratian's perspective. Mauldin, Stoodley, Monaghan and other travel writers are genuinely surprised by their interactions with the Montserradians; they are unexpectedly caught short; they find themselves unprepared for what, for them, are alien encounters - culture-shock experiences which can be turned either into a joke or a complaint. Unfortunately, these travel writers' revelations can cut both ways as comic foreign accounts eventuate tragic local repercussions, not least in the tourist's bathetic visit to Montserrat.

### Travel writers - 'innocents abroad'?<sup>156</sup>

In this final section I would like to make a few concluding remarks about the texts which I have just examined, and then I would like to comment about some of the implications of these texts, particularly when they appear in places other than their intended publication newspapers, in the local Montserratian newspapers for instance. This chapter began by examining the distinctions made between travel writing and anthropological writing. I blurred this tenuous distinction and confused the two genres of writing by comparing and contrasting Clifford Geertz's account of the Balinese and D.H. Lawrence's account of the Hopi. I then established the aim of this chapter - to further an understanding of the people who write their impressions of Montserrat, in particular those who consider themselves to be professional travel writers. I did this by first contextualising an example of what is genre-ally accepted as travel writing - 'Redonda Reclaimed' by Brighid McLaughlin which was written whilst I was on Montserrat,<sup>157</sup> travel writing to which I inadvertently contributed, travel writing which demonstrates a schizophrenic - here/there - quality. From this stage in the process of travel writing's production, I moved on to give a lengthy summary and chronology of travel writing which represented impressions of Montserrat found in travel journals, vacation letters, and newspaper and magazine articles. With the context of McLaughlin's article in mind, with the knowledge of how travel writers are hosted on Montserrat and how they obtain their story material, I went on to provide a running commentary about the travel writings I cited from newspapers and articles. What became apparent from all the excerpts was that travel writing, like other social commentaries and histories of Montserrat, is a site of contestation and competition, and not just composition. The travel writings are impressions of Montserrat by writers all maximising and brokering their realities - 'the Emerald Isle of the Caribbean', 'the other Emerald Isle', the 'Black Irish', the colonial and comic Montserratians - all competing and contesting for voice. To try and maintain a consistent "representation" of the tourist's expected reality of their visit to the island, to shape the travel writers impressions of Montserrat into consistent descriptive constellations, the Montserrat Tourist Board hosts as many travel writers' visits to Montserrat as possible, thereby



controlling the travel writers' contributions to their editors; many of the slogans and phrases about Montserrat - 'the Emerald Isle', 'the way the Caribbean used to be', and references to 'the Black Irish of Montserrat' - are given to the travel writers who use them in reciprocity for their free visits.

The Montserrat Tourist Board unknowingly implements John Urry's notion that the tourist destination controls and institutionalises 'the tourist gaze'.<sup>158</sup> On Montserrat, tourism is further controlled, and carefully developed, by the Chief Minister who also carries the title Minister for Tourism.<sup>159</sup> When Reuben Meade opened Tourism Week in November 1994, his encouragement of tourism was reported in the local newspapers.<sup>160</sup> *The Montserrat News* and *The Montserrat Reporter* also feature regular weekly pieces about the benefits of tourism to Montserrat.<sup>161</sup> At other times, the Montserratian newspapers pick up travel writing articles such as the Sylvan article.<sup>162</sup> And, in addition, they publish Dr. Fergus's occasional social and historical pieces about Montserrat which aim to promote Montserrat primarily for Montserratians.<sup>163</sup> In so doing, by describing Montserrat as more than a tourist resort, Fergus feeds his educational nationalism and gives a boost to Montserratians' self-confidence and self-worth, Fergus's Montserratian reality for Montserratians we might say:

[t]his magical isle is more than eco-forest, more than the boiling balm of sulphuretted waters, scenic hills, entrancing vistas of sea and mountain and luxuriant vegetation; it is more than an ambience of escape. Its natural beauty is backdrop to a rich culture which reflects its checkered history and the creativity of its people.<sup>164</sup>

Fergus is writing that Montserrat is more than an escape, she is a home for a group of creative and cultured people. It is possible to interpret this to mean that Montserratians should retain a sense of identity above that which the tourist pays them. He continues:

Montserrat's culture still rings with the melody of Europe and the rhythm of Africa and Montserratians are anxious to share the pleasing

harmony with their visitors. [...] When Montserratians speak with pride of the absence of neon and over-noisy night life, it is because they have tasty indigenous substitutes in folk and other arts redolent of history. Our hike trails up mystic mountain sides and to historical ruins furnish new landfalls for discerning discoverers. The Emerald Isle is more than a name, it is a beauty of culture and history.<sup>165</sup>

Fergus evokes Shakespeare for his patriotic pride,<sup>166</sup> and - along with the travel writers - appeals to the cultural values of taste and distinction in the tourist, to what Bourdieu describes as the aesthetics of snobbery in the bourgeois.<sup>167</sup> Fergus parallels the Montserrat Tourist Board in his article, an article which is a local travel writing piece, an article which appears in a local island paper and so could have been written expressly for Montserratians, reminding them of their Montserrat.<sup>168</sup> Likewise, other examples of Fergus's writing form a part of the genre of tourism literature. Fergus's Montserrat - Emerald Isle of the Caribbean is a 'Caribbean Guide' which invites the reader to visit Montserrat (see Chapter Two).<sup>169</sup> Described as an 'amplified guide' to unveil the 'special Montserrat package', with chapters such as 'Things to See and Do',<sup>170</sup> the text is demonstrably written and marketed 'with visitors in mind'.<sup>171</sup> It is available in the island's tourist shops as an up-market local 'Welcome' to Montserrat.<sup>172</sup> In this way Montserrat's tourism literature dances Laffey's 'fine line between conflicting Euro-American desires, the desire for peace with activity, for non-commercialism with development - the conflicting desires from which nostalgia arises'.<sup>173</sup> However, do not Fergus, Meade and the Montserrat Tourist Board's controls over tourism water-down Laffey's central claim that '[t]hrough its representation in tourism literature, Montserrat, is transformed into an object for Euro-American consumption'?<sup>174</sup>

We are left in no doubt that the impressions of Montserrat - described in newspapers, articles, books and letters - impact upon the readers, tourists, Montserratians, and other travel writers. They shape the various and varying realities. In this way I extend Laffey's academic argument, namely, that the 'image of Montserrat affects the way tourists perceive the people who live there', and her insight into the desires and understandings of European and American tourists allows her to examine how 'desire

and representation continually produce and reproduce one another'.<sup>175</sup> Laffey draws from Paul Rabinow when she writes that 'first world understandings and desires shape touristic images of third world locales',<sup>176</sup> and continues with Jean Baudrillard's irony - 'the tourist's desire for an authentic experience actually generates a simulated one.'<sup>177</sup> Leisure and luxury, affluence and excellence, intimacy and peace, Montserrat is undoubtedly promoted as a tourist attraction devoid of the indexical signs of mass tourism - fast food, neon night-life, cheap package holidays. Yet, I would not go so far as to treat Laffey's analysis as an objective bedrock, uncovering others' subjective biases. According to Laffey, this romantic and sophisticated island, where the Caribbean remains the way it used to be, 'encourages the potential visitor to identify with the elite status of colonial rulers and with the power and deference they enjoyed, without the problematic and potentially guilt-provoking need for overt oppression.'<sup>178</sup> But, Laffey does little other than challenge the humour and attitudes which underpin 'racist' stereotypes and comic images such as Solomon's. She does not re-examine the racial and ethnic islands which are represented. The result, then, is the presence of the unmentionable in Laffey's absent analysis.

I have shown in this chapter that the desire for a colonial reality is manifest in the imperial gaze of the travel writer. I have written that Montserrat - where ethnicity is a commodity as tourists and travel writers gawp at Ras O'Reilly - is a place where the tourist industry taps into well-known and appealing Irish symbols and histories. And, I have identified the danger which can come from constructing and promoting such a warm and welcoming experience along with the 'ethnic spectacle' - the cultural freak-show - of the Black Irish<sup>179</sup> (a form of ethnic tourism which Dean MacCannell refers to as 'the mirror image of racism').<sup>180</sup> Rather than just critique travel writings and lambaste travel writers, I have sought to apply Leach's point - that writing tells us something about the writer - to many of the distinctive travel accounts in this chapter (Coleridge's self-imposed rheumatic exile, Somerville's colonial desires, Mauldin's sense of humour). And I have shown that a lot of my travel writing examples can be grouped together into stereotypical constellations of Montserrat (Fortescue's 'Emerald Isle', Larsen's 'so-called Emerald Isle', Monaghan's 'other Emerald Isle') and Montserrattians (Hallowell's simple 'friends', Solomon's and Stoodley's exotic buffoons). Finally, I have shown how some of these constellations fall back upon the

community of best-kept villages and tourist-aware villagers of Montserrat. In this way I end this chapter in concert with previous chapters, not with Laffey's Baudrillardian vein of tourists and locals living in simulation with each other, but with my argument that Montserrat is indeed an arena of contest, not least for the travel writers and their texts, where interest groups compete to assert themselves and their realities.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> (Leach, *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 1984: 22).

<sup>2</sup> In her thesis, Vacani argues (1994: iv):

[b]ecause travel writing is both reactive and subjective (a writer's reaction to a country is underpinned by a meta-text of his own concerns), I ask if Lawrence's presentation of experience can be thought of as accurate or whether places and people are constructs of his imagination.

In essence, she links Lawrence's novels and travel writings which all touch on the human condition (Vacani 1994: 1). Billy Tracy has written, similarly, that (1983: 8): '[a]s a travel writer Lawrence belongs among the ethnologists.'

<sup>3</sup> (Levi-Strauss 1973).

<sup>4</sup> (Turnbull 1961).

<sup>5</sup> (Louch 1966: 160).

<sup>6</sup> (Louch 1966: 162).

<sup>7</sup> (Howell 1994: 327).

<sup>8</sup> (Watson 1995: 78-79). In the Preface to this thesis, I used the work of Barthes and Shweder to criticise deterministic dualism which no doubt includes the anthropologist Nigel Barley's dualistic consciousness as a case of split personality (1990; 1991).

<sup>9</sup> (Louch 1966: 161).

<sup>10</sup> 'The Hopi Snake Dance' in, *Mornings in Mexico* by D.H. Lawrence (1986: 69-88).

<sup>11</sup> Chapter Fifteen, 'Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight' in, *The Interpretation of Cultures - Selected Essays* by Clifford Geertz (1993[a]: 412-454).

<sup>12</sup> (Geertz 1993[a]: 412). Geertz does not specify the name of the village.

<sup>13</sup> (Geertz 1993[a]: 448).

<sup>14</sup> This is paraphrased from *Social Anthropology* by Edmund Leach, where he poses the problem 'of how far we are all the same and how far we are different' (1986: 18).

<sup>15</sup> (Louch 1966: 160).

<sup>16</sup> (Pratt 1992: 6).

<sup>17</sup> (Geertz 1993[a]: 30).

<sup>18</sup> The quotation continues, 'and thereby acknowledging the necessary experience of absence or lack on which the entry into language is predicated' (Curtis & Pajaczkowska 1994: 207).

<sup>19</sup> (Theroux 1992).

<sup>20</sup> (Steinbeck 1990).

<sup>21</sup> (Waugh 1951).

<sup>22</sup> *The Traveller's Tree - A Journey through the Caribbean Islands* by Patrick Leigh Fermor (1984). This text won the Heinemann Foundation Prize for Literature in 1950, and the Kemsley Prize in 1951.

<sup>23</sup> (Lawrence 1986). Lawrence made his visits twenty years after British anthropology shifted from armchair anthropology based upon reading, to experiential fieldwork anthropology with A.C. Haddon's Torres Straits expedition to Melanesia in 1889 (Beattie 1982: 10).

<sup>24</sup> (Forster 1988).

<sup>25</sup> (Stewart, *The Independent on Sunday*, 4th February 1996: 51-52).

<sup>26</sup> (Pratt 1992: 9). What then of James Boswell's colonial tour of the Scottish Hebrides (Boswell 1936)?

<sup>27</sup> (Pratt 1992: 87).

<sup>28</sup> (Danziger 1988: 2).

<sup>29</sup> (Wheeler, *Anthropological Quarterly*, April 1986: 58).

<sup>30</sup> (Stagl & Pinney, *History and Anthropology*, 1996: 122). The two anthropologists continue, '[t]he *differentia specifica* is that travel reports proceed more or less *narratively*, whereas ethnographic monographs proceed more or less *descriptively*. Ethnographic monographs tend to mask the concrete person of the traveller as well as the exact temporal and local circumstances under which the experiences of alterity occurred. Ethnographic knowledge is thus not offered in its 'raw' form, but semi-processed in a form that makes it amenable to the generalisations of the discipline of anthropology.' (Stagl & Pinney, *History and Anthropology*, 1996: 122, authors' emphasis).

<sup>31</sup> (Stagl & Pinney, *History and Anthropology*, 1996: 122).

<sup>32</sup> (Curtis & Pajaczkowska 1994: 202).



<sup>33</sup> (Arshi & Kirstein & Naqvi & Pankow 1994: 225).

<sup>34</sup> Here I am bringing together John Urry's use of Foucault's concept of the systematising and socially organised power of 'the gaze' - taken from Michel Foucault (1993) - applied to his study of the tourist's socially organised and systematised gaze (1994), and Susan Laffey's incisive investigation of a selection of newspaper, magazine and brochure pieces about Montserrat (1995).

<sup>35</sup> (McLaughlin, *The Sunday Independent*, 25th June 1995: 7L, no other references available).

<sup>36</sup> On the first page of the supplement are five of the photographs and the following leader for Brighid's article (McLaughlin, *The Sunday Independent*, 25th June 1995: 7L, no other references available):

[i]t's an uninviting, uninhabited rock in the Caribbean, its only (unlikely) source of income the vast amounts of bird droppings which land on its cliff faces. And yet Redonda (which has its own monarchy) has always held strong appeal for aficionados of the fantastic and strange; its history throbs with mad, alcoholic and burnt-out visionaries. Small wonder then that one of the last outposts of the once great Empire of Bohemia would attract one of our great Bohemians who dodged death by drought, huge boulders of lava and massive tidal waves to plant the tricolour on this extinct volcano to honour the island's Irish ancestry. **Brighid McLaughlin** recounts her adventure.

The pictures entice the reader into the travel article with captions pointing to 'Redonda reclaimed', the event, 'a Bohemian quest which had started with an intriguing conversation in a Dublin pub', and the 'divine spiciness' of Montserrat (McLaughlin, *The Sunday Independent*, 25th June 1995: 7L, no other references available).

<sup>37</sup> I refer to Shiell with the double 'l' in this thesis for consistency.

<sup>38</sup> (McLaughlin, *The Sunday Independent*, 25th June 1995: 7L, no other references available; see also the London journal, *The Kingdom of Redonda*, 1865-1990, no other references available).

<sup>39</sup> (McLaughlin, *The Sunday Independent*, 25th June 1995: 7L, no other references available).

<sup>40</sup> (McLaughlin, *The Sunday Independent*, 25th June 1995: 7L, no other references available).

<sup>41</sup> (McLaughlin, *The Sunday Independent*, 25th June 1995: 7L, no other references available).

<sup>42</sup> (McLaughlin, *The Sunday Independent*, 25th June 1995: 7L, no other references available):

I was wet, bruised and bleeding but twinkling with glee. We all laughed at that. Just laughed. As we sailed away through the sunny, strange sea, with the boobies and flying fish keeping us company, I was happier than one could ever hope to be [...]

<sup>43</sup> One reading of McLaughlin's description of her departure from Redonda pays heed to her sexual helplessness (McLaughlin, *The Sunday Independent*, 25th June 1995: 7L, no other references available):

Kevin swam to the boat. With great difficulty, he put the cameras and gear safely aboard. Both Joe and Kevin came to get me, in the rise and fall of surf on that boulder-heaped shore. I jumped into the sea, and clung to Joe's back like a piece of yellow seaweed.

"Uh-huh," said Joel, pulling my drenched carcass aboard. "I'spects you crazy, Missie Brighid. The watter near mash you up."

I was wet, bruised and bleeding but twinkling with glee.

Missie Brighid leaves Redonda, not as the vanquishing conqueror, but as a helpless stranger caught in 'the rise and fall of the surf on that boulder-heaped shore'. The white woman clings to the back of her black rescuer, colour imagery resonant with Frantz Fanon's psychological interpretations (1991).

<sup>44</sup> (Wagh 1938).

<sup>45</sup> The bar is run by a Montserratian who migrated to England in the 1950s to work as a tailor for the RAF and returned to Montserrat for his retirement, bringing his German wife with him. Under the name of 'The World's Only Black Kiltmaker' he also runs a clothing business, leaving his wife with the bar until evenings.

<sup>46</sup> Bourdieu, writing an ethnography of Kabylia, Algeria, introduces 'the dispositions of habitus' as 'the schemes of perception and appreciation deposited, in their incorporated state, in every member of the group' (1991: 17). This 'habitus' is installed or acquired by a 'communication of the consciousness' (Bourdieu 1991: 79), by cultural interaction which objectively installs and instills 'cognitive and motivating structures' (Bourdieu 1991: 78), the productions and reproduction of

objective meaning and practice (Bourdieu 1991: 79). In sum, the 'habitus' is, for Bourdieu, 'history turned into nature', 'the durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisations' (Bourdieu 1991: 78) which results in 'the production of a commonsense world endowed with the *objectivity* secured by consensus on the meaning (*sens*) of practices and the world, in other words the harmonisation of agents' experiences and the continuous reinforcement that each of them received from the expression, individual or collective (in festivals, for example), improvised or programmed (commonplaces, sayings), of similar or identical experiences.' (Bourdieu 1991: 80, author's emphasis). Whilst I take on board the 'habitus' term, I do not see it as simply an objective, unconscious practice thereby restricting individual agency, individuality, and creative exploitation and play within the cultural 'structure'. It can be conscious, deliberate, and recorded.

<sup>47</sup> These are the titles of the first and the last chapters of Geertz's Works and Lives - The Anthropologist as Author (1989).

<sup>48</sup> (Montserrat Government leaflet, no other references available).

<sup>49</sup> Both tour guides and taxi drivers have to attend annual 'seminars on the island's history, the Irish connection and folklore' (Anon., *The New York Times*, 28th October 1984: 10, no other references available).

<sup>50</sup> (Anon., *The New York Times*, 28th October 1984: 10, no other references available). Another article (Anon., *The Montserrat News*, 16th December 1994: 11, no other references available; see also Anon., *Travel Weekly*, 30th January 1995: 35) reports a promotion drive by the Montserrat Tourist Board to cruise ship companies based in Miami and Fort Lauderdale. The same article also notes that:

Vue Pointe hotel and Neville Bradshaw Agencies - part of the Montserrat delegation at World Travel Market - have both recorded initial positive action as well as results from their participation at this year's international tourism trade fair.

Vue Pointe successfully made contact with, and appointed a representative - based in England - who will be responsible for promoting the property in Europe.

In addition, Vue Pointe is negotiating with UK-based tour operator, Owners' Syndicate, to develop a two week package which will incorporate the St. Patrick's Day Week of Celebrations during Week One and, for the first time, the Annual Irish-Caribbean Golf Open during Week Two. It should also be noted that the Montserrat Tourist Board ran a toll free information line in the United States for callers to ring, hear about the island and obtain information packs for travel operators to utilise Montserrat as a location, and for holiday consumers. The information packs were tailor made.

Having received the support and endorsement of the Minister of Tourism, the Honourable Reuben Meade, and the Montserrat Tourist Board, it is hoped that the Irish-Caribbean Golf Tournament will be established as a yearly event immediately following the St. Patrick's Day Week of Celebrations.

The two-week package will be promoted commencing early next year in Ireland and the rest of Europe.

<sup>51</sup> In 1994, Tourism Week ran from 30th October to 5th November and activities ranged from inter-island bike races and basketball matches, to scuba diving presentations and a Culinary Competition for Hotel cooks. During the week, WINAIR announced the launch of a new air service to Montserrat, and the Caribbean islands celebrated Caribbean Tourism Day on 3rd November (Anon., *The Montserrat News*, 14th October 1994: 19, no other references available).

<sup>52</sup> (Anon., *The Montserrat Reporter*, 28th October 1994: 1, no other references available). Tourism dominates Montserrat and other Caribbean islands to a great extent: the Montserrat Tourist Board sponsors poetry and essay competitions for Montserratian school children, they fund a Montserratian's place on a BSc in tourism Management (even when the Caribbean librarian's conference in 1995 was held, special panels were devoted to Cultural Survival and Eco-Tourism).

<sup>53</sup> (Anon., *The Montserrat Reporter*, 28th October 1994: 1, no other references available). Recognising that tourism employs 500,000 people in the Caribbean, Holder (*The Montserrat News*, 11th November 1994: 14) has written that:

[t]ourism has prospered because it touches a cord deep inside the very psyche of man. It is a symbol of man's need for freedom - to move at will without hindrance

and to know even more about himself, the world around him, and the wonderful creatures that populate the earth.

<sup>54</sup> (Sylvan, *The Montserrat News*, 11th November 1994: 15).

<sup>55</sup> (Sylvan, *The Montserrat News*, 11th November 1994: 15).

<sup>56</sup> (Sylvan, *The Montserrat News*, 11th November 1994: 15).

<sup>57</sup> (Sylvan, *The Montserrat News*, 11th November 1994: 15).

<sup>58</sup> (Sylvan, *The Montserrat News*, 11th November 1994: 15).

<sup>59</sup> (Sylvan, *The Montserrat News*, 11th November 1994: 15).

<sup>60</sup> (Urry 1990: back cover).

<sup>61</sup> Sub-sectioned in MacCannell's work (1989: 98-99) is a piece, 'Staged Authenticity in Tourist Settings', where he applies Erving Goffman's division between front and back stage to apply to tourism where:

a new kind of social space is opening up everywhere in our society [...] a space for outsiders who are permitted to view details of the inner operation of a commercial, domestic, industrial or public institution [...] a staged back region, a kind of living museum for which we have no analytical terms (MacCannell 1989: 99).

This, MacCannell terms 'staged authenticity'.

<sup>62</sup> (Sylvan, *The Montserrat News*, 11th November 1994: 15). The exclusivity of the islander is linked with the isolation of the island.

<sup>63</sup> (Sylvan, *The Montserrat News*, 11th November 1994: 15).

<sup>64</sup> In 1995, Cherrie Taylor took *The Green Flash* to court for noise pollution and a disturbance of the peace. She was unable to prove her case.

<sup>65</sup> (Darnton 1984: 221). See also Mark Twain's travel account, *The Innocents Abroad or The New Pilgrim's Progress - being some account of the steamship 'Quaker City's' pleasure excursion to Europe and the Holy land, with descriptions of countries, nations, incidents, and adventures as they appeared to the author Mark Twain (Samuel L. Clemens) (1916)*, especially the final chapter - LXI - which contains his article for the *New York Herald* (Twain 1916: 605-609): this work blurs fiction with reality, author with literary authority. See also an account of Dickens's tour of America (1885 [1842]) which is also a piercing social commentary; or Laurence Sterne's satire upon the European Grand Tour (1984 [1768]); or Tobias Smollett's travel novels such as *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* (1992 [1771]), a bumbling tour through England and Scotland.

<sup>66</sup> Messenger (*Ethnicity*, 1975: 282) cites this piece by the historian Bryan Edwards in 1793 (1801: quoted from pages 486-498) as one of the earliest descriptions of Montserrat. The section about Montserrat begins:

[I]ike Nevis, it was first planted by a small colony from St. Christopher's, detached in 1632 from the adventurers under Warner. Their separation appears indeed to have been partly occasioned by local attachments and religious dissensions; which rendered their situation in St. Christopher's uneasy, being chiefly natives of Ireland, and of Romish persuasion. The same causes, however, operated to the augmentation of their numbers; for so many persons of the same country and religion adventured thither soon after the first settlement, as to create a white population which it had ever since possessed [...]

<sup>67</sup> (Richardson 1803: no other references available; see also Alexander Gordon's letterbook 1768-1788; Walter P. Garry's Methodist preaching tour of duty Journal 1852-1885).

<sup>68</sup> Introductory chapter, 'Reasons for Going Abroad', in *Six Months in the West Indies in 1825* by Henry Nelson Coleridge (1826: 1-5, especially 4). See also the chapter on his visit to Montserrat (163-186).

<sup>69</sup> (Coleridge 1825: 1).

<sup>70</sup> (Coleridge 1826: 3-5). The author uses his own spelling, italics and spaces in the text.

<sup>71</sup> (Coleridge 1826: 186).

<sup>72</sup> (Coleridge 1826: 165).

<sup>73</sup> (Coleridge 1826: 165).

<sup>74</sup> (Coleridge 1826: 172).

<sup>75</sup> (Coleridge 1826: 172).

<sup>76</sup> (Coleridge 1826: 173).

<sup>77</sup> See 'Indians and an Englishman' by D.H. Lawrence in, *Selected Essays* (1950 [1922]: 189-198).

<sup>78</sup> (Coleridge 1826: 173).

<sup>79</sup> (Coleridge 1826: 175).

<sup>80</sup> (Coleridge 1826: 178).

<sup>81</sup> (Coleridge 1826: 186).

<sup>82</sup> They cast anchor at Plymouth at 7am, and weighed anchor at noon on the same day (Coleridge 1826: 187).

<sup>83</sup> (Pratt 1994: title).

<sup>84</sup> (Sturge 1906: no other references available).

<sup>85</sup> (Sturge 1906: 40; see also Davy 1971 [1854]: 409-431, especially 409; anon., 1968 [1838]: 80-88).

<sup>86</sup> (Sturge 1906: 43). Sturge continues:

[i]t is noteworthy, too, that in 1776 a local tax was imposed on billiard tables. One gets the impression of a prosperous pleasant life, and it may be in those early days the white farmer undertook some of the agricultural work himself. In one respect these early inhabitants contrasted very favourably with those who have come after them; for it is known that when the first coloured child was brought into the town of Plymouth, Montserrat, it was thought a public disgrace.

<sup>87</sup> (English 1930). The final chapter about contemporary life has been stolen from the original text and so has not been reproduced in the typed version. It is believed to have been controversial and critical.

<sup>88</sup> (English 1930: 1).

<sup>89</sup> (Somerville 1975). Somerville was an acquaintance of Cherrie Taylor, who also knew of English. She was possibly a retired history teacher.

<sup>90</sup> (Somerville 1975: manuscript dedication, author's emphases).

<sup>91</sup> (Somerville 1975: 1).

<sup>92</sup> (Somerville 1975: 139).

<sup>93</sup> (Somerville 1975: 139).

<sup>94</sup> (Somerville 1975: 139).

<sup>95</sup> On some pages Somerville (1975: 90-94) records excerpts of the 1729 Island Census in similar fashion to the lists of 'cleared outwards from the islands' in English's *Records of Montserrat* (1930: 38-41). Here and elsewhere, Somerville mixes 'fact' with 'fiction'.

<sup>96</sup> (Somerville 1975: 133).

<sup>97</sup> (Somerville 1975: 134).

<sup>98</sup> (Somerville 1975: 139).

<sup>99</sup> (Mead 1977: 284-291, especially 287 and 289). This is the only letter about Montserrat which was published. Unfortunately, Mead published none of her findings on Montserrat, or her comparison with the Manus, the Arapesh and the Montserratians.

<sup>100</sup> (Mead 1977: 287).

<sup>101</sup> (Chandler, R., & L. Chandler, *The Montserrat News*, 6th January 1995: 10; see also Hunter, *The Montserrat Reporter*, 2nd December 2nd 1994: 5).

<sup>102</sup> (Chandler, R., & L. Chandler, *The Montserrat News*, 6th January 1995: 10, sic).

<sup>103</sup> (Lewis, J., & C. Lewis & S. Lewis, 17th April 1995).

<sup>104</sup> (Lewis, J., & C. Lewis & S. Lewis, 17th April 1995).

<sup>105</sup> (Lewis, J., & C. Lewis & S. Lewis, 17th April 1995).

<sup>106</sup> (Lewis, J., & C. Lewis & S. Lewis, 17th April 1995).

<sup>107</sup> Percy Shelley's poem 'Ozymandias' speaks of the ruined stature of this Egyptian 'king of kings' who once, long, long ago, forced his statue upon his population so that his life might have longevity and eternal meaning (1987: 14, l.10).

<sup>108</sup> The same article appeared with three different titles by Charles Hanley of The Associated Press: 'Montserrat: Britain's tiny happy colony' (*The Tribune*, 12th August 1984: F-1 & F-5); 'Manhattan-sized Montserrat mulls leaving Mother Britain' (*The San Francisco Examiner & Chronicle*, 5th August 1984: A2); 'Montserrat: Independence or not?' by Charles Hanley (*Syracuse Herald American Stars Magazine*, 26th August 1984: 3) begins the same way. Other travel articles about Montserrat which are not mentioned in the above text but read for reference include the following: 'The Quiet Caribbean - Montserrat, a lush little island off Antigua' by Janice B. Brand (*Travel & Leisure*, February 1985: 158-163); 'The Caribbean's Irish connection' by Jerry Morris (*The Boston Globe*, 29th January 1984: no other references available); 'Homeward bound - A search for family leads to



Montserrat' by Ken Wibecan (*MM*, September-October 1994; no other references available) is an article featuring a writer who stays 'at Aunt Cherrie's house' with Elaine, his partner residing at Jamaal Jeffers's rented apartment (from Cherrie), two doors up, above The Emerald Cafe where I was staying. The following are other pertinent articles: Demarino (*The Edmonton Sunday Sun*, 8th September 1985: T-2 and T-4; see also Anon., *The New York Times*, 30th October 1994: no other references available; Anon., *Travel & Leisure - Caribbean Supplement*, November 1976: no other references available; Anon., *Caribbean Vacation Planner*, February 1995: no other references available).

<sup>109</sup> (Laffey 1995). Laffey's research material for her MA in Anthropology (The University of Texas at Austin) consists of 56 pieces of Montserratian tourism literature and nothing else (Laffey 1995: 2). Whilst on Montserrat I collected several hundred pieces of Montserratian tourism literature, and I was privy to the process of travel writing and its affects upon the local population.

<sup>110</sup> (Morris, *ISLANDS*, March/April 1995: 121).

<sup>111</sup> (Wykes, *The Canadian Travel Courier*, 7th February 1980: 9, 10, 19).

<sup>112</sup> (Totten, 20th May 1983: covering letter, 1-8).

<sup>113</sup> (Totten, 20th May 1983: 1).

<sup>114</sup> (Totten, 20th May 1983: covering letter).

<sup>115</sup> (Totten, 20th May 1983: 5-6).

<sup>116</sup> (Totten, 20th May 1983: 7). If the visiting medical professor was associated with the American University of the Caribbean on the island, then he would be interested in the critical article, 'Medical school on Montserrat' by Mary Cupito (*The St. Petersburg Times*, April 1986: no other references available).

<sup>117</sup> On Montserrat - 'a laid-back place' where there is 'not a single traffic light' - absence is an asset (Forman & Owen, *Hideaways Guide*, Fall/Winter 1994/5: 26; see also Morris, *ISLANDS*, March/April 1995: 146). Such features are attractions for tourists seeking a break from their everyday life. The authors go on to link the peace from modern society with a peace of mind and a peace from crime (Forman, & Owen, *Hideaways Guide*, Fall/Winter 1994/5: 26):

[a]lso notably (and pleasantly) absent: hustle-bustle crowds, hawkers on the beach, petty crime, traffic jams, electrical blackouts, and racial tensions. However, this is not a fast-lane attraction for those who require duty-free shopping, discos, and casinos.

<sup>118</sup> (O'Shaughnessy, *The Financial Times*, 19th November 1969: Section III, no other references available). He also describes Montserrat as a 'refuge from the asperities of bigger and more bustling places.'

<sup>119</sup> Montserrat is a place where '[v]isitors feel like guests, not tourists' (Fortescue, *BWIA SUNJET*: 16, no other references available). See the following for references to Montserrat's 'emerald' qualities: 'The Islands - Retirement with Romance' (Anon., *Travel and Retirement Edens Abroad*: 90-91, no other references available; Anon., *Time*, 18th February 1980: 64, no other references available); 'Montserrat - emerald jewel of the Caribbean' (Jacobs, *Industry Week*, 21st January 1980: 69-70); 'Montserrat - The Emerald Isle' (Strong, *Virgin Islander*, June 1981: 41-43); 'Montserrat - Emeralds and Charcoal Beaches' (Doherty, *Skylight*, 1986: 10-11); 'Streatham got the shamrock' (Beal, *The Evening Standard*, 21st April 1980: no other references available).

<sup>120</sup> (Fortescue, *BWIA SUNJET*: 16, no other references available).

<sup>121</sup> (Anon., *Travel-Holiday*, October 1984: front cover, no other references available).

<sup>122</sup> This Black Irish, dark imitation, copy of the original is a colonial notion often associated back to the motherland of Great Britain for Montserrat, or France for Guadeloupe. Identified with Ireland because of the Irish connection drawn and reified by travel writers, this New Ireland - set in the New World - is hinted at in the title of the article, 'A reflection of Old Ireland in the Caribbean sunshine' by Martie Sterling (25th October 1986: F6, no other references available). The article is repeated as 'In the Caribbean sunshine' in another paper (Sterling, no other references available), an article which also ran in *The Boston Sunday Globe* as 'A shamrock island in the Caribbean', continued on the next page as 'Montserrat - the emerald isle of the Caribbean' (16th March 1986: B29). The idea that Montserrat is an Irish rather than British copy is also expressed in the article, 'Montserrat offers a bit o' old Ireland in the West Indies' (Harris, R., & P. Harris, *The San Francisco Examiner & Chronicle*, 15th June 1986: T-24). There, they write about Montserrat:



Montserrat's motto, "This is the Caribbean as it used to be," accurately describes this little jewel of a tropical vacation land which thus far has escaped the tourist invasion that is changing much of the West Indies. This blessed absence of noise and neon signs cannot last forever, so visit Montserrat now. [...]

It is felt here that Montserrat will be the last colony of the once globe-encircling British Empire, for all its Irish traits. The natives are satisfied with their colonial status. They have not the slightest intention of bothering with a new flag, a new anthem and a new constitution or any of the responsibilities that go with independence.

Less flattering treatment of the Irish Connection features in *The Irish Press* (Anon., 'Montserrat: that other 'Irish' Emerald Isle', 27th March 1995, no other references available). Here, Montserrat is 'an eccentric outpost of the British empire':

[i]t is not just the rain and the lush emerald appearance of the rain. It is not just the fondness for potatoes or goatwater that smells and tastes like Irish stew. It is not just the nomenclature, Cork Hill, or Kinsale, a gourmet village of 400 people.

It is on St. Patrick's Day that the people of Montserrat eventually confirm their Hibernic tendencies.

Montserrat should be just another West Indian isle, vacillating between repose and reggae, life revolving around cricket and basketball and the latest on American cable.

But the names betray that somewhere in the distant past the two Emerald Isles crossed paths. Mary Farrell, black as the proverbial ace of spades, John Galway, Timothy Roche.

This Irishness is a badge of honour on the small island. The population, at 11,000, roughly equivalent to north Leitrim, and its area, 22 square miles, is exactly one thousandth the size of Ireland. [...]

He [Governor Savage] can be sure that Montserrat's Irish feel will last as long as the molasses are imbibed on St. Patrick's Day. And perhaps they might have a few diaspora cricketers with Irish names to spare?

Not only are Montserrat and the travel writings about Montserrat influenced by Old Ireland, but Old Ireland is influenced and is interested in Montserrat, ostensibly, 'New Ireland'. Peadar O'Dowd writes a weekly series in an Irish paper in Galway, and in one edition he promotes the Irish connection ('Heritage of Galway', *The Connacht Sentinel*, 15th November 1994: 2), mentioning a pamphlet he viewed which included some lines about Galway's Estate on Montserrat which was owned and run by a family from Cork (not Galway) - 'Galway's historic Caribbean links.'

<sup>123</sup> (Solomon, *Travel-Holiday*, October 1984: 44-47).

<sup>124</sup> (Solomon, *Travel-Holiday*, October 1984: 46, my emphasis).

<sup>125</sup> (Larsen, *The Boston Sunday Globe*, 9th December 1984: B29). For other references to Montserrat's Irish connection, see 'Montserrat - A breath of Eire in the Caribbean' (George, *The San Francisco Sunday Examiner & Chronicle*, 23rd August 1981: no other references available) and 'Shamrock in the Sun' (Share, no other references available).

<sup>126</sup> (Larsen, *The Boston Sunday Globe*, 9th December 1984: B29, my emphases).

<sup>127</sup> Consider Martie Sterling's travel article where she describes Montserrat as an island '3,000 miles from the Old Sod [...] the radiance of the tropics, the warmth of an Irish pub. [...] Fishermen with cafe-au-lait skin and blue eyes wish you "top o' the mornin'." [...] Gardens [...] prize-winning grounds as green as County Cork' ('A shamrock island in the Caribbean' by Martie Sterling, *The Boston Globe*, 16th March 1986: B3-B4). The same article also appeared as 'Caribbean Capers' (Sterling, *The Sunday Express-News*, 8th June 1986: 1-2L), and as 'Montserrat: A wee touch of the Old Sod in the Tropics' (Sterling, 6th July 1986: B11-B12, no other references available).

<sup>128</sup> The work of the Montserrat Tourist Board is particularly evident in Deborah Nigro's article which exhorts the reader to 'Come and see Montserrat, "The Way the Caribbean Used to Be"' (Nigro, *The Boston Irish Echo*, February 1988: no other references available).

<sup>129</sup> 'The Black Irish' by Jim Fallon (*Irish Echo*, 28th July - 3rd August 1993: 18).

<sup>130</sup> (Stapleton, *Consort Hotels*, 6th June 1994: 1). Stapleton is the presenter of ITV's 'The Time, The Place'. The title of his article plays with the title of his programme, a point not lost to the British readers of the article, but not very apparent to other readers.

<sup>131</sup> (Stapleton, *Consort Hotels*, 6th June 1994: 1).

<sup>132</sup> (Stapleton, *Consort Hotels*, 6th June 1994: 1).

<sup>133</sup> (Stapleton, *Consort Hotels*, 6th June 1994: 1). It could be argued that this advertising slogan is internalised by local Montserratians themselves - or at the very least they are heavily encouraged to promote the advertising slogan. This is illustrated in the article, 'An island time passes by - Psst! Don't even tell your friends about Montserrat' (McCue, *The Plain Dealer*, 14th March 1982: no other references available) where she reports an encounter with a local guide as soon as she had left her cruise ship: "[t]his," said John Lee, the proud, polite black man who offered his services as our guide, "is the way the Caribbean used to be."

<sup>134</sup> (Stapleton, *Consort Hotels*, 6th June 1994: 2).

<sup>135</sup> (Hamilton, *The Guardian Weekend*, 29th October 1994: 66). This is a perceptive article which relates alien native encounters to other exotic stories his readership may be acquainted with (Hamilton, *The Guardian Weekend*, 29th October 1994: 65):

[...] I did have an enjoyable encounter with Frank Murphy, a Rastafarian with an open-fronted roadside eatery called Roots Man at Carr's Bay, where he serves goat-water stew and baked fish straight from the nets, amid a decor of horns and witchcraft that would have appealed strongly to Dennis Wheatley.

In measuring the worth of investing retirement time and money on Montserrat, the political, social and economic climate is put under scrutiny. According to these criteria, Montserrat does very well: 'relations between foreigners and Montserratians are good-to-excellent, relative to other places in the Caribbean' (Cowell, *Island Properties Report*, 20th September 1984: 1). The reason for the report is given in a section, 'From the Publisher' (Cowell, *Island Properties Report*, 20th September 1984: 1):

[t]his Report is in response to an unusually large number of subscriber requests for an IPR issue devoted to Montserrat. In view of this island's rather unique determination to reject high-powered tourist promotion in favor of courting foreign investors through its long range "Villa Strategy" [...] Montserrat should be of particular interest to readers in real estate seeking property for income or retirement.

There is, thus, a proclivity amongst non-belonger investors to monitor and influence island tourism, and local Government (Cowell, *Island Properties Report*, 20th September 1984: 1) situation on Montserrat with the intention of minimising any political, social, or economic dissent which might have ramifications deleterious to their in-vested interests. In an interview (Gjersvik, *JA<>FAX*, November 1986: 69), Vue Pointe hotelier Carol Osborne said:

[w]e get about 75-80% repeat clientele and many of the first-timers hear about us through word-of-mouth. [...] Many people say this is like a second home, and when they return it is like a family coming back together.

For other comments about the Vue Pointe's gracious hosting of tourist, see Rein (*The Tribune*, 3rd November 1994: S2). And on a point of information, in his article, 'Montserrat Looks to Tourism Marketer to Spur Business', Jorge Sidron writes that, '[t]he island has only 100 hotel rooms but boasts about 300 villas' (*Travel Weekly*, 4th July 1994: 42).

At the end of Cowell's report (*Island Properties Report*, 20th September 1984: 1) runs the politically minded paragraph:

[Chief Minister] Osborne is not likely to push his independence plan, at least for the present: too many more-urgent problems are facing him. But for the late 1980s, watch this one, because an independent Montserrat could be an economic disaster: the island is too small and too vulnerable to function independently.

*Retirement Edens* also provides a commentary upon Montserrat as the journal's title suggests ('Montserrat - The way the Caribbean used to be' by Dickinson, no other references available). This is what Martie Sterling in *The Boston Globe and Mail* (25th October 1986: F6) describes as 'the Caribbean as it used to be - unspoiled, unexpected. An enchanted place of palm-fringed beaches and steep, green hills, Montserrat has the radiance of the tropics, the warmth of an Irish pub'. For other references to the people on Montserrat, consider the following by M. Smythe (*The Ottawa Citizen*, 1st September 1984: 51) who begins an article about Montserrat: '[a]t first glance, Montserrat seems a cruel joke', and continues:

Montserratians seem to be a shy people, probably because they have been exposed to so few foreigners. The women, in particular, walk with eyes downcast when passing a stranger and speak in hushed tones.

But give these proud people a chance to establish some bond of trust and smiles spread like the warm sun across their leathery faces.

For other further travel writing references to Montserrat, see Trotman (*Weekend EC NEWS*, 3rd April 1987, no other references available; see also Anon., *JA<>FAX*, November 1986: 56, no other references available; Anon., *Canadian Travel*, 30th October 1986: 5, no other references available; Norton: 3, no other references available; Sylvan, *The Montserrat News*, 11th November 1994: 15; Anon., *GOLF*, February 1971: 60, no other references available; Anon., *Caribbean Sun*, 22nd October - 4th November 1972: 5, no other references available; Bowers, *The Daily Telegraph*, 24th November 1979: no other references available; Anon., *The Calgary Sun*, 16th February 1981: no other references available).

<sup>136</sup> (Montserrat Tourist Board, *The Caribbean Sun*, 22nd October - 4th November 1972: author's emphasis, no other references available).

<sup>137</sup> 'From mountain chicken to rock, Montserrat holds varied charms' (Kerr, *The Herald*, no other references available). The same article mentions that Plymouth is Montserrat's only village, just as another article by Kerr - 'the free-lance writer from Fort Lauderdale' - describes places like St. Patrick's as a hamlet (*Sunshine*, 4th May 1986: 25). For Doone Beal (*The Evening Standard*, 21st April 1980: no other references available), the title for her article - 'How tropical Streatham got the shamrock' - comes from a comment made by the author which derives from the Irish connection:

[t]he Irish were among the original settlers, hence such names as O'Garro's and Farrell's Estates, and that of Galway's Soufriere, a more or less dormant, though still sulphurous, volcano. But there are London names too, and in a whimsical moment - for it's that kind of island - I speculated whether there are London bus conductors who actually hail from Norwood, Streatham or Richmond, Montserrat?

Likewise, Ted Larsen has described Plymouth as 'a sleepy throwback to a time when London had almost a dozen similar colonial headquarters in the Caribbean' (*The Boston Sunday Globe*, 9th December 1984: B29). Larsen continues with the observation:

Montserrat is a very small island with an extremely limited tourist clientele. Personal service often comes in unexpected ways. Don't be surprised if that same customs officer personally accompanies you to the adjacent police department simply because you asked, "Where do I apply for a driver's license?" This is one of the beauties of travelling to an "unspoiled" island.

<sup>138</sup> (Hallowell, *The Caribbean Sun*, 22nd October - 4th November 1972: no other references available).

<sup>139</sup> (Lord, *Wardair World*, Spring 1981: 11). This is another in-flight magazine, one with another title on the cover reading 'Antigua and Montserrat are attracting Canadians', plugging the Toronto/Montreal to Barbados route which Wardair operates. For other articles about the people of Montserrat, see 'Montserrat: Irish Charm In The Caribbean' (Thompson, *The New Brunswick Telegraph Journal*, 17th September 1983: no other references available; Pinheiro, *People*, April 1976: 24-26; and, Anon., *Sunday San Juan Star*: 1-4, no other references available).

<sup>140</sup> (Solomon, *Travel-Holiday*, October 1984: 46).

<sup>141</sup> (Laffey 1995: 35-36).

<sup>142</sup> (Laffey 1995: 35).

<sup>143</sup> (Laffey 1995: 34). In this way Laffey cites Dean MacCannell's argument that '[e]thnic tourism is the mirror image of racism' (MacCannell 1992: 170).

<sup>144</sup> 'Cable a serpent in paradise' (Hamill, no other references available). Other interesting comments picked up by Hamill expand upon the incredulity of tourists at local knowledge of the OJ trial. The conversations were noted from a cocktail party at the Vue Pointe Hotel, one of Mr. Osborne's receptions.

<sup>145</sup> 'The Other Emerald Isle - Norman Monaghan visits Montserrat, a tiny island in the Caribbean with an Irish past' (Monaghan, *Irish America Magazine*, September/October 1993: 42-45). This publication appeared in the same format in another magazine. This is a common travel writing occurrence. Indeed, some articles are published under pseudonyms, one man impersonating several women, freelancing various articles, inventing the names of accompanying photographers. Jack Oldham, Canadian archivist and travel writer, has sold his articles about travel in the Caribbean to various Canadian newspapers. In the 16th August 1980 edition of *The Mail Star* (30-31), he ran the article, 'Islands of the West Indies "so much nicer in Summer"' by George Buchan (i.e. Jack



Oldham). The same story appeared anonymously on 5th July 1980 as 'Islanders say summer is the time to visit' (*The Columbian*, no other references available), and as 'Summer in the islands has its advantages' (*The St. Catharines Standard*, no other references available), and as 'Summer's best time for Caribbean visit' (*The Chatham Daily News*, no other references available). I am also suspicious as to the authorship of Oldham's archive article, 'Tiny Montserrat's charms are the non-flashy kind', allegedly by Alyse Frampton with photographs by Jack Oldham (*The Toronto Globe and Mail*, 14th November 1981: 8).

<sup>146</sup> (Monaghan, *Irish America Magazine*, September/October 1993: 42).

<sup>147</sup> (Monaghan, *Irish America Magazine*, September/October 1993: 45). Monaghan also criticises Messenger's definition of the Black Irish, preferring Fergus's explanation that they are in fact descendants of English and Scots ancestry (Monaghan, *Irish America Magazine*, September/October 1993: 43). In his article, Monaghan also points out the irony of Irishmen squashing a 'Freedom' revolt in 1768 (Monaghan, *Irish America Magazine*, September/October 1993: 45). See also the *Caribbean Week* (Anon., 2nd-16th April 1994: 17, no other references available) where the freedom attempt is described as a symbolic gesture to the past:

[a]lthough this rebellion was unsuccessful and the names of the brave leaders, who were executed, are unknown, nevertheless their attempt to gain their freedom is symbolic and is remembered every year on this day.

<sup>148</sup> 'Montserrat: An Island That Still Has A Soul' by Bill Mauldin (*Golf*, February 1971: no other references available).

<sup>149</sup> This activity is also mentioned as a local custom in 'Montserrat: Irish Charm In The Caribbean' (Thompson, *The New Brunswick Telegraph Journal*, 17th September 1983: no other references available).

<sup>150</sup> (Mauldin, *Golf*, February 1971: no other references available).

<sup>151</sup> (Mauldin, *Golf*, February 1971: no other references available). The Mauldin family encounters with Montserrattians start off tentative and gain in surety:

[w]e waved and smiled in a tentative way. I mean you tend not to stick your neck out too far in such encounters, these days. He waved expansively and grinned back. Delighted, we passed a lady with a bale of clothes on her head. This one waved and smiled at us first. Riding high, we even undertook an exchange of pleasantries with some kids crawling through the roadside bushes. They told us that they were looking for golf balls.

<sup>152</sup> 'The Jewel in the Caribbean: Montserrat' (Brody, *The Washington Post*, 8th November 1970: K2). The full reference to this term reads:

[w]hat impressed us most, however, were the Montserrattians. Although Montserrat is a British protectorate, the blacks themselves govern the 14,000 population. They believe that white capital and know-how are essential to the island's prosperity, so a spirit of extreme cordiality prevails toward tourists. Since Montserrat is off the jet route, tourism has not flourished as it has in other parts of the Caribbean; consequently, the natives have remained relatively unjaded.

<sup>153</sup> (Mauldin, *Golf*, February 1971: no other references available).

<sup>154</sup> The one illustration for this piece is a cartoon by Mauldin of a black man in a straw hat riding backwards on a donkey, waving (Mauldin, *Golf*, February 1971: no other references available). The caption reads, 'On Montserrat They Still Treat White Folks As Equals'.

<sup>155</sup> (Stoodley, *The Metro Telecaster*, 7th July 1979: no other references available).

<sup>156</sup> This title refers in part to Charles Dickens's book (1916).

<sup>157</sup> (McLaughlin, *The Sunday Independent*, 25th June 1995: 7L, no other references available).

<sup>158</sup> (Urry 1994: 1).

<sup>159</sup> (Frost & Davidoff, *Travel World News*, March 1995: 20).

<sup>160</sup> (Robilotta, *The Montserrat News*, 4th November 1994: 14). At the same event, Royston Hopkin (President of the Caribbean Hotel Association) pointed out that 1995 will be the year of Caribbean Tourism. The same week of tourism events marked a new airline passenger service - WINAIR - between St. Maarten and Montserrat (Anon., *The Montserrat News*, 4th November 1994: 24, no other references available).

<sup>161</sup> An example of the weekly tourism messages in the news - which are designed to make the public more receptive to tourism - are present in *The Montserrat News*. This page carries two anonymous

articles under the 'Tourism What's Happening' header, a column about Mountain Biking on Montserrat - 'Mountain Biking Montserrat' (Anon. [a], *The Montserrat News*, 10th February 1995: 12, no other references available), how the sport attracts tourists to the business Island Bikes, as well as encouraging locals to exercise; and, 'Tourism Industry Forecast to Double by 2005' about how international tourism is becoming the leading industry in the new century, an industry caring for its destinations because '[t]ourism cannot destroy the environment without destroying itself' (Anon. [b], *The Montserrat News*, 10th February 1995: 12, no other references available). Another edition of *The Montserrat News* containing 'Tourism "What's Happening" - 'Montserrat Tourism Industry Raise Pledge to the Value of US\$100,000 for Promoting the Island' (Anon. [a], *The Montserrat News*, 24th February 1995: 19, no other references available) mentions pledges from the key tourism industry players on Montserrat totalling US\$100,000 to promote the island: for example, the donation to the Montserrat Tourist Board of 100 free dives by the new diving company, or 100 free bike tours with Island Bikes, or 100 free bed-nights at the Vue Pointe Hotel (some of which we heard about in the main text). The second article was about how many of the same operations had donated a total of EC\$25,000 to rejuvenate the 'Best Village' on Montserrat competition (Anon. [b], *The Montserrat News*, 10th February 1995: 12, no other references available). Both articles itemised the exact contribution made by each local tourist industry. Though neither Montserratian newspaper mentioned the vested interests of the tourist industries with the promotion of Montserrat and the Best Village competition (see also *The Montserrat Reporter*, 24th February 1995: 1, no other references available). Then, in a June edition of *The Montserrat News*, there appeared the promotion adverts, under the same heading, for the launching of the 1995 Tourism Awareness Drive with the theme 'Tourism is Everybody's Business', a message which went on to saturate the island (Anon., 23rd June 1995: 20, no other references available). In addition, some tourism articles are indirectly related to tourism such as 'St. Patrick's Day Celebrations Flop', a commentary about the St. Patrick's Day celebrations and other island events (Anon., *The Montserrat Reporter*, 24th March 1995: front and back pages, no other references available). Tourism news from the Caribbean Tourism Organisation is also updated in the local newspapers such as the article, 'Quality Tourism: the key to Caribbean survival - A Caribbean Tourism Day Message' (Holder, *The Montserrat News*, 18th November 1994: 19) where Holder links 'Caribbean People' - who have the proud essence of Asia, Africa and the Americas, excellent sportsmen, entertainers and Nobel laureates with the tourism product which Caribbean people can offer up to 'the expectations of our visitors'.

<sup>162</sup> (Sylvan, *The Montserrat News*, 11th November 1994: 15). *The Montserrat News* carried almost all of the travel writings such as 'Fantastical Montserrat' (Bareuther, *The Montserrat News*, 26th May 1995: 18) and 'Escape from Paradise', an unauthored and undated article picked up from *The Washington Post* (Anon., 2nd June 1995: 14, no other references available).

<sup>163</sup> 'This Emerald Isle - Where History and Culture make Beauty' by Howard Fergus (*The Montserrat News*, 18th November 1994: 17, 16).

<sup>164</sup> (Fergus, *The Montserrat News*, 18th November 1994: 17).

<sup>165</sup> (Fergus, *The Montserrat News*, 18th November 1994: 17, 16).

<sup>166</sup> (Shakespeare 1984: 93, Act 2, Scene 2, 1.43-44).

<sup>167</sup> (Bourdieu 1994).

<sup>168</sup> (Fergus, *The Montserrat News*, 18th November 1994: 17, 16). It is possible that this article is a reprint picked up by the newspaper from an off-island newspaper, journal or article, but the piece is not attributed to any other source, as are most reproduced pieces.

<sup>169</sup> (Fergus 1992).

<sup>170</sup> (Fergus 1992: 62-87).

<sup>171</sup> (Fergus 1992: vii).

<sup>172</sup> The Montserrat Tourist Board's policy is to promote low-key, expensive and exclusive tourism, rather than encourage back-packers. Fergus's 'Welcome' section contributes to this policy (Fergus 1992: 35, my emphasis):

[i]f you are looking for noise and neon, Montserrat is hardly your dream world. But simple pleasures, quiet beauty and people who are friendly and simple, *without being native*, are all here, far from the madding crowd.

<sup>173</sup> (Fergus 1992: 63).

<sup>174</sup> (Fergus 1992: 64).



<sup>175</sup> (Laffey 1995: 2). Laffey's entire survey of material ranges from 33 brochures to 19 articles, to 2 excerpts from tour guides, 1 map and 1 poster. My survey is larger and fits into an ethnographic picture whereas Laffey expressly avoids the controversial 'ways in which Montserratians perceive themselves or their island' and crucially, 'the ways in which Montserratians' self-representations intersect with or diverge from touristic representations' (Laffey 1995: 3).

<sup>176</sup> (Laffey 1995: 6). Here Laffey draws upon the ideas found in Paul Rabinow's article, 'Representations Are Social Facts: Modernity and Post-Modernity in Anthropology' (1986: 241).

<sup>177</sup> (Laffey 1995: 11). Here Laffey draws upon ideas found in Simulations by Jean Baudrillard (1983).

<sup>178</sup> (Laffey 1995: 30).

<sup>179</sup> See the 'Dominant Themes' chapter, 'Home of the Fabled "Black-Irish" section (Laffey 1995: 31-51).

<sup>180</sup> (MacCannell 1992: 170). Here, Laffey (1995: 34) draws upon Dean MacCannell's work and suggests that Montserratians evince genuine family friendship, such that the tourist, with their unplanned encounters on the island, feels that they are *a-part* of the island community, and willingly partakes in a 'staged authenticity' - a member of the island community as well as somebody distinct from the island community. See Chapter Five, 'Staged Authenticity' in, The Tourist - A New Theory of the Leisure Class by Dean MacCannell (1989: 91-107), where MacCannell applies Goffman's division of front and back regions to tourism attractions which can be structured into a continuum. Naturally, from my postmodern position, I dispute such a clear-cut continuum, and hence Laffey's use of Baudrillard's 'simulations'.

## Montserrat braced for further eruption

RIVERS of molten rock continued to spread across the Caribbean island of Montserrat yesterday following last week's volcanic eruption. Scientists at the island's laboratory gave warning of another major eruption soon.

The volcano is pulsing in six to eight hour cycles and emitting millions of tons of debris every hour. Communities once considered safe are now threatened, and two-thirds of the island's accommodation is now unusable. Last week's eruption destroyed 100 homes, and placed 2,000 in the danger area.

Yesterday, a Lynx helicopter from the destroyer Liverpool, which arrived off the British colony on Saturday, winched Montserratian policemen into the area hit by the eruption to look for survivors.

On Saturday, two women aged 87 and 60, who had been in hiding for three days, were lifted to safety. Nine islanders are known to have died in the eruption and a further 10 are missing, presumed dead. **Malcolm Brabant, Montserrat**

(Brabant, *The Daily Telegraph*, 30th June 1997: 12)

## **Conclusions - Postils, postulations and postliminy: an overview of this thesis**

In this Conclusion I would like to draw the thesis to a provisional close. I do this by writing a postil, a commentary upon the text so far: a commentary to open out my literary and academic points whilst ending the representation of my ethnographic observations and impressions of Montserrat. Here, also, I end my presentation of social commentaries and impressions of Montserrat by genre groups of poets, calypsonians, tourists, and travel writers - as well as individuals such as Howard Fergus and Chedmond Browne. Both the indeterminate processes of writing this text, and of reading this text may be at a close, but life on and around Montserrat continues apace, and what Maurice Bloch terms the 'long conversation' with the anthropologist's fieldsite continues apace in both the writer's and reader's imagination.<sup>1</sup> All that has been suspended is the writer's collection and presentation of diverse realities and impressions of Montserrat, the writing process of representing some perspectives and connections,<sup>2</sup> and the reader's reading of these representations and impressions. Howard Fergus is still writing poetry - about the volcano; Chedmond Browne is still contesting British colonialism from a more northerly cantonment; travel writers are still visiting and writing about Montserrat - cautiously; and I am still collecting and collating new representations and impressions of Montserrat - though from the more remote and restricted distance of St. Andrews University in Scotland.

Throughout this thesis I deliberately broke with the tradition of writing a text which presents a consistent presence, written with one, single, authorial voice. I wanted to construct a text which, if read chapter by chapter, immersed the reader in the ethnographic present of fieldwork on Montserrat - be it through the anthropologist's eyes, or by interview with calypsonians or Cheddy, or by following tourists around the island - but also, in places, pulled the reader away from the island and anthropologist's 'long conversation' with the locals. To do this, to deconstruct and fragment the reader's presence, I inserted a temporal leap - a detached report of Montserrat's developing volcanic crisis - at the start of each chapter, reports which are a record apart from the ethnographic chapters. These reports I collected from 'post-fieldwork', from when I was writing each chapter after I had left Montserrat. This is my -

postmodern - way of recognising the partial nature of the text and the reading and writing processes. I did this to break from the supposedly rigid boundaries of academic research and writing: the illusion of ethnography - the 'persuasive fictions' of anthropological presence,<sup>3</sup> of 'being there'<sup>4</sup> in the (ethnographic) present,<sup>5</sup> which are 'fabricated' from the university setting.<sup>6</sup> Throughout this thesis I have maintained that writing is more than the construction of an illusion, it is an indeterminate activity which affects the reader's reality. A part of this argument stems from Dick Hobbs's suggestion of 'writing as field-work': for him, the writing process forces a new re-engagement with the fieldwork, recognising 'that our experiential and interpretive faculties continue to function long after the gate to the field has been closed'.<sup>7</sup> For me, the field alters and affects the anthropologist's reality. We never really leave the field. In this way, I am echoing Anthony Cohen's sentiments, blurring and querying the liminal distinctions between the pre- and the post- in fieldwork. These are not just physical universals - distinctions of place, they can be broken down in various metaphysical and phenomenological fashions.<sup>8</sup>

From the start of the Preface to the start of this Conclusion the volcano situation has developed, shattering the closure of this text, tinkering with the reader's reality with e-mails on the Internet, pages and pictures on the World Wide Web, and international reports from the Associated Press. As one narrative development, the volcano forewords opened with the alerts in late July when I evacuated myself from the island.<sup>9</sup> Reuters covered the situation and their reports were posted on the CaribTalk 'beach bar' web site.<sup>10</sup> The British papers such as *The Times*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Sun* and even the Scottish paper, *The Courier and Advertiser*, picked up the story as soon as they found a human-interest story concerning 'locals'.<sup>11</sup> On Montserrat, the newspapers wrote optimistic pieces, one even predicting a future variety of volcano tourism.<sup>12</sup> And there was the travel-writing article about the volcano and the Irish heritage on Montserrat, a useful foreground for Chapter Six's discussion of St. Patrick's Day<sup>13</sup> and the travel-writing examples of impressions of Montserrat in Chapter Seven. The actual volcano foreword to Chapter Seven was written by Polly Patullo, a travel writer whom I mentioned, briefly, in the Preface.<sup>14</sup> She reports the latest deadly volcanic activities whilst the final chilling foreword suggests even more ominous island-wide eruption.<sup>15</sup> True to life, the Postscript foreword leaves the island

with its uncertain future - with super-heated gas, rock and ash flows tearing through the streets of Plymouth which an anthropologist once trod, where Cheddy once flogged his newsletters, where Teknikal and the fire-fighters once sang together in Prof's house, and where Cherrie once entertained. These messages are an artificial frame about which I filled in the various chapters about reading, writing, and doing anthropology. It is about these chapters - a sustained example of postmodern anthropology - that I shall now direct my more general comments.

### **D) Blurred impressions - anthropology and the anthropologist**

To recap so far, to delve through the volcano bulwarks to each chapter, my first impressions of Montserrat are the impressions of an anthropologist. Prior to these impressions is my theoretical Preface to the thesis. In the Preface I set out my anthropology which is uncomfortable and uncertain, postmodern and impressionistic; it was there that I set out the postmodern agenda which I was attempting to sustain in an ethnography of Montserrat. There, I argue that anthropologists gain but impressions which are partial without being whole, and relative. I examined two written impressions of the coronation of Ras Tafari to make my case; the differences in accounts show not a diversity of interpretation, but a difference in realities between the authors, Thesiger and Waugh. This difference I apply to anthropological studies. Without an *a priori* stance towards reality, native realities, I argue, are just such native realities. Rather than maintain what Shweder regards as the anthropologist's 'null hypothesis', I - in my ethnographic studies of other people - envision a pragmatic but relative approach to diversity. I use an IF ... THEN approach to curtail relativism's slippery slope: universals, essences and truths are local truths, incommensurable realities which can be juxtaposed by the anthropologist once they are situated within their respective variables. It is, thus, the anthropologist's task to fathom culture's criteria. There are, for instance - if we were to rely upon the work of two renowned anthropologists - incommensurable anthropological results from England and India: there are individual world-views in Rapport's Dales, but not in Dumont's Southern India. When placed side-by-side, these two anthropological 'world-views' -



themselves, create an anthropological impasse -- two world-views proclaimed by two anthropologists, neither of them reconcilable with each other. This impasse, as I have argued in my Preface, can only be overcome by invoking my extension of Shweder's analysis, my 'multiple subjective worlds'; in other words, by accepting that world-views are more than just perspective or viewpoint, by accepting that world-views are multiple, subjective (and subject-dependent) and relative, worlds - in - themselves, local and partial truths. In this way, history - and even anthropology - can be treated as contested and heterogeneous disciplines without any universal trajectory. This 'perspectival relativity', which Tyler coined,<sup>16</sup> means that anthropology remains an uncertain discipline, lacking a universal position and certain epistemological approach. The rest of the thesis, then, is a diverse range of different impressions of Montserrat, various realities which I cautiously present in an experimental manner. The ethnographic examples range from two notable individuals in the public realm - Howard Fergus and Chedmond Browne, to the impressions of Montserrat scripted by poets, calypsonians, development workers and travel writers.<sup>17</sup> I also include an example of the contested nature of these people's historical realities with a chapter addressing tourism and the St. Patrick's Day celebrations/commemorations.

Each chapter is an illustration of my postmodern impressionistic anthropology set out in the Preface and the second chapter. By order, to force a catholic reading of this thesis, Chapter One immerses the reader without warning.<sup>18</sup> Chapter One initiates the reader's relationship with the island. Here, I force away the virginity of the reader's Montserrat reality. In this chapter, Montserrat is built up through the author's presences. This, for me, is what life and fieldwork was like on Montserrat. I have tried not to remove myself or my fieldwork activities, mistakes and all, from this representation of my impressions. No doubt, each reader, with each indeterminate reading, will establish their own impressions from the text, and will, according to 'the "gestalt" of the text',<sup>19</sup> fill in the absences in the text, wherever they are. I accept and acknowledge these characteristics of writing and reading, characteristics which differ from my lived experiences and which I try to communicate to others. I allow the reader more leeway in reading - there are no pictures or maps outside this text for any pictures or maps would freeze forever an aspect of the reader's reality which relates to Montserrat. As I mentioned in my Preface, reality is a-blur, boundaries are unrealistic

attempts at order, and distinctions are only local universals and should be recognised as such by the anthropologists who specialise in the native's point of view. Indeed, even the impressions which feature in this thesis are partial impressions, arbitrary in selection, based upon my brief dip into the fieldwork mire. This thesis narrative comes, then, to a provisional close scarcely mentioning the traditional ethnographic categories of the kinship, geography, economics, politics of the island, and a comparison with other neighbouring islands. But, I will be happy if I have realised my theoretical and practical intentions, that is, to have outlined and accounted for my theoretical postmodern impressionistic anthropology, and to have exemplified it with my diverse ethnographic collection of partial impressions, all carefully evoked and creatively presented to encourage a sensitive reading.

From this loosely-written opening, characters are drawn and personalities are described from my perspective of them, and of my relationship with them. This reveals the muddle of fieldwork, the loose understandings built up by the anthropologist: in my case, I absorbed dialect by osmosis - there were no fixed or collective understandings for many words, or even activities. What was a passable and acceptable expression, opinion or action in one quarter of the island was not acceptable and not understood in another. Montserrat was "pock-marked" by various interest groups sharing realities - for want of a better word. They contested and competed with other groups, and sometimes they converged - from the individual level to small interest groups, to wider groups; for example, Prof, the firemen, Montserradians. And even for Prof, there are Goffmanesque roles which he is playing and presenting in everyday life<sup>20</sup> - and if I continue with my own impressions of Prof,<sup>21</sup> there is change and contest within himself.

From a sample day on Montserrat, the impressions and representations of Montserrat slip and slide into a deconstruction of ethnography - what passes in this thesis as the first chapter. Leaving my ethnography of an anthropologist on Montserrat fresh in the reader's memory, I dipped into social anthropological theory with Strathern's ethnography as partial connections and Rapport's suggestion that each individual muddles through their social life with diverse world-views, both anthropologists practising Shweder's version of a romantic and rebellious anthropology. These

anthropologists, like myself, like Geertz, Leach and Fernandez are dealing with people and their messy lives. Writing about people, writing about unbounded individuals, anthropologists have to engage with the non-rational ideas and practices of people's lives. We have to interpret social behaviour, listen to locals, follow local events, research local knowledge and what is described as local culture. This local lore, local behaviour, local knowledge, is labelled local culture, but as I have tried to show by alluding to the contests and competitions between individuals and social groups at work on the island, what there is of a culture is an inchoate. Culture is a cult of social consensus between people.<sup>22</sup> Culture is a persuasive trope, a powerful label to unify people. But in the case for those on Montserrat, Fergus shares little with Governor Savage or Union leader Cheddy, and less even with another poet - Prof. Prof's dialect, which I spoke around him and his friends, was incomprehensible to the librarian on the island. Fergus, though he occupies the Governor's residence when the Governor is off island, does so for very different reasons. Expatriates living on Montserrat, do not socialise with Prof; and Cheddy's historical reality is unfathomable to the Governor or expatriates. Prof is sympathetic to Cheddy, but Cherrie is sceptical of his colonised world-view. These people - groups and individuals - demonstrate the diverse and fragmentary nature of reality, Montserratian with Montserratian, Montserratian with expatriate, expatriate with expatriate, expatriate with Montserratian.

As an anthropologist, as an 'Arab Jew' on Montserrat, as a British colonial, as a poet, as a tourist, I moved through Montserrat, a researcher, a chameleon on various walls, switching and jumping realities and situations from tourist's beach, to poets' Maroon, to calypso session, to a fire-fighter get together. This is not to describe myself as a Machiavellian parasite latching onto informants, becoming a doppelgänger for the sake of research. My status as researcher on the island was a special privilege. I had the good fortune to share aspects of myself with diverse individuals and groups, partly as a result of sharing my personal interests, partly a part of my personality, and partly a part of my research position on Montserrat: I personified the ambiguous nature of reality - neither Montserratian nor tourist: British but not expatriate.

## II) Social commentaries - poetry and calypso

As I mentioned at the tale end of the first chapter, I regularly attended the Writers' Maroon. I got to know the poets on the island by joining their meetings, socialising with them and eventually interviewing as many as possible. Howard Fergus, the most well-known poet on the island, preserves an aloof aura about him, so my contact with him was more formal - the poetry meetings which he ran, his West Indian History classes, and my interview with him in his UWI office. It is in the second chapter that I concentrated upon the poets of Montserrat - in particular Dr. Fergus because of his interesting position and poetry on Montserrat. I partially explicate and contextualise his poetic reality. Poetry is the way in which Fergus expresses himself - it is his only expressive medium. Fergus 'makes literary' his everyday impressions of life and people on Montserrat, using the public domain for what many would consider to be his private thoughts.<sup>23</sup> In this thesis I concentrate upon Dr. Fergus because his various positions on Montserrat make his impressions of Montserrat particularly interesting, and because his poetry can be related to the work of other Barbarian & Commonwealth poets. Fergus's work can also be contrasted with that of Chedmond Browne, another intellectual who occupies a different historical reality on Montserrat.

Different poets represent Montserrat differently, giving us their diverse individual impressions of the island. So too with the calypsonians discussed later in Chapter Four. Drawing from similar backgrounds, the calypsonians write songs and sing about the island - what it is, what it used to be, and what they want Montserrat to be. Calypso, I would argue, is like poetry, both private and public for some of the performers and creators. Both, too, are social commentaries, opportunities for the author to express their particular impressions of Montserrat. Poetry is sometimes performed to an audience whereas calypso is usually performed to an audience. But neither poetry nor calypso are products just for the public setting. In the case of calypso, along with an examination of songs about the island, I included a presentation of calypso at a private local gathering. Writing to suit another set of presentation needs, I gave some examples of calypso's creative nature, how calypso is written, played and toyed with to retain its topical position as social commentary. There is the

conversation with Top Secret about calypso as social and political commentary, there are three private scenes which I shared with Teknikal and some fire-fighters, and there is the serious and poignant interview with Lord Alfredo.<sup>24</sup> And finally, I mentioned how calypso is internalised by many listeners, a point not lost to the Montserrat Tourist Board which created their own tourism jingle to advertise the benefits of tourism to Montserradians.

Teknikal, Top Secret and Lord Alfredo are but three calypsonians out of many on Montserrat. As calypsonians their voices gain prominence, their songs are played on the radio, sold on the streets, and repeated on people's lips; and, if they can snappily reflect life's situations, the lyrics become catchphrases: "come better dan dat" was the retort putting down Tony when his eyes and mouth were hungrily chasing a school girl, as I mentioned in Chapter One. For this chapter, Chapter Four, the conversation narrative account changed to suit the conversation with Top Secret and the evening of musical treats with the fire-fighters' lyrical exchanges dubbed over the background music of Teknikal's '*A News Dem A Look*'.

### III) Opposing conversations on Montserrat

Teknikal's social commentary is little known by the Technical Co-operation Officers (TCOs) from Britain who feature in Chapter Three. Though, as I argued in this chapter, the TCOs share the same title, they share little else with Teknikal, the calypsonian, or with other Montserradians. The TCOs do, however, share a certain degree of inter-subjectivity which I observed at one of their dinner parties. I have chosen to refer to this similarity in a partial version of reality as a constellation, a constellation which contrasts with a Montserradian constellation witnessed at another dinner party. A constellation is a vaguely shared inter-subjectivity, a loosely wrought interpretive community, an indeterminate Shwederian extension of Stanley Fish's 'interpretive [reading] communities' and Nigel Rapport's loops of thought ('*world-views*'). The TCOs are international development workers who have worked all around the world. They form a British team on Montserrat where they work and



socialise together, sharing interests, outlooks and attitudes. In this chapter is set down a record of some of their conversations at a New Year's dinner party. The conversations are about the various development projects on the island and they are contrasted with another set of dinner party conversations by Montserratians invited to one of Cherrie's soirées. In the first presentation, the reader is less close to the scene of events: rather than experience the occasion through the anthropologist's eyes, here, the reader is a fly on the wall following the anthropologist at a distance. The second presentation shows the anthropologist differently. At the Montserratian dinner party, the anthropologist is more sympathetic to the guests and their opinions. So, though both conversations were heard and written about by the same author, the second conversation subtly places the anthropologist closer to the reader. In the second presentation the author, Jonathan, is implying a far more intimate and relaxed dinner party, just as the author experienced the occasion.

What is interesting about the contrast in conversations - aside from their presentation to the reader - is the way in which the development projects are perceived by the two groups. The members of the two groups share their own views about the construction of Government Headquarters, the new Glendon Hospital and plans for a runway extension, for example. The purpose of this chapter is not only to note the importance of the indigenous reactions and responses to development work, it is to show that the people's diverse realities can converge as well as diverge.<sup>25</sup> In this case, on this topic, there appear to exist two separate groups. This, then, is an example of expatriate individuals' realities converging, and Montserratian locals' realities converging to form two opposing constellations, an example of both inter-subjectivity (within the two groups) and incommensurability (between the two groups). Inter-subjectivity here, then, is a conversational instance which exposes shared feelings and attitudes which I was able to verify by conducting further observation and interaction with the participants. Needless-to-say, even the 'spoken' examples contained in Chapter Three are as partial as the indeterminate nature of words' meanings when read. Indeed, many conversations are examples of people talking past each other. On other matters, the groups differ in substance and in kind. These expatriates are foreigners on Montserrat, judging and rating the island and the islanders according to previous postings. Jim finds it frustrating working on Montserrat. For him, the island is no more than a

'bloody artificial cesspit'. This is how he sees the island. His impressions of Montserrat are of an island artificially supported. The other Jim also looks at the economics of the island where tourism could make the place thrive. Their impressions of Montserrat are important because they live and work on the island, and because this affects the way that they interact with people on the island. Though their impressions of Montserrat vary, as a social group on the island they are mid-way between the Montserratians - belongers, those at Cherrie's dinner party, calypsonians such as Belonger, the fire-fighters and the poets who consider themselves to be Montserratian - and the fleeting visitors such as the tourists and travel-writers who describe the place as they see and experience it.

To maintain the contrasts between people and groups, the life and works of Chedmond Browne are considered in the next-but-one chapter, number five. After the calypso chapter, in Chapter Five, I again investigate impressions of Montserrat through conversation. Cheddy is a personality on the island who contrasts with Dr. Fergus. Cheddy has a bitter relationship with Governor Savage, a Technical Co-operation Officer himself, who is in charge of all the other TCOs. Cheddy is introduced as I heard of him and as I met him. Once more, the reading of the chapter begins by situating the writer and his relationship to his subject. I place him and myself in the text. This is because it is important to show how the relationship was built up. He, like Fergus, was difficult to get to know, but for different reasons. Cheddy, as a rule, does not talk with white people. In this situation I wanted to show how barriers are broken down, how I was treated, and how I gained unique access to his confrontational world-view and representation of Montserrat. Once the context of the text and information is known, then Cheddy's reality is represented by me. He shares with Fergus, a strong personal historical reality.

It could be argued that I am just engaged in Geertz's interpretive anthropology, that Cheddy is giving me a Montserratian reading of a Montserratian experience.<sup>26</sup> It could also appear that I am suggesting a version of Geertz's Indian tale of the world on a platform on the back of an elephant on the back of a turtle on the back of an infinitude of turtles.<sup>27</sup> Yet, I maintain that we have here, something more than local interpretations, we have the manifestation of local realities. I extend Geertz, and I

criticise Geertz for giving us a tale which illustrates his point that '[c]ultural analysis is intrinsically incomplete',<sup>28</sup> whilst at the same time, failing to take on board the full ramifications of his own words.<sup>29</sup> My understanding of such interpretation which Geertz calls for is that there is an interpretive understanding to Balinese cockfights, one which lies with the Balinese themselves, one which the anthropologist can only report upon and translate into the anthropologist's own culture once the anthropologist has uncovered the symbolic keys - the keys which are cultural symbols - to the social activities. But this is an interpretive anthropology with limitations upon interpretation. This is an interpretive anthropology which does not rest upon the back of turtle after turtle after turtle. Geertz's initial Indian tale at the start of his book does not match up with the Balinese example at the tail end of the book. His understanding of Balinese understandings stereotypes the Balinese, according to Watson,<sup>30</sup> and for me, is more akin to the tale of the anthropologist standing on the back of a Balinese elephant which is standing upon a turtle which is standing still on a bedrock reality. For Geertz, here rests the tip of the tail of the interpretive turn. This means that for Geertz there is an end to interpretations, that some interpretations are more apt than others, that assertions can be made - tremulously,<sup>31</sup> but asserted nonetheless. My postmodern impressionistic anthropology shies away from such comfortable concretes.<sup>32</sup> What I mean is that, unlike an interpretive tail - one with layers of interpretations and understandings, one on top of another, but all with a base interpretation, that grounded turtle, where culture is an assemblage of texts<sup>33</sup> - all we have are shifting, depthless impressions of ourselves and others. Culture, history, ethnography and representation are all Baudrillard's simulacrum rather than his simulations.<sup>34</sup> My realities are, thus, as tailless as they are endless.

The chapter about Cheddy situates his role on Montserrat and represents his revolutionary work as leader of the Seamen's Union involved in an employment dispute with the British and Montserratian Governments. Like Fergus, Cheddy writes and articulates his reality in the public domain. So adversarial is Cheddy that he has to self-publish his own media outlet, *The Pan-African Liberator* newsletter. After several lengthy conversations with Cheddy, I interviewed him, noting that there was little difference between what he writes, what he speaks, and what he reports. Like Fergus, Cheddy works towards an independent Montserrat and an end to colonialism. And

like Fergus, Cheddy wishes to promote his own historical reality across Montserrat. Both public figures are educators whom I likened to Du Bois and Garvey respectively. Fergus is the accepted historian of Montserrat; he courts publishers - and the British and Montserratian Governments - from his offices in the Continuing Education Department of the University of the West Indies. Cheddy is the unacceptable voice on Montserrat; he is banned from the radio and forced to work the streets, arguing, challenging, and haranguing both Montserratians and tourists.

I would argue here that both Chedmond Browne and Dr. Fergus have their own very fixed conceptions of the history of Montserrat: history which accounts for Montserrat's present colonial position; history which accounts for the distribution of wealth across the island as well as internationally; history which chronicles the oppression of black people, and which - crucially - continues to chronicle the oppression of black people. Though both are historians of Montserrat and the lives of Montserratians, Fergus has been the more successful at teaching and writing about the history of Montserrat. Fergus is lauded for his history of Montserrat, a history from newspapers, reports, and colonial records as well as from his lived history proceeding from the 1950s. Cheddy - though he too proclaims his own historical reality as the history of Montserrat - has been banned from broadcasting his radio programmes about the history of Montserrat, and is not allowed to speak to classes of school children. In effect, Fergus has been applauded for his history of Montserrat whereas Cheddy has been condemned for his history of Montserrat. Both Cheddy and Fergus write a past reality in the present to alter the future's anticipated reality. For me, these are two of many histories.

Let me continue: Dr. Fergus, writing a history of Montserrat, a history up to his present, includes his work for the arts and politics of Montserratian society. Fergus's history is contemporary and bound up in the nation-building enterprise. It is a one-man history in that there have not been any previously published sustained histories of Montserrat. Fergus's history of Montserrat is also presented as a fixed record of prices and events. However, we have already heard from Gilles Deleuze (via Young) of the insurmountable difficulty with defining and circumscribing an event. And, we can add to this the historian E.H. Carr's point that history is not independent of the



historian's interpretation.<sup>35</sup> To some extent, history reflects the present, 'our own position in time',<sup>36</sup> and so Fergus's history of Montserrat necessarily reflects his own position in time, as well as his position in Montserratian society; it reflects his-story. To continue, both Carr and Young give us useful critiques of the belief in an objective and universal history, of a singular historical reality. Elaborating upon the historiography of history, extending a view of history beyond conceptions of history in which the past is a fiction of (and a charter for) the present, I believe that the past is a record of our endless presents. The present is all that we have. And it is only in the present that the past has any meaning. History's meaning comes from the present. Yet, I recognise that this is my (anti-)historical reality, which many others - Fergus and Cheddy included - do not share. This chapter, and this Conclusion, I hope, show just how pragmatic my relativism can be.

A great deal has been written about the convergences and divergences between history and anthropology, the relationship between history and ethnography, history and myth, and the merits of diachronic social accounts over time as opposed to synchronic snapshots of society.<sup>37</sup> My focus is upon the meaning, and the understanding of history, the native's historical reality.<sup>38</sup> And, of course, I am concerned with how these historical realities are used: how they are spread and disseminated by Dr. Fergus and Cheddy; how they are influenced and contested by the Government and expatriates, and how the histories are received by other people on Montserrat. All parties aim for the pre-eminence of their history, and all parties contest and challenge each other's history as rivals.

Cheddy wants the public of Montserrat to be aware of historical events surrounding the redundancy of port workers, relating the activity to an international global picture of events, to a capitalist/socialist, colonial/mother-country struggle. He wants *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator* to be the voice of the Union he leads, a voice which contests the version of events available in the national papers. For Cheddy, *The Montserrat Reporter* feeds the public Government propaganda, rationalising the demise of the Union at the Port. For the Governor, *The Pan-Afrikan Liberator* is an irksome rag troubling the voice of unity the Governor and Government wish to present. It is Cheddy's *Liberator* which contests the chronicle of Plymouth's Port, castigates the



British development projects on the island, and questions Montserrat's status as a British Dependent Territory akin to Hong Kong.

In presenting his voice, Cheddy appeals to the island's blackened past, to the founding days of the Unions, to the time when W.H. Bramble was Montserrat's first Chief Minister. Cheddy and Fergus, in their histories, both appeal to W.H. Bramble - Bramble as a former President of the Montserrat Trade and Labour Union, for Cheddy: a man who established union power on Montserrat which resulted in 'deliverance from post-emancipation neo-slavery'.<sup>39</sup> Fergus, interestingly, portrays Bramble as a *fellow* union man, a folk hero on Montserrat to be invoked to gain support for the Union struggle. He is 'the father of the working-class movement in Montserrat', for Fergus;<sup>40</sup> he is Fergus's intellectual and political mentor, a man *used* by Fergus to root Fergus amongst the people of Montserrat; and he is a man used by Fergus to root all Montserratians together as members of a common working class. Here, because Fergus's historical reality is shared by many others, it becomes a constellation, a dominant reality.

#### **IV) Arenas of contest: St. Patrick's Day and the travel writer's gaze**

Though the two historians would not publicly align themselves, the poet and the port leader were once again thrown together during the week of 17th March 1995. In Chapter Six, I write about the Irish legacy on Montserrat and I give my ethnography of the Montserratian celebrations of St. Patrick's Day. During the week-long festival it was publicly announced that, in the future, the unknown martyrs of the St. Patrick's Day 1768 rebellion would be commemorated at the August Emancipation Commemoration which would subsequently be known as Montserrat Achievers Day. This would be done so that the St. Patrick's Day celebrations would be more appealing to tourists without the local underlying memory of racial tension and slavery tainting their experiences of Montserrat. Following this announcement during the 1995 celebrations, the public national figures Cheddy Browne and Howard Fergus were interviewed for public radio, each responding that the 17th March should always be

connected with the attempted slave rebellion, Fergus mentioning that the day should be named National Heroes Day. Here, their historical realities converged momentarily.

Fergus has always campaigned for the commemoration of St. Patrick's Day. It was Fergus who researched the failed rebellion and publicised the event in his poetry and history of Montserrat. And it is Fergus whom Cheddy accuses of concealing the names of the nine executed and the 30 banished from the island, and for keeping to himself the knowledge of their execution site. This is reserved either to maintain the mystique surrounding the rebellion, to allow Fergus to expose the information at an opportune moment, or simply because the names are no longer available. This has become a moot point between Cheddy and Dr. Fergus. St. Patrick's Day celebrations are a public island-wide activity, a local tradition created and shaped and made meaningful by Howard Fergus. To change the date of the activity would, for Fergus and Cheddy, break the connection between the historical reality of the date and its commemoration, turning a day of martyrdom into a tourist celebration. I would like to suggest that the St. Patrick's Day celebrations resemble Davydd Greenwood's example of the Alarde, a Basque festival in Fuenterrabia, where the town inhabitants commemorate their defeat of a French siege in 1638.<sup>41</sup> Both are local occasions imbued with authentic meaning for the participants, Montserratian or Basque. The re-enactment of Fuenterrabia's town solidarity against the French occurred as a local celebration, one which the town council sought to capitalise upon by re-enacting the Alarde re-enactment twice in one day to make it available to tourists. This overt commodification of culture - 'selling culture by the pound' as Greenwood describes it<sup>42</sup> - re-defines, for the participants, the Alarde private ritual as a public show to be performed for outsiders. Though the double-bill never came to pass, the town council's actions resulted in the town population's loss of interest in the performance of the Alarde. The town councillors had inadvertently violated the meaning of the ritual enactment: they had destroyed the "authenticity" of the ritual for the performers, resulting in a local reaction of indifference to any performance of the ritual. Greenwood ascribes this local Alarde *anomie* as a collapse of cultural meanings.<sup>43</sup> This is what Cheddy and Dr. Fergus seek to avoid - losing the meaning which they have imbued in the St. Patrick's Day commemorations.

In Chapter Seven, however, I do more than script an ethnography of St. Patrick's Day 1995 as an invented tradition. In the same chapter, I also note the ethnic disputes raging between Dr. Fergus and the anthropologist John Messenger concerning the vestiges of Irishness in contemporary Montserrat. In the section 'Exposed - John Messenger's 'Black Irish' of Montserrat', I look at the meaning Fergus establishes for the St. Patrick's Day national holiday as a development of Montserrat's creole national and cultural identity, the vivid historical reconstructions of the event given by the cultural historian Michael Mullin, and the previously observed St. Patrick's Day celebrations which Messenger uses to further his claim of a Black Irish ethnic category existing on an island which has strong Irish retentions in its people. Finally, I look at 'The future of St. Patrick's Day and the "Black Irish"', a section of the chapter which explores the various competing agendas surrounding the fated - fêted - day: tourism, economic regeneration and St. Patrick's Day for the Montserratian Government; black liberation, independence and St. Patrick's Day for Cheddy; the Black Irish, exotic anthropology and St. Patrick's Day for Messenger; poetic and historical material, independence and St. Patrick's Day for Fergus; the Irish-experience, a vacation and St. Patrick's Day for the tourist.

To return to my point: unravelling all the competing agendas at work surrounding the Irish connection with Montserrat and the commemoration of celebration of St. Patrick's Day on Montserrat - each self-interested party fielding an historical reality of and for Montserrat - I was almost tempted down such strictly historical pathways. Reading Fergus and Cheddy and Mullin, I was impelled towards an analysis which would unearth the truth and falsity about the Irish on Montserrat: whether or not their influence was lasting or transitory; just exactly how the St. Patrick's Day rebellion failed; the colour of the seamstress. I wanted to resort to an historical approach to make sense of my ethnography of Montserrat, especially my impressions of St. Patrick's Day celebrations and John Messenger's 'Black Irish'. I wanted to present an historical excavation of the past in which to frame and contextualise the present. However, history is diverse and heterogeneous; and an archaeology of an invented tradition such as the kilt does little to fathom the meaning which the kilt holds for the Scots, nor does such an approach take into account the ability of the present to frame and reconstruct the past - even if the past is an invented tradition. I am not in the

business of establishing historical benchmarks. Historical realism cannot assist with an understanding of the present, the time and place in which the history is written and read. For us, history remains another country.

Instead of confirming and co-founding, or rejecting and denying, the authenticity of the Black Irish or St. Patrick's Day, I have concentrated upon their present day meanings and understandings, and the attendant agendas contending with each other. If Fergus and Cheddy establish their historical realities and try to assist with the establishment of other Montserratians' realities then the issue becomes one of situating rather than eradicating the position from which the Black Irish label is being used, or the St. Patrick's Day commemoration supported. Here, I extend Richard Wood<sup>44</sup> and Richard Handler's analysis where they argue that 'tradition' and 'authenticity' are but assigned meanings defined in the present.<sup>45</sup> For me, they are native realities. Moreover, I must remark that fieldwork results are blurred impressions and can never be categorised as authentic themselves, nor should they be considered observations of cultural inventions (Handler's conclusion from working amongst the *independantiste* Parti Quebecois of Quebec,<sup>46</sup> and Hanson's conclusion from working amongst the Maori).<sup>47</sup> Hanson is perceptive in his final assertion that the analytic task of the anthropologist is 'not to strip away the invented portions of culture as inauthentic, but to understand the process by which they acquire authenticity'.<sup>48</sup> With respect to Montserrat, the factuality of Fergus's St. Patrick's Day (doubted by expatriates) and Messenger's 'Black Irish' (questioned by Fergus) becomes a non-issue for the anthropologist: for the anthropologist, uncovering the names of the St. Patrick's Day 'martyrs' is as unnecessary as pathologising the names of those buried in the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Similarly, for the anthropologist, the historical and cultural substantiation, or repudiation, of links between the 'white' Irish of the Emerald Isle and the Black Irish of the Other Emerald Isle becomes an inappropriate investigation.

In these chapters Montserrat is 'the locus of a struggle', as Bourdieu would describe it.<sup>49</sup> It is here that I examine anthropological and philosophical questions: for example, following Rorty's deconstruction of the mental/physical dualism,<sup>50</sup> why cannot thinking be reality? Why cannot the individual variously and diversely apprehend the social world(s)? This interrogative approach leaves room for the inchoateness of my

postmodern anthropology which challenges 'the pursuit of truth' but holds to what is variously taken for reality by 'man', a postmodernism which remains resilient to reality's challenge.

Continuing the theme of struggle between competing participants who are all representing Montserrat, my final ethnographic presentation of impressions of Montserrat comes from itinerant travel writers, novelists, and anthropologists. *Sunday Times* Travel writer reviewer Anthony Sattin has quoted from the novelist Sebastian Faulks's attack upon the travel writing genre, describing travel writing as "'indifferent writers going to places where anyone else can go and giving an account of their random experiences.'" In other words, Faulks dislikes a genre of writing which either has to convince readers to visit the places written about, dazzle the reader with words, or demonstrate a discovery of knowledge.<sup>51</sup> These criticisms of travel writing might also be applied to anthropology writings which share similar genre characteristics: a convincing, well-written and original ethnography, or thesis, will be favourably received. Not only do travel writing and anthropology try to cater for restricted audiences - the magazine or journal reader, but the two genres further correspond with respect to their topics and analysis: the ethnographic monograph evolved from the travel report as far as Justin Stagl and Christopher Pinney are concerned.<sup>52</sup> Chapter Seven explores this inter-connectedness of anthropological texts (what Geertz regards as a contribution to human knowledge), and travel writing texts (what Louch correlates together with anthropology as worthy 'contributions to human knowledge').<sup>53</sup> The chapter begins with a discussion seeking to maintain a distinction between D.H. Lawrence's account of 'The Hopi Snake Dance' and Clifford Geertz's article 'Deep Play: Notes on a Balinese Cockfight'.<sup>54</sup> Comparing these articles is easier than contrasting them. I am able to show that both writers attempt to grasp the meaning of the social structures and practices before them, to render the meaning understandable to the reader. Both writers have their agendas and intentions for their writing, but, I would like to suggest after Dell Hymes's 'dissolution' of divisions between literary criticism and ethnographic writing - both indispensable for each other, that 'the difference is in our understanding, not in kind'.<sup>55</sup> For me, this means that we each have personal, creative, indeterminate and impressionistic readings and that it depends on how we treat and take the text rather than follow the course of the text.



For me, this means that the text is derailed from its interpretive tramlines. This is why I have made use of my own loose and indeterminate 'constellations', rather than rely upon Fish's 'interpretive communities'. I wish to preserve the creative, 'idiosyncratic subjectivity' which Howell seeks to eradicate.<sup>56</sup>

A consideration of travel writing in anthropology is necessary because it informs the relationships encountered between tourists and Montserratians, or as Edward Bruner puts it, '[t]he dominant narratives of hegemonic tourist discourse [...] [which] organise and give meaning to the tourist encounter for both the tourist and the native.'<sup>57</sup> Bruner uses Said and Foucault to explore the power relationship between tourist and native, hypothesising that though the tourist experience is advertised as a profound transformation of the self, it is the native self which undergoes change due to contact with the tourist, and that because it is the tourist and tourist industry which has the power and money in the relationship, they are able 'to decide what stories will be told - by whom, in what discursive space - so that others in the system, such as the Africans [for example], have to base their actions on what is essentially someone else's story.'<sup>58</sup> Perhaps this occurs on Montserrat as Messenger's Black Irish trope becomes a tourism tag? This speculation I mention at the end of the chapter after presenting an 'ethnography' of written representations of impressions of Montserrat, accounts written by individuals which largely follow their own experiences whilst visiting the island.

In the volcano foreword to Chapter Six, Lucretia Stewart writes about the Irish heritage of Montserrat. Her article in *The Independent* (with Travel Notes) combines news about the island with news about the rumbling volcano.<sup>59</sup> The production of such travel texts as this I explicate, in Chapter Seven, by following the production context of Brigid McLaughlin's article 'Redonda Reclaimed' which was featured in the Irish newspaper *The Sunday Independent*.<sup>60</sup> There is only slight significance as to the contrasting English-Irish 'Independent' papers and their respective readership, and an irony in the self-determining title of the paper in which stories about a British Dependent Territory are featured. McLaughlin becomes temporarily involved in the lives of several Montserratians as she writes and translates her activities for her staple Irish readership back home. I try to show how her work is built up, how she takes her

material from Montserratians, creates links between the two Emerald Isles, and becomes an individual part of the tourist discourse which is partly mediated and influenced by the Montserrat Tourist Board. The travel writer feeds off the local knowledge spoken in the Bird's Nest Bar in Plymouth, local knowledge and local history which is taught on the radio by Dr. Fergus, and is administered in the form of tourism seminars to all people who encounter tourists; taxi drivers are especially coached on the island's history and the Irish connection; customs officials are schooled in welcoming tourists, searching baggage with a smile; and island hotel staff and cooks take part in the Hospitality Workshops or food and service competitions. The production of travel writing, then, is particularly bound up in the activities of the tourism industry. This is further demonstrated by the number of free nights' accommodation, or free meals, or free dives given out by the Tourist Board to the visiting writers who subsequently praise and flatter their island hosts and recommend their readers - potential tourists - to this unspoilt bit of the old sod in paradise.

The production of travel writing impressions occurs piecemeal, just as ethnography is fashioned, just as events are narrated, and just as locals are mined for their ways and means. My collection of information and participant observation at the Bird's Nest Bar was the same as McLaughlin's, though perhaps more implicit and long-term. I was more free to explore than McLaughlin; McLaughlin was bound by her paper and by her contact with the Montserrat Tourist Board and regulars at the Birds Nest Bar - more socially obliged to write to Montserratian expectations than my obligation to write according to my doctoral academic necessities. The first of her weekend pieces was available at the bar as soon as it had been printed in Ireland. In other cases of travel writing, the Montserrat Tourist Board exercised greater control over the production of the literature by determining, and guiding, the travel writers' impressions of Montserrat. By hosting the travel writer, the organisation thus enforces its centrality to both the external and the internal representation of impressions of Montserrat. Both Tourism Week and the St. Patrick's Day week-long celebrations are Tourist Board sponsored occasions with local as well as foreign implications.

Tourist visitors have read about Montserrat and some of the islanders in the marketing of Montserrat, but as the local papers pick up international stories or articles about

Montserrat, the islanders also read about themselves and other islanders on Montserrat. Montserratians are aware of the tourist attractions Montserrat offers, and they are also aware of the expatriate/tourist lifestyle on Montserrat. For this reason, though some may decide against setting together opposing world-views such as expatriate with local (development worker with Montserratian), or tourist perspective with local history (the demands of the visitor with the needs of the local historian), on the grounds of unproductive rabble-rousing, I have done so. In this thesis I emphasise contrasting positions and contested representations of impressions - not to crash the development worker at the TCOs party with the Montserratians at Cherrie's soirée; or to show up Messenger with a promotion of Cheddy's version of Montserrat's history; or to expose the Montserrat Tourist Board's declaration of Montserrat's Irish connection with Fergus's Macmillan Caribbean Guide to Montserrat; or to pit Montserrat's Heroes Day against Montserrat Achievers Day - but to show how people's beliefs, convictions, impressions all elide each other.<sup>61</sup> The resulting read, then, is an edifying collage of dynamically represented impressions: a narrative as edifying as Fernandez's account of narratives of jurisprudence among the Kpelle where success is measured upon a criterion of resourcefulness more than any polarity of truth or falsity;<sup>62</sup> a narrative more edifying, peripheral and elliptical than systematic, divisionary and universally commensurable.<sup>63</sup>

The penultimate section in Chapter Eight ('With imperial eyes: the travel writer's gaze on Montserrat') is 'a Rough Guide' to the travel writing about Montserrat: it is divided into the book and journal entries which represent Montserrat, letters mentioning Montserrat, and newspaper/magazine articles featuring travel writers' impressions of the island. Henry Nelson Coleridge, the self-styled 'rheumatic traveller', mentions Montserrat whilst struggling through a grand tour - with gout - of the West Indies. Away from home, Coleridge performs a spatial schizophrenia in his travel narrative of Pratt's 'contact zone', 'the space of colonial encounters'.<sup>64</sup> He is both here and there in his descriptions of Montserrat and the other islands whilst constantly referring back to the Devon, Eton, Cambridge and London which he knows, has lived in, and considers to be home. I suggest that this is how Coleridge makes sense of his new environment, by relating it constantly to the one that he knows. This is how Coleridge, *à la* Leach, turns the unfamiliar into the familiar. It is an example of colonial meaning

making: he positions himself as a humorous raconteur; his 'imperial eye' - which essentialises and textualises all before it in a vain scientific quest, 'the exact description of everything' as Buffon characterises the ideology - is less than impervious.<sup>65</sup> This point we can apply to the accounts of Montserrat by Davy, English and Somerville, if not further afield.

The problematic distinction between possible 'genres' or 'interpretive communities' of anthropological and literary writings collapses even further when I represent one of Margaret Mead's field letters (describing her accommodation on Montserrat) as a travel text.<sup>66</sup> Other letters were also published, mostly in the Montserrat press; both critical and complimentary, they show how Montserrat lives up to, or departs from, the visitors' expectations of their visit. These letters differ from Fergus's articles in the papers, the anti-colonial editorials, the Maroon poetry, the calypso commentaries, and the local understandings of Messenger's Black Irish. Unlike the other impressions of Montserrat, the letters are not examples of 'autoethnographic expression' ('instances in which colonised subjects undertake to represent themselves in ways that engage with the coloniser's own terms'), or 'transculturation' ('how subordinated or marginal groups select and invent from materials transmitted to them by a dominant or metropolitan culture'), to try and loosely apply Pratt to the rest of the thesis and the Tourist Board's marketing of Montserrat.<sup>67</sup> Regardless of this observation, written about Montserrat by visitors to Montserrat, written for publication on Montserrat, the readings of these letters - along with the readings of other representations of impressions of Montserrat which constitute my ethnographic base - challenge Georg Simmel's idea of writing as the 'objectification of the subjective',<sup>68</sup> writing as public, objective and fixed understanding of the letter and written communication.

Final travel writing impressions of Montserrat appear in off-island newspaper and magazine articles which are diligently collected by the Montserrat Tourist Board and are occasionally re-published in *The Montserrat News* or *The Montserrat Reporter*. Professional pieces written by career writers, the travel writers try to advertise Montserrat as an up-market retreat; exclusive - a must for the discerning traveller - a pass for the seven-day tourist. In keeping with the Tourist Board's policy to attract a small number of wealthy visitors who will stay for a long period of time - also in

keeping with the Government's policy to attract residential tourists to the island, the travel writers personalise Montserrat in their compositions. Montserrat is 'wee' rather than 'small', 'emerald' and 'verdant' rather than 'green' and 'lush'; indeed, Montserrat is even depicted as '[a] three-humped whale of an island' by one writer for the Associated Press.<sup>69</sup> Montserrat is a place for the sophisticated, the rich and famous, and so it is sometimes described rhetorically as the place *not* to go to for the holiday you don't want - as the place not to go to for a regular holiday alongside the less-discriminating. Unspoilt by tourism, travel writers ironically promote the island for tourism, albeit of a genteel and environmentally-friendly fashion. Failing to mention the internal marketing to Montserratians of the importance of tourism promulgated by the Montserrat Tourist Board (the seminars, workshops, the 'Tourism Is Everybody's Business' awareness programmes), the travel writers report Montserrat's friendly people as one of Montserrat's core assets, as much an attraction as the beauty of Montserrat's 'verdant' emerald scenery: when Jill Wykes describes Montserrat as 'one of the last few remaining old-world islands'<sup>70</sup> she is reiterating the Tourist Board's marketing epithets, 'Montserrat - The Way The Caribbean Used To Be', alluding to the people of Montserrat as much as the place.

Colonial British with a twist of Irish mystery, Montserrat is also tagged as 'The Emerald Isle of the Caribbean', 'The Other Emerald Isle', 'Shamrock in the Sun'. Though the travel writers only occasionally pay tribute to the hotels which accommodate them, they are sure to make reference to Montserrat's Irish connection. To be sure, with its 'breath of Eire in the Caribbean', travel writers maximise Montserrat's Irish connection. The island, represented as a traditional, unhurried location with Irish place names, and the people are linked with the land, portrayed as backward-facing peasants riding donkeys or selling their produce at the market, innocent of the competitiveness and coldness of the rest of the world. The islanders also have Irish names, their Irish brogue, and a twinkle of friendliness in the eye - an 'innate friendliness' as James Kerr describes it<sup>71</sup> - and a 'typically colonial manner' as Arthur Solomon phrases their behaviour.<sup>72</sup> The tourists are fascinated by these black natives who are so friendly and endearing; perhaps almost childlike in a 'noble savage' sense of the word.



The travel writers tell us that Montserratians have a hint of an Irish brogue in their speech. They run through the list of Irish symbols to be found around the island - the prominence of the shamrock on Government House and elsewhere on Montserrat, Erin the mermaid on the national flag, the celebration of St. Patrick's Day, goatwater stew, and remnants of the Irish jig in the traditional dance steps, and fragments of Gaelic mythology in the local legends. Messenger is even cited by the travel writers as an authority on the Irish connection with his anthropological expertise in ethnicity and the Black Irish. Here, indeed, is an anthropological loop to follow! In all these reports I have shown, the travel writers set themselves up at odds - in contest - with the impressions of Montserrat represented by Cheddy, Fergus, some of the calypsonians, Maroon members, and other Montserratians. This is shown in Susan Laffey's work where she comments upon, and criticises, the travel writer's humorous coupling of black ethnicity with the Irish to produce the 'Black Irish' ethnicity; casting the Black Irish as an 'ethnic spectacle' for the tourist, in her words.<sup>73</sup> Laffey and I both disagree with the humorous, backward, static and homogenising portrayal of Montserratians by the travel writers:- the comic reaction elicited in reaction to Ras O'Reilly's name,<sup>74</sup> the eccentricity of the scene in which the old black man is ridiculed for riding a donkey - backwards;<sup>75</sup> the North American travel writer's amusement with the native's reply that he is not poor but rich with his goats and his garden.<sup>76</sup> In these situations, with these travel writing ethnographies, the mirth arises from the challenge to the presumed incommensurability of Euro-American cultural understandings: the incommensurability of Irish culture with black skin; the irrational and 'irrefutable logic'<sup>77</sup> underlying native practices; the seemingly inexplicable world-views and perspectives and realities revealed by the tourist-native encounter. In these encounters, it is the tourist travel writer who has to reorder their reality. The travel writing is grounded, then, in what Laffey projects as traditional Euro-American understandings - or perceptions - of race, culture and colour, namely, that the Irish connection with what is seen as a black West Indian island jars the mutually exclusive categories which we hold. The consequences are predictable - when Euro-American cultural understandings are threatened, they are lampooned and ridiculed as coping strategies, not just for the sake of an interesting travel piece. Though in general agreement with Laffey's impressions of Montserrat and impressions of travel writers' impressions of Montserrat, I do disagree with her if - as I suspect - she is pointing us in the direction of a universal and inviolable

Montserratian ethnicity: there is a difference between exoticising ethnicity - the complicity of the travel writers describing an essentialised ethnicity, *sans* hybridity, Laffey's contention; and edifying ethnicity - presenting the usages of ethnicity, the strategies, contests, constellations and discourses which I evince. Laffey's impressions may be universal and true for her, but they can only be partial truths and relative universals for me.

As with the anthropologist, many travel writers, in their impressions of Montserrat, represent constructions of conversations and encounters with the local Montserratians. We all exhibit the inequality of the host-guest relationship, and what Bruner describes as the power of the representation to frame the tourist encounter with the tourist destination and its local inhabitants.<sup>78</sup> The examples that I come across show the travel writer to be highly conscious and aware of the colour differences between them and their subjects. There is a surprise that Montserrat is different from some of the other Caribbean islands with their racial tensions. The low-key conversation in a bar, the low-key exchange in a shop, the casual native wave - all shake the visiting travel writers, liberating them from any ancestral guilt they might shoulder. Such encounters give them impressions of authentic affability as opposed to the expected façade of contrived amiability for economic gain. Still, it is the travel writer who remains wary of the encounter. And it is the travel writer who frames the encounter: recall Maudlin's wave again:

'[w]e waved and smiled in a tentative way. I mean, you tend not to stick your neck out too far in such encounters, these days. He waved expansively and grinned.'<sup>79</sup>

Reassured, the travel writer recalls the humour of the encounter for his audience of sympathetic readers. In instances such as this, the travel writer is insecure and lacking in local knowledge, as much a tyro as the Montserratians being represented. It is at moments such as this that we glimpse what Leach refers to as the unmentionable, what I refer to as the author's personality. The readers and the travel writer share an understanding or experience which is intentionally written not to be privy to the Montserratians, rather like Messenger's last academic article about St. Patrick's Day.

The travel writing is also at the expense of the Montserratians as the travel writer forces their readers to share a joke about Ras O'Reilly or other tourist attractions on Montserrat such as 'dreadlocked Murphy'.<sup>80</sup>

'[Q]uintessentially English',<sup>81</sup> with English place names (Wapping, Plymouth, Richmond) as well as Irish place names (St. Patrick's, Galway's, O'Garro's), where 'they still treat white folks as equals',<sup>82</sup> Montserrat is an island of contest and contradiction, where the Queen's Birthday is celebrated after the St. Patrick's Day festivities. Perhaps more so than the poems, calypsos, and histories of Montserrat, the representation of Montserrat with an Irish connection - as 'the Emerald Isle of the West' - is the most proximate instance of Pratt's 'transculturation'.<sup>83</sup> Though the travel writers manage their representations of Montserrat, as I have shown, they are to a large extent influenced by the Montserrat Tourist Board which is connected with the Montserrat Government, which is also influenced by the tourism industry and other travel writers. Thus, there is no sole control dictating Montserrat's tourist image, but there are people and organisations representing and marketing impressions of Montserrat, setting and predicting, initiating and framing, reporting and representing and marketing tourist encounters. Ras O'Reilly was unaware of his humorous representation by the travel writers, the disapproving point taken up by Laffey and myself. As an island, however, Montserrat is deliberately represented by those Montserratians involved in the tourism industry. This means that Montserratians are hardly the exploited, dominated, hosts in any 'host-guest' tourism relationship.<sup>84</sup> They shape and influence, invent and create, their own versions of 'Irishness', playing and contesting the traditional notions of Ireland; Africans cashing in on Celto-centrism, working the signs and seductions that the Ireland of Europe is known for - country friendliness, quaint charm, Gaelic myth. Transcultured, Montserrat sells herself with the intellectual fascination of the 'Black Irish', and bonus attraction of the Caribbean climate: Ireland with a black creole, a bit of the old sod in a tropical paradise.

Better than 'the real thing', no pale imitation or copy (quite literally?), impressions of Montserrat and Montserratians are represented by travel writers - the professional homeless<sup>85</sup> who have an imperative to both travel and narrate.<sup>86</sup> These writers are able to occupy what David Spurr describes as 'the position of visual authority': for him,

they maintain a panoptic control in their writing over all that they survey.<sup>87</sup> For me, there is a contest for the impressions of Montserrat. Spurr distinguishes between travel writing and anthropological monographs, but notes that this visual authority, this writing with a 'commanding view',<sup>88</sup> is found in both writing genres - not because anthropology's ethnographies are born out of colonial conditions, but because the author attempts to describe, write, and represent the social reality of their gaze. Spurr is looking for strategies of textual representation which do not hold 'a totalizing authority over the objects of representation.'<sup>89</sup> Spurr toys with Clifford's desire to overthrow not only the monologic authority of the ethnographer, but also the dialogic<sup>90</sup> and polyphonic experiments in ethnography which, for Clifford, are all present in ethnography in a discordant and incoherent manner.<sup>91</sup> Clifford is left behind as Spurr engages in Derridean deconstruction of journalism and ethnography: for Spurr, Clifford fails to overcome the "virtuoso orchestration" of author, or authors, engaged in polyphonic or even heteroglossic ethnographic writing - even authorial control shared between members of different cultures does not entirely loosen the authority of the scribe(s).<sup>92</sup> In other words, Derridean declarations (free-floating signifiers, fluid meanings, an unstable language without correspondence between words and things and thoughts)<sup>93</sup> allow Spurr to resist colonial discourse by 'maintaining a perpetual openness to the unexpected.'<sup>94</sup>

Spurr does well to examine the nature of authorial power and authority in travel writing and ethnographic forms of writing. His intent to break free from the authority of the writer is admirable, however mistaken. It is important for the reader to be aware of the authority of the author, and the nature of the text's production, particularly so when the text purports to represent social reality. In this thesis I have sought to locate myself in my writing, as well as show how my writing occurs; I want readers of my text to be able to fathom the tenuous connection between ethnography the social process and ethnography the written product. Rather than end with Derrida in my Conclusion, I stay close to Clifford: both Clifford and I partake in the examination and production of texts for authority and voice, we both examine and produce writing; I do this because I do not believe that it is possible for a text to lose its authority, no matter the number of authors, or experimental nature of the writing.

In *Orientalism - Western Conceptions of the Orient*, Said answers this epistemological problem and his own question - '[h]ow does one *represent* other cultures?'<sup>95</sup> - not by rejecting Western scholarship or the ability of written ethnography to represent reality,<sup>96</sup> but by arguing that texts about the Orient should be shaped by the experience of the Orient; there should not be an accumulation of each text on the Orient simply affiliating itself with other texts on the Orient.<sup>97</sup> This reminds me of Miller's critique of cultural studies which I mentioned in my Preface. For me, Said is simply forcefully reiterating anthropology's fieldwork ambitions.

Despite resisting the 'postmodern' label,<sup>98</sup> and though his *Orientalism* has been criticised for doing to Western scholarship what Western scholarship has done to the Orient,<sup>99</sup> I applaud Said's maintenance of meaning in his cultural analysis. In my work - in the ethnography which I have presented, and in the theory with which I have packaged the ethnography - I too have sustained an interrogation of meaning, and I have paid attention to the literary understandings of the reader, not just those of the writer. In so doing, I have queried our ability to give an accurate and authentic representation of reality - one of modernism's central tenets.<sup>100</sup> The results are not nihilistic or schizophrenic; I do not aim to de(con)struct the semiotic chain, rather, I suggest that there is some metaphoric looseness in the semiotic system, a factor which must be taken into account by the ethnographer typically writing an integrated ethnography with 'narrative closure and semiotic framing'.<sup>101</sup> Meaning, I am arguing, is not lost; meaning, as I mention in Chapter Two, is ductile: meaning - which is composed of the relationship between signifier and signified - works like a coil, sometimes tight, sometimes loose; hence, meaning is never precise, but always impressionistic.

I began this thesis addressing the impulse to write and connect with others. Let me, then, end my Conclusion in similar vein, by drawing upon Nietzsche where he opens his collection of thoughts, *Beyond Good and Evil*, by describing what philosophers hold as 'will to truth', an appetite for fundamental desires, eternal truths, and exact meaning.<sup>102</sup> This 'will to truth', Nietzsche - the relativist - criticises as an assumption which philosophers hold dear; Nietzsche, however, calls it a prejudice.<sup>103</sup> I suggest that this imperative, this 'will to truth', this modernist prejudice, lies at the heart of



both the human and inhuman sciences. This 'impulse to truth' (what Nietzsche derides as a 'mobile army of metaphors, metonymies and anthropomorphism')<sup>104</sup> - to understand, to order, to make sense and meaning, also lies outside the academic world. In this thesis I have attempted to show that not only does the anthropologist attempt to represent his own social realities (Chapter One), but so do other interest groups and expressive individuals: Dr. Fergus and the Maroon poets (Chapter Two); the development workers and Montserratians living and working on Montserrat (Chapter Three); the calypsonians (Chapter Four); Cheddy and the Pan-Afrikanists and port workers on the island (Chapter Five); the tourists, travel writers, local Government and Montserrat Tourist Board (Chapter Six and Chapter Seven).

In all these chapters I have represented impressions of Montserrat to the reader. These representations I have shown to be fleeting, partial, and impressionistic. I mentioned in the Preface that these impressions are an extension of Hume's 'perception of the mind'; in fact, I declared that they are a postmodern sensory phenomenism with the anthropological goals of Malinowski and Leach, the semiotics of de Saussure and Geertz, the semantics of Parkin, and the inchoate spaces created by Fernandez. Successive chapters represented some of the various collective (inter-subjective constellations) and individual impressions of Montserrat, exemplifying the calypso contests, poetic parodies, union struggles, *et cetera*. The reading of these ethnographic chapters as representations of impressions from contrasting and contesting groups and individuals should be a feature of not just my ethnography but of other ethnographies and attempted representations of social realities. In "writing about writing and reading impressions" I hope not to deride other writings but to open them out for impressionistic readings and revisionist interpretations such as Geertz's literary re-use of well-known anthropologists' work in Works and Lives - The Anthropologist as Author.<sup>105</sup> Here, perhaps, my constrained relativism, my sustained postmodernism, my constellations of shifting realities, my uncomfortable and uncertain anthropology may be of some use.

Underpinning even my fieldwork activities there was an intense 'will to truth' - a determination to "get to the bottom of things", an ethnographic ambition "to cover events" - to interview informants and friends at the end of the year despite our

previous conversations; to collect 'concrete' samples of newspapers, poetry, and travel articles representing Montserrat, to experience life on Montserrat by eating the local food and speaking the local lingo. I tried to become a believer, to become Montserratian. Despite this, I do not seek the end of ethnography as anthropological praxis, I seek just to problematise the assumption that reality at large can be precisely represented and pinned down.<sup>106</sup> Here, then, I propose my suppositionless anthropology.

To conclude my Conclusion, this chapter has both summarised the previous chapters in this thesis and drawn them together to show that the academic world thirsts after meaningful truths. This craving runs so strong, and so deep, that the academic world would rather create well-worked illusions feigning to be truth - a singular historical reality, one meta-narrative, and accurate and authentic representations of reality - than countenance an edifying plurality of realities, shifting positions, partial connections, and impressionistic realities. This thesis has taken an ethnographic location, Montserrat, and shown that a place is an arena of contest. It has shown that people represent their realities in expressive and creative - and in this case, individual - ways. Perhaps this suggests that we all carry this ordering desire which is manifested for some in writing, in singing, in reading, and in speaking.

When Rorty writes:

*[a]nything* can be discoursed of abnormally, just as anything can become edifying and anything can be systematized.<sup>107</sup>

I take this to mean that examples, ethnographic for instance - or 'naturalistic' as is the context of the philosopher's quote - can be brought in to flesh out any argument; that our examples illustrate our opinions. I can use my ethnography of Montserrat to build a theory of the Caribbean or further afield; I can use my ethnography of Montserrat to reify Montserrat from other islands and people in the world; or I can use my ethnography of Montserrat as a way of entering into a 'long [- challenging, contesting, probing, edifying -] conversation' with myself, Montserratians, anthropologists, and others. From this trio of possible directions, my postmodern choice approach to

Montserrat and anthropology has represented both as travellers' tales, as edifying impressions, rickety constituents of our meaningful edifice of signification.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> See 'The Past and the Present in the Present' (Bloch, *MAN*, 1977: 278-292) where Bloch argues that the past is used to inform and explain the present even though the past is not there in the present and it is challenged, manipulated and changed in and by the present. Bloch acknowledges the 'long conversation' term from Malinowski when Bloch writes that he uses Malinowski's 'view of the anthropologist's subject matter as a tool for criticising other theories' (Bloch, *MAN*, 1977: 278). By this, he understands Malinowski to mean what is 'taking place among the people with whom we live during field-work and in which we inevitably join' (Bloch, *MAN*, 1977: 278). This 'long conversation', I see as the change in anthropology from observation without participation to observation with participation in the local community, an important change in the direction of research in the social sciences.

<sup>2</sup> I am cautious as to the usage of the term 'reality' as in the ethnographic - textual - representation of reality, a translation and transcription of experience, an attempt to grasp the quality of being real, of resembling an original fieldwork experience, all of which postulate a distinction from the unreal, imaginative world.

<sup>3</sup> (Marilyn Strathern, *Current Anthropology*, June 1987: 251-280). This is also the central thesis to Paul Atkinson's book (1990). However, nowhere does Atkinson mention Jaques Derrida's contribution to post-structuralist thought with his attributed notion of 'the violence of the text' - that the practice of writing is a framing, concatenating movement to situate all signifieds (hence the need for Derrida's neologism 'différance' as a 'transcendental signified' to attack our logocentric desire for closure and fixed meaning: a desire for the universal, unilateral closure of signifieds, what Derrida describes as a 'war economy' (Derrida 1993: 5); see also Barbara Johnson's excellent Introduction and translator's notes (Johnson 1993: vii-xxxiii, especially pp.viii-x)). Again, let me reiterate from Chapter Two of my thesis:- when I refer to post-structuralist thought, philosophy, deconstruction, literary analysis, I take what I solely mean to use - no more, no less. For example, the general line of my thesis persists with the resilience of postmodernism and notions of creativity, individualism and representation. To explain and expand further, it is a part of my thesis that there is always a connection between signifier and signified, but that connection can be thought of as though a spiralling coil with sometimes a close connection and sometimes a loose connection. Unlike Fredric Jameson - who describes post-modernism under headings such as 'The Deconstruction Of Expression' (Jameson, *New Left Review*, July-August 1984: 58), 'Pastiche Eclipses Parody' (Jameson, *New Left Review*, July-August 1984: 64) and crucially - 'The Breakdown of the Signifying Chain' (Jameson, *New Left Review*, July-August 1984: 71) which leaves a Lacanian 'schizophrenic writing' devoid of meaning (Jameson, *New Left Review*, July-August 1984: 71) - I suggest that there is always some sort of semiotic and semantic connection, some tie between word and meaning, even if the words make no sense in reading. In the babble of speaking in tongues, for example, there is the intention of babble, and therein lies the connection and meaning: there is meaning even from intended purposeless - 'anomie'; there is sense even from intended nonsense. Meaning lies with intent: meaning is in the eye of the beholder and the beholden. To resolve this conundrum, Daniel Miller resorts to a 'kitchen-sink' ethnographic approach to retail and household material culture in 160 Trinidad households in *Modernity - An Ethnographic Approach - Dualism and Mass Consumption in Trinidad* (1994: 1-5, especially 2). Anthropology (rooted in ethnography) is faced by threats from the new disciplines such as Media Studies, Cultural Studies and Gender Studies (postulated upon theoretical and textual investigations). After my ethnographic baptism in the same Caribbean region, I reject Enlightenment postulations such as Miller's and I turn, instead, to metaphor and impressions, to a poetic inchoate which retains individual expressions, creativity, individualism, subjectivity and scope for endless play - to an art rather than a science of grammatology. This is where anthropology is making its newest contributions, where the anthropologist and the subject are claiming a return from exile and banishment, invoking ('evoking') postliminy - the authority of a voice in the clamouring milieu of competition and contestation. Thus, I claim a metaphorical reading, a use of tropes, an 'impressing' and an understanding that representing reality - for Derrida a 'labyrinth that includes in itself its own exits' - is but a collage of impressions (Mitchell 1992: 298, 299). One such example of impressing meaning upon people and places comes from the act of travel-writing which is described by Mary Louise Pratt as colonial meaning-making because of the essentialising gaze of imperial eyes (1994: paraphrased from 136, 153).

<sup>4</sup> 'Being here' and 'being there' is how Geertz frames the anthropological practice of doing ethnography and then writing ethnography (1989). At the end of the book, Geertz cites Stephen Tyler's postmodern approach to ethnography which favours 'evocation' rather than 'representation' (Tyler, 1986: 134, 136). This, as I mentioned at the start of this thesis, is taken up by Marilyn Strathern (1990: 8) where - after personal communication with Nigel Rapport - she notes that any comparison of evocative ethnography would be for 'aesthetic impact'. This, I believe, need not be the case unless comparison is taken to be a scientific activity

<sup>5</sup> By writing ethnography in the present tense, the reader is faced with an immediate account, one which impels the reader into the fieldwork site. The ethnographic present simulates the immediacy of the subject matter, situating the ethnographic period in the same temporal period as the reading of the text. For Paul Atkinson, the ethnographic present is a writing strategy employed to persuade the reader of the textual reality of the ethnography (1990: 83).

<sup>6</sup> Kevin Dwyer makes the point that the dialectical relationship between ethnographer and ethnography occurs for Geertz, and many academic writers, only in 'the privacy of the anthropologist's study'. It is there that the confrontation takes place because during the fieldwork period the fieldworker claims a passive role for 'himself'. In extensive footnotes further on, Dwyer notes that he is challenging 'the dominant anthropological view that the discipline's theoretical statements can be divorced from the anthropologist's anthropological activity, from his or her direct encounter with the Other.' Dwyer maintains a dialogic relationship with the Other - his subject - by presenting tape-recorded conversations with Moroccan Faqir Mohammed. This is as 'real' as he can make his ethnography of translated, edited, contextualised and analysed conversations, as though Dwyer has strong notions of the authentic, of what a strictly conversational text can give the reader, and of the strict division between the inquiring Self and examined Other (1982: 263, and footnote #6 - pp.277-280). I dispute all three notions, preferring to cast doubt upon his ability to present a 'true' and accurate reality in the reader's mind, preferring to blur the pre-, during and post- fieldwork phases which he holds, and lastly, preferring to break down this false dichotomy, this modern, Cartesian, binary division between Self and Other. For the reader, 'authenticity' may be more apparent in Nigel Rapport's conversational narrative journey around St. John's, Newfoundland (1987) rather than Dwyer's dialogues, Paul Rabinow's concentration on the fieldwork experience (1977), or Vincent Crapanzano's attention to the ethnographic and conversational encounter between anthropologist and informant (1980).

<sup>7</sup> 'Peers, Careers, and Academic Fears: Writing as Field-Work' (Hobbs 1993: 48).

<sup>8</sup> Because all authorial experiences and interpretive thoughts and impressions contribute to the author's text, it is not possible to distinguish between before/during/after fieldwork unless along the lines of physical presence at the intended ethnographic site, with the immediate collection of impressions from the arbitrary research site. This differs slightly from Cohen's 'Post-Fieldwork Fieldwork' article which queries the spatial and temporal boundaries of 'fieldwork' when carrying out long-term fieldwork (*Journal of Anthropological Research*, Winter 1992: 339-354). I would argue that this is the case for no matter the length of time considered to be carried out in the field, for I am querying and extending the boundaries of our notion of the field.

<sup>9</sup> See the foreword to Chapter One (Global Volcanism Network, e-mail, 19th July 1995). My departure from the Emergency Isle was swift and sudden; I left behind everything bar an emergency backpack and fieldnotes. I was due to leave the island six weeks later than I did. There were 'swarms' of earthquakes, ash was falling from the volcano, the sulphur smells necessitated surgical masks to be worn. The inhabitants in the part of the island to my south were compulsorily evacuated to the north where they stayed with friends or sheltered in temporary accommodation. Flights from the island were booked solid. A large number of Montserratian families and expatriates managed to leave the island to avoid the changes in the volcano which were occurring before teams of scientists, the British Army and Royal Navy arrived. Although it would have been very productive fieldwork observing and living through an international disaster, I left Montserrat because where I was living was deserted and evacuated: Plymouth was closed and became a ghost town; friends and informants had left the island, moved to the north or sent their wives and children to relatives on neighbouring islands. In these conditions I did not feel able to work, I feared for my personal safety, and I felt that it would be an abuse of my close relationships with people to continue to ask them questions, to interview them about their poetry, their calypso, or to just 'lime' as we had done before the start of the eruptions. In addition, with no official capacity on the island, I felt I was superfluous. And so I fled



to Antigua, intending to stay for a week to await developments. Montserrat's condition worsened and so I returned abruptly to Britain. From Britain, I have been monitoring the gradual build up of the volcano and the sudden change in life, a change more profound and lasting than the devastation of the 1989 hurricane, one which changes - forever - how people lead their lives on the island. More than most, I am writing an impressionistic (and perhaps synchronic) ethnography, more synchronic than other anthropological pieces because life altered just as I left the field site. I did not want to construct an ethnographic Montserrat here without alluding to such changes, to deflate the reader at the end of the narrative. But perhaps it is here that I too fall foul of the lust for ethnographic realism, and a consideration of historical change? The people, actions and activities and social commentaries continue, if in more pressing fashion than the direction hinted at in the Postscript (Associated Press, *The Guardian*, 5th August 1997, : 9). Cherrie left for Jamaica. She sent Laine to St. Kitts. The Montserrat National Trust, other organisations and shops from Plymouth, now operate out of houses to the north of the safety zone which splits the island along Belham Valley. Cheddy gave lectures abroad and returned to contest the Government in elections and on behalf of his Union; Prof. left for the States before the volcano trouble, ominously mentioning that he wouldn't return if there was any natural disaster on the island. This, then, is a postmodern account par excellence, one which moves on and fragments further as soon as the ethnographer leaves.

<sup>10</sup> See the foreword to Chapter Two (Ferguson, CaribTalk web page, 28th July 1995).

<sup>11</sup> See forewords to Chapter Three (Anon., *The Courier and Advertiser*, 26th August 1995: 13) and Chapter Four (Anon., *The Courier and Advertiser*, 6th September 1995: 4). It was interesting being interviewed for the latter article and having impressions of the interview turned into a verbatim text. I enclose this publication to convey my own self-representations, and to further disrupt the reader's narrative.

<sup>12</sup> See foreword to Chapter Five (Anon., *The Montserrat Reporter*, 22nd September 1995: 2).

<sup>13</sup> See foreword to Chapter Six (Stewart, *The Independent on Sunday*, 4th February 1996: 51-52).

<sup>14</sup> See foreword to Chapter Seven (Patullo, *The Guardian*, 28th June 1997: 17).

<sup>15</sup> See foreword to the Conclusion (Brabant, *The Daily Telegraph*, 30th June 1997: 12).

<sup>16</sup> (Tyler 1986: 127).

<sup>17</sup> Fergus and Browne are people with public images and profiles. Their representations are crafted, like the calypsonians, unlike the conversations with the development workers, unlike my rapport with Cherrie and the poets. Though I take public materials from the public realm, such as calypsos and travel articles, this is no fieldwork drawback. On Montserrat, people were very open, society was very close, and I was able to move through all sectors, attend a wide range of events and occasions from marriages to funerals, arguments and drinking binges to library meetings and Carnival costume workrooms. I was privy to a wide range of interaction on Montserrat and believe that there was not such a public/private distinction on Montserrat as there is in Britain; in addition, a year of 'long conversation' with people such as Cheddy, Dr. Fergus, Cherrie and Teknikal in a range of different situations entailing different tasks and burdens allowed me to gain a measure of consistency of opinion, relationship and interaction which was reflected in the final interview sessions I held with them (Cherrie declined an interview because her intentions were to write her own autobiographical exposé). In noting this public quality of material, which is inevitable when unintentionally researching these representations and impressions, I am making the reader aware of the bias to my work. However, audience reaction and local participation in and to such representations does provide a useful general gauge to such public representations and impressions: they often reflected and caught public moments, opinions, sentiments and perspectives; they were more than public expressions; they were more than economic activities; they were people expressing their condition, the condition of others, writing, singing and dancing social critics and commentators. I also acknowledge that their voices are but part of a choir, each with a different voice of Montserrat, and that their voices either rang out the loudest on the island, or their voices were the ones that I was able to tune in to whilst I was on the island.

<sup>18</sup> I was forced to concede the Abstract and Preface to this thesis.

<sup>19</sup> (Iser 1988: 216).

<sup>20</sup> (Goffman 1990).

<sup>21</sup> For the anthropologist, it is difficult to avoid Cartesian dualism - the distinction between mind and matter, which causes the problem of how they interact - a problem temporarily patched over by participant observation which attempts to match mental notions with physical actions. Richard Rorty

challenges this philosophical assumption by answering such questions as "Why should the mental be thought of as immaterial?" -- namely, why should the phenomenal be thought of as immaterial?" with answers such as 'Feelings *are* just appearances. Their reality is exhausted in how they seem. They are pure seemings' (Rorty 1996: 28, 29). However, *contra* Rorty, Ernest Gellner seeks to defend '[t]he Cartesian redoubt' from postmodernist relativists and religious fundamentalists with his brand of 'rationalist fundamentalism' or 'Enlightenment rationalism' which upholds the idea that there *is* a unique truth, but denies that any society can ever possess it definitively (1993: 24, 2, inside front cover). This is reminiscent of Geertz's case for cultural analysis when '[c]ultural analysis is intrinsically incomplete' (Geertz 1993[a]: 29). More sympathetic with Rorty than Gellner and Geertz, I contest what I would refer to as *the turtle's standpoint* - that in the final analysis there is one objective reality which can be subjectively interpreted. Recall, for example, Galina Lindquist's use of Maurice Bloch's socialisation amongst Malagasi swidden cultivators to show that though there are different 'culturally formed cognitive models of reality', they are all attendant to the universal, objective reality (Lindquist, *Ethnos*, 1995: 9):

[t]he reality outside, the forest, would be the same, existing before and after they walk through it; but, having formed different cultural models, they attend to the same reality in different ways.

The last part of the last sentence, repeated here from the Preface, epitomises, for me, the turtle's standpoint, a standpoint which I consider to be mistaken and akin to Max Marwick's imperial gaze upon the Cewa; this I will further explore below by developing an argument revolving around the anthropological implications for an impressionistic construction of subjective realities.

<sup>22</sup> Rather than define and essentialise 'culture' as a term, Alan Barnard and Jonathan Spencer, as good anthropologists, show how the term is used in an ethnographic history of anthropological usage: Herder and Tylor's culture as 'complex whole'; Ruth Benedict's humankind as 'culture-bearing animals'; Edward Sapir's disavowal of 'culture in society' with culture as 'world of meanings' guiding each individual's interactions; Radcliffe-Brown's dismissal of culture for the social relations of 'social structure'; Edmund Leach's culture as a 'social system' of diversity and cultural difference; Clifford Geertz and David Schneider's culture as a semiotic web of symbols and meanings. The authors end their 'culture' entry in their *Encyclopaedia of Anthropology* (1996: 136-143) by undercutting the 'culture-as-meaning' approach with post-structuralist and post-modern references to the instability of particular cultural meanings. And the authors end their entry by problematising the representation of culture (what Edward Said considers to be a highly politicised action), and the difficulty in extrapolating culture from everyday life when many people are using anthropological arguments about culture to suit their own purposes. The culture entry itself represents postmodern anthropology, expanding and problematising conceptualisations of culture through anthropological usage rather than narrowing and restricting definitions of the word. In this way, the entry exemplifies anthropology in practice - describing and reflecting the term or label as it is used rather than defining and over-determining the term or label with their understanding. Whilst the authors can be criticised for deriding 'culture as the cliché of contestation', and they can be criticised for presenting an historical overview as to the use of culture, one which does not escape the problems they recognise in the various conceptualisations, the authors' account is a successful anthropology of anthropologists, one which turns to all the practitioners of the word. In this way, Barnard and Spencer do to anthropologists what anthropologists do to other people, namely, 'anthropologise them', look at them and how they lead their lives and how they make sense of their interaction and behaviour with themselves and each other. From my commentary box, I participate in the same practice of anthropology, one which looks to the 'informant', one which is interested in the symbols and meanings used by the informant who represents their Montserrat along with their-selves. Hence, I am influenced by the work of Weber, Schneider and Geertz: I also recognise the perspective, and implicated practice, of the anthropologist; the diversity of meaning and world-views held by anthropologist and subject alike; and the difficulty in gaining access to the subject's world-view, let alone representing it as the anthropological impression that it is. Accordingly, my conceptualisation of culture concerns my informants and myself - at one and the same time my diverse individual selves, those of other individuals and those shared by groups of individuals - in effect, my cultures, Cherrie's cultures, Cheddy's cultures, behaviour and interactions, class behaviour and interaction as people see it and themselves, calypsonian culture, poets' culture, Montserradians' culture, expatriates' culture, black culture, white culture. In this way, I am on an equal footing with those I met and interacted

with on Montserrat. This is my postmodern anthropology which caters for *my* social construction of reality as well as the social construction of reality of others. Naturally, my construction predominates in my work. This is unavoidable, but a part of my social construction of reality is my ascription of realities and diverse meanings for others which I duly uncovered during my impressions on and of Montserrat. Herein lies my main theoretical assumption, that of personal, postmodern constructions of realities based upon impressions and representations.

<sup>23</sup> This private/public dichotomy is difficult to ascertain, confirm or reject. Dr. Fergus wrote personal poetry but published it publicly on the island or internationally. At Maroon meetings, he expressed a compulsive and sometimes uncontrollable love for poetry and writing. No doubt some poetry was very calculating whilst some was innocent of ulterior motive. As with many poets, Fergus saw his writings as a social commentary and as a social duty on the island. Less impressionistic than abstract poets, Fergus's interpretations of his own poetry deliberately play upon words, their meanings and local knowledge whether the reader is privy to such clues or not.

<sup>24</sup> By deeming the fire-fighters' calypso session private rather than public, I don't mean that it was private in a confidential sense of the word, here I am using private to indicate a relaxed, low-key, small group activity amongst a few friends. Lord Alfredo was one of several calypsonians I interviewed. I left Montserrat before completing several intended interviews with some very elusive calypsonians. However, I did manage to meet regularly with a number of calypsonians; I worked in the radio station going through calypso archives; and I built up an extensive collection of several artists' work.

<sup>25</sup> Both conversations are reconstructions from the evenings. Though not interviews, these representations capture the occasions in ways which are more 'representative' of the occasions than the textual reproduction of an interview which fails to convey the tone of voice, pace of delivery, emphasis on words, movement of the speaker, dress and setting, indeed, the context of the occasion which is at least as important as the verbatim record of the occasion.

<sup>26</sup> This is an adaptation of an important phrase which Geertz has written about interpreting Balinese cockfights: '[i]ts function, if you want to call it that, is interpretive: it is a Balinese reading of Balinese experience, a story they tell themselves about themselves.' Geertz treats this Balinese reading of Balinese experience as a story, with the view to extending 'the notion of a text beyond written material'. I would criticise this interpretive approach as 'his' Balinese reading of Balinese experience (Geertz 1993[a]: 448).

<sup>27</sup> From 'Thick Description: Towards an Interpretive Theory of Culture', (Geertz 1993[a]: 3-30, especially 28-29).

<sup>28</sup> (Geertz 1993[a]: 29).

<sup>29</sup> In addition, on page twenty-eight Geertz writes about his use of thick-description ethnography 'in the hope of rendering mere occurrences scientifically eloquent' (Geertz 1993[a]: 28). On the next page Geertz comments upon cultural analysis and his interpretive approach: '[a]nthropology, or at least interpretive anthropology, is a science whose progress is marked less by a perfection of consensus than by a refinement of debate' (Geertz 1993[a]: 29). And finally, Geertz concludes his 'Thick Description' chapter with the sentence, '[t]he essential vocation of interpretive anthropology is not to answer our deepest questions, but to make available to us answers that others, guarding other sheep in the valley, have given, and thus to include them in the consultable record of what man has said' (Geertz 1993[a]: 30).

<sup>30</sup> (Watson 1992: 138).

<sup>31</sup> (Geertz 1993[a]: 29).

<sup>32</sup> Here Geertz writes, '[y]ou either grasp an interpretation or you do not, see the point of it or you do not, accept it or you do not' ([a] 1993: 24).

<sup>33</sup> (Geertz 1993[a]: 448).

<sup>34</sup> Baudrillard's 'simulacrum' is described as 'the collective hallucination that there is something solid outside the system' such as natural values (Levin 1996: 280).

<sup>35</sup> (Carr 1974: 12).

<sup>36</sup> (Carr 1974: 8).

<sup>37</sup> I refer to the chapter 'Anthropology and History' by E.E. Evans-Pritchard (1962: 46-65) where he laments anthropology's ignorance of history but mentions that history has to move in the direction of social anthropology because anthropologists 'can observe behaviour directly and ask questions which elicit replies, whereas the historian can only observe behaviour in documents, and when he questions



them they are often dumb' (Evans-Pritchard 1962: 59). This suggests that the anthropologist is writing an informed history of the present, one based upon our social contact with the social reality of our informants. Claude Levi-Strauss, when criticising anthropologists of the younger generation who disdain to 'study any source materials or regional bibliographies before going into the field' so as not to contaminate their 'intuition', has written the following on the same topic: '[t]he problem of writing the history of a present without a past confronts ethnography' (1977: 12, 3). Although both anthropologists claim to consider history, they do so only for the period of ethnography and for the history of their subjects. Neither writer considers the historical separation in time between fieldwork ethnography and the writing of ethnography according to their conceptions and use of history. Rather than develop this criticism which I have already discussed following the recent work of Kevin Dwyer (1982) and Nicholas Thomas ('history and anthropology' entry in Spencer and Barnard's *Encyclopaedia* where he raises the interesting question - 'how can a multiplicity of constructions of the past and modes of constructing the past be acknowledged, without lapsing into an uncritical relativism?' (Thomas 1996: 275)), I would like to develop my own anthropological use of history.

<sup>38</sup> 'The Invention of Tradition: The Highland Tradition of Scotland' (Trevor-Roper 1992: 15). Trevor-Roper performs an historical archaeology upon 'national apparatus' (Trevor-Roper 1992: 15) such as the kilt, clan tartans and bagpipes. His aim is to criticise the false historical realities of the present by referring to his true historical realities of the past. The kilt was, for instance, according to Trevor-Roper, invented by an Englishman (Trevor-Roper 1992: 221-222); and tartan patterns were once the latest designs imported from Flanders (Trevor-Roper 1992: 18-19, 23). The consequences of such mistakes are 'a bizarre travesty of Scottish history, Scottish reality' (Trevor-Roper 1992: 29-30). In response, David McCrone suggests that our interpretations of the past take place in the context of the present. In *Scotland the Brand - The Making of Scottish Heritage* (McCrone & Morris & Keily 1995: 60), McCrone looks at how Scotland's past has been invented and reconstructed and commercialised by the tourist industry such that Scottish history has become Scottish heritage:

we have seen that the iconography of tartanry has a powerful if distorted history attached to it. Its significance, however, does not lie simply in that, but in the place it has in the cultural creation of 'Scotland' itself. It cannot be excised by a dose of historical realism, as was attempted by the English conservative historian Hugh Trevor-Roper in the Hobsbawm and Ranger collection *The Invention of Tradition* (1983). Its significance is anthropological, not historical.

<sup>39</sup> (Fergus 1994: 152).

<sup>40</sup> (Fergus 1994: 151).

<sup>41</sup> 'Culture by the Pound: An Anthropological Perspective on Tourism as Cultural Commoditization' (Greenwood 1977: 37-52). Greenwood has been criticised for being too synchronic in 'Time and tides in the anthropology of tourism' (Wilson 1993: 32-47). Both articles are taken up in a discussion of authenticity in 'Tourism, culture and the sociology of development' (Wood 1993: 59-60).

<sup>42</sup> (Greenwood 1977: 179).

<sup>43</sup> (Greenwood 1977: 178). The St. Patrick's Day public holiday has existed since 1985 and has featured slave emancipation displays through the streets, and jump ups between Plymouth and St. Patrick's to the south. In recent years, the commemorations have become celebrations, less a commemoration of a failed rebellion or slave emancipation, more a holiday celebration to make the most of a day off work, to congregate about the streets of St. Patrick's in the evening just like other village-day celebrations. St. Patrick's Day, unlike other village-day celebrations, is marketed to attract overseas tourists.

<sup>44</sup> (Wood 1993: 58).

<sup>45</sup> I take the following quotation from Wood's article (1993: 59). It originates from 'Tradition, Genuine or Spurious' (Handler & Linnekin, *Journal of American Folklore*, 1984: 286):

[t]he origin of cultural practices is largely irrelevant to the experience of tradition; authenticity is always defined in the present. It is not the pastness or givenness that defines something as traditional. Rather, the latter is an arbitrary symbolic designation; an assigned meaning rather than an objective quality.

<sup>46</sup> See the sub-section 'Toward an Anthropological Conception of Quebecois Culture', Chapter Five, 'Holistic Culture, Bureaucratic Fragmentation', (Handler 1988: 118-124). Handler's account of culture's involved convolutions with the world of politics is mentioned in Spencer and Barnard's 'culture' entry in their *Encyclopaedia* (1996: 142) as a problem to do with the definition of culture.

They mention resolving the problem by abandoning the talk of different 'cultures' altogether. The position which I favour is to not see this involvement as a problem. This is anthropology's postmodern condition.

<sup>47</sup> (Hanson, *American Anthropologist*, December 1989: 890-902). Here, too, I extend the anthropological debate between Holy and Marwick on the topic of witchcraft amongst the Cewa; wholly invented for Marwick, with real repercussions for Holy, another reality for me (Holy & Stuchlik 1983: 39; see also Holy 1976: 47-64). Belief systems present us with the best examples to work through these social science issues and questions.

<sup>48</sup> Yet again, I am taking this quotation from Wood (1993: 59). It originates from Hanson (*American Anthropologist*, December 1989: 888).

<sup>49</sup> (Ritzer 1996: 546). This is quoted from *Homo Academicus* (Bourdieu 1984: 11).

<sup>50</sup> See 'The Invention of Mind', Chapter One (Rorty 1996: 17-69). See also *Reality at Risk: A Defence of Realism in Philosophy and the Sciences* (Trigg 1980: 200) where he argues that an inviolable reality is open to various interpretations.

<sup>51</sup> (Sattin, *The Sunday Times*, 1st December 1996: 7).

<sup>52</sup> (Stagl & Pinney, *History and Anthropology*, 1996:122). Valverde describes many travel writing texts at the turn of the century as 'social-discovery texts of the time' (*Sociology*, August 1996: 493).

<sup>53</sup> (Geertz 1993[a]: 30; see also Louch 1966: 160).

<sup>54</sup> (Lawrence 1986: 69-88; see also Geertz 1993[a]: 412-455).

<sup>55</sup> (Hymes, *New Literary History*, Autumn 1973: 201, 196).

<sup>56</sup> (Archetti 1994). Signe Howell concludes her chapter in the volume by mentioning that we should be aware of 'the different relationships that operate in the construction of meaning: the text, the reader, the interpretative community, the writing - and never forget the ethnographic situation with the myriad of different people that gave rise to the text in the first place' (Howell 1994: 335). For me, Howell's resort to Fish's 'interpretive community' (referred from *Is There a Text in This Class?* by Stanley Fish 1980) to maintain some closure of meaning fuzzes the issue of meaning production. Howell's use of his thesis - that there are 'different relationships that operate in the construction of meaning' (Howell 1994: 335) - to claim that there are social conventions to reading adopted by reading communities such as the anthropological one, problematises the topic. Her belief in social conventions which embed the interpretation allow her to railroad over any 'idiosyncratic subjectivity', allowing her to preserve analytical objectivity under the guise of convention, allowing her to state firmly that 'subjectivity is an illusion and need not concern us' (Howell 1994: 326). Nigel Rapport, however, in a review of the book, makes the important observation that Fish's interpretive communities can be 'exegetically plural', that 'textual interpretation will more likely be multiple and inconsistent than singular and shared, even at one and the same event' (*Social Anthropology*, February 1997: 114). Similar positions to Howell can be found in the volume as the group of 'anthropological readers' - as they would describe themselves - privilege 'anthropological writings' above others. Thomas Hylland Eriksen - 'The Author as Anthropologist - Some West Indian lessons about the relevance of fiction for anthropology' (1994: 190) - writes about the use of Caribbean novels to a Caribbean regionalist anthropologist: 'What use, then, can we make of such novels? They cannot be used as plain ethnography since they do not profess to represent the truth and because their relationship to social reality is ultimately uncertain.' Similarly, Marit Melhuus - 'The authority of the text: Mexico through the words of others' (1994: 69) - describes the reading of native literature by anthropologists preparing for fieldwork as interesting but 'impressionistic and haphazard', contrasting presumably with readings and writings during and after fieldwork which are held more dearly amongst this anthropological interpretive community which is the last gasp by modernist anthropologists desperate to retain some semblance of meaning-making sense when considering the issues of reading, writing and meaning in anthropology and ethnography. Naturally, I interpret Rapport's writing about Fish's 'interpretive communities' as a rhetorical device to avoid equating ethnography with travel writing or Melhuus's impressionistic but 'haphazard' reading of native literature. It is an attempt to avoid the consequences of their theorisings, an attempt to smother an exploding and engaging discipline.

<sup>57</sup> (Bruner, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 1991: 240).

<sup>58</sup> (Bruner, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 1991: 241).

<sup>59</sup> (Stewart, *The Independent on Sunday*, 4th February 1996: 51-52).

<sup>60</sup> (McLaughlin, *The Sunday Independent*, 25th June 1995: 7L, no other references available).



<sup>61</sup> A point made by Robert Paine in conversation at St. Andrews University, 28th October 1996.

<sup>62</sup> See Chapter Seven, 'Edification by Puzzlement' (Fernandez 1986: 172-187, especially 175-176). In Chapter Nine, 'The Dark at the Bottom of the Stairs - the inchoate in symbolic inquiry and some strategies for coping with it' (Fernandez 1986: 214-238), Fernandez notes that an inquiry into symbolic productions 'excites the moral imagination' and 'arous[es] participants to a contemplation and greater tolerance of the centrality of ambiguity, paradox and dilemma in the human condition'; 'edifying by puzzlement' to coin an expression (Fernandez 1986: 222).

<sup>63</sup> Richard Rorty contrasts the 'edifying' philosophers such as Dewey, Wittgenstein and Heidegger with the 'systematic' philosophers such as Descartes and Kant when he writes:

[g]reat systematic philosophers are constructive and offer arguments. Great edifying philosophers are reactive and offer satires, parodies, aphorisms. They know their work loses its point when the period they were reacting against is over. They are *intentionally* peripheral. Great systematic philosophers, like great scientists, build for eternity. Great edifying philosophers destroy for the sake of their own generation. Systematic philosophers want to put their subject on the secure path of a science. Edifying philosophers want to keep space open for the sense of wonder which poets can sometimes cause--wonder that there is something new under the sun, something which is *not* an accurate representation of what was already there, something which (at least for the moment) cannot be explained and can barely be described.

See section two in Chapter Eight, 'Systematic Philosophy and Edifying Philosophy' (1996: 365-372, especially 369-370). We might place Ernest Gellner amongst the systematic philosophers, and Jean-Francois Lyotard - with his definition of the postmodern condition, 'incredulity toward metanarratives' - amongst the edifying philosophers (Lyotard 1992: xxiv).

<sup>64</sup> (Pratt 1992: 6).

<sup>65</sup> (Pratt 1992: 153, 34). Pratt does more than cite Buffon in her analysis of travel writing. For her, the travel writing narrative is intrinsically different to the scientific narrative despite the attempted merge of the two in journal accounts of scientific expeditions: '[i]nformation is textually relevant (has value) in so far as it bears upon the speaker-traveller and his quest. In scientific narrative, by contrast, information is relevant (has value) in so far as it attaches to goals and systems of knowledge institutionalised outside the text' (Pratt 1992: 77).

<sup>66</sup> (Mead 1977: 284-291).

<sup>67</sup> (Pratt 1992: 7, 6).

<sup>68</sup> (Simmel 1964: 353). Look to the 'Written Communication' section (Simmel 1964: 352-354) for an account of the diversity of Simmel's sociology (see also Sociological Impressionism - A Reassessment of Georg Simmel's Social Theory by D. Frisby, 1992). In addition, see Erik Cohen's use of Simmel's 'sociology of the letter' (Simmel 1964: 352) as an 'objectivization of the subjective' (Simmel 1964: 353) when referring to the personal correspondence between Thai prostitutes and foreign men (Cohen, *Anthropological Quarterly*, July 1986: 117).

<sup>69</sup> (Hanley, *The Tribune*, 12th August 1984: F-1).

<sup>70</sup> (Wykes, *The Canadian Travel Courier*, 7th February 1980: 9).

<sup>71</sup> (Kerr, *The Herald*, no other details available).

<sup>72</sup> (Solomon, *Travel-Holiday*, October 1984: 47).

<sup>73</sup> (Laffey 1995: 34).

<sup>74</sup> (Solomon, *Travel-Holiday*, October 1984: 46).

<sup>75</sup> (Thompson, *The New Brunswick Telegraph Journal*, 17th September 1983: no other references available).

<sup>76</sup> (Stoodley, *The Metro Telecaster*, 7th July 1979: no other references available).

<sup>77</sup> See also the above example of the conversation between the travel writer and the store proprietor who no longer stocks 'bitter lemon' because it is so popular (Maudlin, *GOLF*, February 1971: no other references available).

<sup>78</sup> (Bruner, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 1991).

<sup>79</sup> (Maudlin, *GOLF*, February 1971: no other references available).

<sup>80</sup> (Hamill, no other references available).

<sup>81</sup> (Stapleton, *Consort Hotels*, 6th June 1994: 1).

<sup>82</sup> (Maudlin, *GOLF*, February 1971: no other references available).

<sup>83</sup> (Pratt 1992: 6, and footnote #4, p.228). Pratt attributes this term to the Cuban sociologist Fernando Ortiz who sought a term to replace concepts of 'acculturation' and 'deculturation'. She found its first use in his description of Afro-Cuban culture (Ortiz 1947). In a more recent piece of work, however, Jonathan Spencer (*Man*, 1997: 2) mentions Malinowski's use of the term in 1938 (Malinowski, *Int. Inst. Afr. Cult. Mem.*, 1938: no other references available).

<sup>84</sup> See Smith (1977) for the use of this phrase which Bruner disputes for masking 'the commercial nature of the transaction' (*Annals of Tourism Research*, 1991: 241-242).

<sup>85</sup> Writing about migrants, Iain Chambers (1994: 246) makes the observation that there are 'an increasing number of people who are making their home in homelessness, there dwelling in diasporic identities and heterogeneous histories.' Why not include the travel writer as a paid up volunteer?

<sup>86</sup> (Arshi & Kirstein & Naqvi & Pankow 1994: 226).

<sup>87</sup> The Rhetoric of Empire - Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing and Imperial Administration (Spurr 1993: 16).

<sup>88</sup> (Spurr 1993: 16).

<sup>89</sup> (Spurr 1993: 187).

<sup>90</sup> Recall Dwyer (1982) and Crapanzano's (1980) representation of conversations and dialogues between themselves and another interlocutor.

<sup>91</sup> Clifford (1988: 54) writes that '[e]xperiential, interpretive, dialogical, and polyphonic processes are at work, discordantly, in any ethnography, but coherent presentation presupposes a controlling mode of authority.'

<sup>92</sup> (Spurr, 1993: 188).

<sup>93</sup> Norris makes a fair point when noting that if 'meaning is at once 'differential' and 'deferred', the product of a restless play within language that cannot be fixed or pinned down for the purposes of conceptual definition', then how can Derrida's 'différance' be explained out of the context of its text, if at all? (Norris 1987: 15; see also Sarup 1993: 3, 33-34). For me, meaning plays on a coil with Gellner at one end and Derrida claiming to be somewhere at the other end, I write 'somewhere' because there is coherence and order to Derrida's work such that his work does not illustrate his thesis.

<sup>94</sup> (Spurr 1993: 195).

<sup>95</sup> (Said 1991: 325, author's emphasis).

<sup>96</sup> This point is made by Asad in a review of Said's *Orientalism* (Asad, *English Historical Review*, July 1980: 648-9).

<sup>97</sup> (Said 1993: 328, 20). Building text about the Orient upon texts upon the Orient degrades knowledge about the Orient and maintains the doctrinal preconceptions about the Orient, Said argues (1993: 327-328). I believe that the same can be said for anthropological works which rely too heavily upon regional studies, including their own.

<sup>98</sup> Personal conversation with Said, Warwick University, March 1994. One reason for not adopting the 'postmodern' label can be that each postmodernist has their own postmodernism, and so it is difficult to present postmodernists as a coherent movement such as critics have done. Some critics wrongly lump all postmodern work together, trying to handle the work as one definable, comprehensive and comprehensible theoretical approach: postmodernism defined into a meta-narrative though against meta-narratives. Said may wish to avoid being caught up in other writers' works. Perhaps, by resisting the postmodern term, should postmodernism decline in public and academic respectability, then Said's works will not decline from prominence. Another reason for not overtly subscribing to the term may be because the term is so disputed even in its spelling and meaning: does 'postmodernism' mean after-the-modern, after the Enlightenment-scientific-rational-ideals, a reaction to modernity - connected with modernism as an historical development? Critics are already citing a 'post-postmodern' as an historical continuity from the 'postmodern' condition, something which is not possible with my conceptualisation of postmodernism. Can we not also raise the question that, without a reification of Modernity can then there can be no 'Postmodernity'? Furthermore, should the 'post' in 'post-modern'/'postmodern' be capitalised? My answer is that if any general coherence can be found in postmodern writings, then it is in the acceptance of some of Lyotard and Nietzsche's ideas; an acknowledgement of "the collapse of the metanarrative" in our society, a collapse which marks the end of "the will to truth", a prejudice and assumption which we are now able to acknowledge. However, by my reckoning, 'postmodernism' should remain fragmented, needing definition and qualification by each 'postmodernist'. Lastly, let me remind you

that, whereas I plunder from the work of Barthes, Derrida, and Jameson, I also discard much of their writings, and - caveat - that which I discard is as important as that which I plunder.

<sup>99</sup> See Dennis Porter's comments in his article 'Orientalism and its problems' (1993: 150-161). Porter argues that Said has constructed Orientalist scholarship as overly monolithic by presenting a 'unified character of Western discourse on the Orient over two millennia' (1993: 128). For a more detailed exposition of my readings of Said's work, and how *Orientalism* has been received, see my article 'Orientalists and Orientalism: William Robertson-Smith and Edward W. Said' (Skinner 1995: 376-382).

<sup>100</sup> (Walsh 1992). Because I do not subscribe to the tenets of 'Modernity', I disagree with Walsh when he describes modernity and post-modernity as the same (Walsh 1993: 3), though Walsh does give us some generally accepted workable definitions of Modernity. Modernity, writes Walsh, is 'the distancing from many of the processes which affect our daily lives' (1993: 1). From Habermas, Walsh notes that Modernity occurred when the modern world broke from the world of the Christian Middle Ages and antiquity (1993: 7). Accordingly, the modern age, then, has its origins in the Renaissance and is associated with ideas of modern science, the discovery of 'truth' and 'facts', and overarching theories - 'meta-narratives' (Walsh 1993: 7). So, in sum, modernity is 'a set of discourses concerned with the possibilities of representing reality and defining eternal truths' (Walsh 1993: 7); it is 'a belief in rational advancement through increments of perpetual improvement' (Walsh 1993: 7). This is what postmodernism can be described as being a reaction against.

<sup>101</sup> 'Modernist Anthropology and Tourism of the Authentic' (Harkin, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 1995: 665). Harkin links anthropology with tourism (1995: 667): both are exotic categories whose objectives are 'to construct some representation of the exotic, of the cultural other.' Though tourist experiences contrast with ethnographic experiences, '[the tourism] experience is framed at the episodic level by means of the semiosis of the sight, [whereas] the ethnographic framing at the level of fieldwork constitutes the field as a continuous flow of significant experiences' (Harkin 1995: 665). This assumes that the stay of the tourist and their experiences are more superficial than that of the ethnographer, a matter of opinion. However, Harkin makes some perceptive comments about the holistic framing of the ethnographic text and the ethnographic other, the native whose life is made coherent and 'readable' by the ethnographer; the anthropological notion of making the strange familiar by writing from the native's perspective, another ethnographic assumption (Harkin 1995: 665); '[t]he truly extraordinary assumption that, to the native, life as lived appears as coherent is largely a function of ethnographic narrativity.'

<sup>102</sup> (Nietzsche 1990: 33).

<sup>103</sup> (Nietzsche 1990: 33).

<sup>104</sup> See 'On Truth and Falsity in their Ultramoral Sense' (Nietzsche 1911: 171-192, especially 80).

<sup>105</sup> (Geertz 1989).

<sup>106</sup> Timothy Mitchell explores 'the citationary nature of Orientalism', the objectivity of ethnography, and the problem of representing reality. Taking the exhibition as an example, Mitchell renounces any clear-cut binary division between representation and reality by collapsing the distinction between the exhibit and the 'so-called real world "outside"' (Mitchell 1992: 312, 309). Homi Bhabha also resists simple binary divisions such as the division between Self and Other, and resorts to a psycho-analytical approach to collapse the Other into the Self (1994; see also Skinner, *Cascando*, Autumn 1994: 73-76).

<sup>107</sup> (Rorty 1996: 387, author's emphasis). Here (1996: 380), Rorty continues his argument that philosophy should not 'center around the discovery of a permanent framework for inquiry.' Unlike Habermas, Rorty heads off in the direction of cultural anthropology rather than search for transcendental systems for analysing functions of knowledge in universal contexts (paraphrased from Rorty 1996: 380-381). To understand how Rorty makes use of the desire for edification as opposed to the desire for truth, I cite the following qualifications Rorty makes (1996: 360, author's emphasis) when he writes:

I shall use "edification" to stand for this project of finding new, better, more interesting, more fruitful ways of speaking. The attempt to edify (ourselves or others) may consist in the hermeneutic activity of making connections between our own culture and some exotic culture or historical period, or between our own discipline and another discipline which seems to pursue incommensurable aims in an incommensurable vocabulary. But it may instead consist in the "poetic" activity of thinking up such new aims, new words, or new disciplines, followed by, so to

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speaking, the inverse of hermeneutics: the attempt to reinterpret our familiar surroundings in the unfamiliar terms of our new inventions. In either case, the activity is (despite the etymological relation between the two words) edifying without being constructive - at least if "constructive" means the sort of co-operation in the accomplishment of research programs which takes place in normal discourse. For edifying discourse is *supposed* to be abnormal, to take us out of our old selves by the power of strangeness, to aid us in becoming new beings.

**Postscript:**

## **Eruption reaches Montserrat capital**

A VOLCANIC eruption on the island of Montserrat sent super-heated gas, rock and ash tearing through the deserted capital Plymouth, apparently setting alight homes and buildings abandoned two years ago. Plumes of smoke and flame could be seen from Salem, a town about 5 miles to the north in an area considered safe from the Soufriere Hills volcano.

It is the first time the fiery debris has reached Plymouth, evacuated along with the rest of the southern half of the island when the volcano sprang into life in July 1995. The deputy chief scientist at Montserrat Volcano Observatory, Jill Norton, said eruptions in the past few days had filled a ravine on the volcano's south-western flank and left Plymouth exposed.

Eruptions in the past two years have prompted nearly half of the British colony's 11,000 residents to flee. --AP, Salem.

(Associated Press, *The Guardian*, 5th August 1997: 9)



## References

In this thesis I have utilised a diverse array of sources - letters, journals, manuscripts, tapes, files, newspapers, photocopies, guidebooks, advertisements, anthologies. To facilitate future research on Montserrat, references are as full as possible and have been arranged in numerical fashion.

1. General references	330
1.1. General references	330
1.2. General poetry volume references	341
1.3. General music references	342
2. Montserrat references	343
2.1. Montserrat references	343
2.2. Montserrat music references	346
2.3. References to Howard Fergus's work	347
2.3.1. Fergus - anthologies	347
2.3.2. Fergus - histories	347
2.3.3. Fergus - histories cited from newspapers	348
2.3.4. Fergus - poems cited from newspapers	348
2.3.5. Fergus - forthcoming	348
2.4. Montserrat travel writing references	349
2.5. References to Montserrat news pieces	353
2.5.1. Chapter prefaces and postscript	353
2.5.2. <i>Pan-Afrikan Liberator</i> pieces	354
2.5.3. Montserrat newspaper pieces	356

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