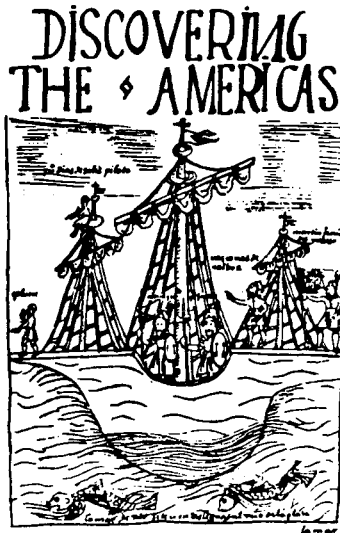


Nancie L. González

**Próspero, Calibán and Black Sambo
Colonial Views of the Other in the Caribbean**



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Próspero, Calibán and Black Sambo

Colonial Views of the Other in the Caribbean

Introduction

Interpretations of the themes in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* are legion, as befits the immortal bard, for the play and its characters are extremely complex. George Lamming suggested more than twenty years ago that the play might be read as an allegory of the colonial experience, and it is to that idea I wish to address myself here. In the Caribbean area, from which the name Calibán (and its anagram, cannibal) certainly derived (Taylor 1958), the biological and cultural fusion of Amerindian, African and European began immediately upon the arrival of Columbus. Literary works such as *The Tempest* (first performed in 1611, and published in 1623) and Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* (1688) may be seen as indicators of contemporary European views of the encounter, and especially of the ways in which Amerindians and Africans were compared and contrasted.

One of the most interesting lines in *The Tempest* is that in which Calibán reflects that had he succeeded in bedding Miranda, he would have populated his island with their half-breed children (Act I, Scene II). Audiences of Shakespeare's time must have been titillated by the thought, but relieved that this had not happened, for the possibility of miscegenation between Amerindians and Europeans was certainly a fact of life. But even more common, especially in the Caribbean area, was the early hybridization of African and Amerindian, and it is significant that the character traits attributed to Shakespeare's Calibán, like Behn's Prince Oroonoko, are in many ways an amalgam of the European views of the African slave on the one hand, and of the free, wild Amerindian on the other. They also combine a certain romantic and reluctant admiration for antipodal man with a deep-seated prejudice against his different looks and ways. These two characters, of course, are literary devices, products of the authors' imaginations, rather than faithful presentations of actual human types, yet they are startlingly close to the way in which a group I have studied at length – the Black Caribs or Garifuna – were portrayed in the 18th and early 19th centuries by French, British and Spanish observers.

It is curious, in view of the fact that hybrid populations sprang up all over the New World at an early date, and that Europeans should

have been sensitive to ways in which phenotypes changed as a result of interbreeding, that there should have been such misunderstanding and misrepresentation of it, either in literary or in documentary sources. Most English chroniclers of 16th, 17th and 18th century Caribbean life, unlike Shakespeare and Behn, tended to portray themselves and ethnic "others" in one-dimensional racial/ethnic terms, almost exclusively based on skin color (see various in Dudley and Novak 1972-73). Among the British, people were labeled "white," "black," or "red" (sometimes "yellow") at first, and only much later did a proliferation of terms develop, many borrowed from the Spanish, to whom we owe such terms as (among others) "negro," "moreno," "mulato," "pardo," "mestizo," and "zambo" (or sambo), the last referring specifically to the mixture of African and Amerindian, especially in Central and South America. The British were less imaginative, using "coloured" to refer to any mixture with Europeans, or borrowing terms from other languages. These terms were vague, at best, when applied to individuals, but led to absurd heights of confusion when applied to entire ethnic groups, for they ignored and obscured the fact that there would have been variations in color and other racial characteristics from one member to another within any mixed population.

This paper will describe the encounter of Amerindians, Africans, and Europeans that on some Caribbean islands resulted in the virtual demise of the first two categories and the formation of a new ethnic group that fascinated, confused, annoyed, and terrified most Europeans – including those who at some point became their allies. The term "Black Caribs" was purely an invention of the Europeans; the first word describing the most salient characteristic they associated with Africans – their dark skins – and the second adopted shortly after the first encounter, a modification of a native Caribbean term – *Kalina* (pl. *Kalinago*, or possibly *Galibi*, close to Spanish *Caribe*) – which came to mean, in European thought, "savagely wild, fierce," and worst of all, "consumers of human flesh."

Ignorant of the concepts of heredity and culture as we know them, most Europeans of that day confused the two, and explained the latter in terms of the former. Thus, physical differences among human populations were thought to account for variations in cultural patterns. Given this idea, it followed that people with different phenotypes practiced different customs and belonged to different sociopolitical entities. Skin color, then, became the primary marker and symbol of cultural, as well as racial difference, and I shall argue that in the Lesser Antilles this mistaken notion caused Europeans to

imagine a nonexistent rift between the so-called "yellow" or "red" Caribs on the one hand, and "black" Caribs on the other.

The corollary to this was that people with the same skin color should be assumed to have everything in common, so early European attitudes and policies fostered the physical and political union of "blacks" everywhere, regardless of the extent to which various of the latter shared genetic or cultural traits. (The fact that such unions did not always succeed only underscores my point.) One ironic outcome was the formation, on the island of St. Vincent, of a new ethnic group that, in spite of its obvious debt to Africa, and its proclivity to absorb foreign blacks, persisted for some 300 years in believing and proclaiming itself to be purely Amerindian, in defiance of British and French classification efforts.¹ The retrospective anthropological eye, however, detects both physical and cultural hybridization at a time when neither was readily understood or accepted in Europe.

But how did the various peoples actually behave toward the others, and how did the peculiar racial beliefs of the Europeans affect the ways in which the Americans and the Africans viewed each other? I believe that European influence was instrumental in structuring all ethnic intercourse in the Caribbean area from at least the mid-17th century onwards. Although circumstantial evidence suggests an early rapprochement between the Africans and the local population, in time each group came to view the other pejoratively as they more and more saw them through the eyes of the dominant Europeans. In order to illustrate my points, I will compare the interracial and interethnic relations among several groups on the island of St. Vincent in the Lesser Antilles in 1795-96 during what was called the Carib War, with those on the coastline of Central America, to which place the defeated Black Caribs were sent in 1797.

The Lesser Antilles, 1500-1750

Upon arrival of the first Europeans, there seem to have been three main linguistic groups among the indigenous peoples in the larger Caribbean, although they were further divided into numerous sociopolitical units with local identities. The first, a relatively small group of food gatherers in Western Cuba we call the Guatabaney,

¹ Kerns (1984) has found documentary evidence showing that the Black Caribs of British Honduras have had high rates of interethnic mating for generations, even though they fervently deny that fact.

became extinct before their culture was well described. The second – Arawak-speaking Taino chiefdoms of the Greater Antilles – also were quickly decimated by disease and warfare, leaving the so-called Island Caribs of the Lesser Antilles, who were the people most frequently encountered by the British and French in the southern Caribbean from the middle 16th through the 18th century. Research has shown the language of the Island Caribs to have been basically Arawakan, although the men also spoke a pidgin based upon South American Cariban (Taylor and Hoff 1980).

The origin of all the indigenous peoples encountered in the Caribbean is believed to have been the Tropical Forest area of South America, the migrants having moved northward via the Guianas and the Orinoco River. Most archaeologists believe the ancestors of both the Island Caribs and the Taino arrived in the islands at about the time of Christ, later diverging into two cultural and linguistic groups known as the Taino and the Igneris (Rouse 1987: 300). Ethnohistorical and linguistic evidence suggests that the Igneris were later infiltrated or conquered by succeeding groups of South Americans – whether of Cariban or Arawakan speech being still unclear. The latter are known to scholars today as the “Island Caribs,” to distinguish them from their South American collaterals; to Columbus and his successors, they were simply “Caribs.”

The inhabitants of the Lesser Antilles defended themselves and their settlements against European attacks more effectively than did their traditional enemies, the Tainos. As a result, they came to have a reputation in Europe for being beyond Christian salvation, suitable only for enslavement or extermination. Many accounts suggest that they waged offensive, as well as defensive warfare, with the object of destroying ships, settlements and lives, but also of capturing both Europeans and their African slaves, the latter arriving in increasingly larger numbers from 1517 onward.

Although the Island Carib belief system included the idea that ritual ingestion of parts of their enemies’ bodies would humiliate the victims, as well as enhance the diner’s spiritual well-being, the bulk of our information suggests that they did not view either Europeans or Africans as being suitable for this ceremony.² Presumably, these

² Myers (1984) argues strongly against the idea that the Island Caribs were cannibalistic, but the evidence seems to me to suggest otherwise. Their practice was to take small pieces of meat into their mouths, which they then promptly spat out, cursing and reviling their enemies. Thus, it was said, they spiritually refreshed themselves and reconfirmed their victory.

foreigners would not have produced the same psychological and spiritual results as the flesh of their own kind. Rather, they often kept such captives in their own homes, ultimately trading some of them to Europeans for money or goods (Rocheport 1666:323-4). But some, especially the Africans, they put to work in their gardens, later integrating them into their communities as second class citizens and providing them with wives. Thus, interbreeding came about easily and inevitably, probably almost from the beginning of the encounter.

On the island of St. Vincent there were some special circumstances that led to its becoming virtually the last stand of the Island Caribs and the "birthplace" of the Black Caribs.³ St. Vincent was one of the more attractive and hospitable of the Lesser Antilles for several reasons. The island was relatively large, fertile, well watered by substantial rivers in which ocean fish spawned, near good ocean fishing banks, had a plentiful supply of land crabs and other fauna, and contained a wooded mountainous interior with many valleys and meadows suitable for cultivation and habitation, although difficult of access to those unfamiliar with the terrain. It was easily reached by seaworthy canoes from Dominica, St. Lucia, Martinique, Grenada, Trinidad, and Barbados. Today it is generally accepted that Africans arrived there by various means; some were shipwrecked near its shores, others were captured from nearby islands and brought there by Caribs, and still others escaped from various islands, making their way to what had become known throughout the Caribbean as a safe haven.⁴

The earliest amateur ethnographic descriptions of Caribs were not made for more than 100 years after the initial encounter, so it is not surprising that some African culture traits might already have become embedded in Carib culture by that time (see Bianchi 1988, González 1988). In fact, by the 1650s several European observers had

³ Island Caribs mixed with Africans on other islands as well, especially on Dominica, where a small group calling themselves the Karaphuna, still resides. However, most of them were overtaken by the events of the 18th century and were either exterminated or joined their more successful brethren on St. Vincent, which had a more favorable environment for a larger concentration of people than did many of the smaller islands.

⁴ Bianchi (1984:525), basing herself on records relating to shipwrecks and the slave trade in the area at the time, argues that the African ancestors of the Black Caribs must have come primarily from Angola, Benin, and the Gold Coast. Slaves from the Gold Coast of Africa were said to be especially expert sailors (Long 1774:403), and many escaped from Barbados in their masters' boats. But I should emphasize that we do not as yet have more definite evidence of the ethnic origins of the Africans who arrived at St. Vincent.

commented on the presence on St. Vincent of many blacks who lived with and like the Amerindians (Gullick 1985:44). The culture traits introduced or influenced by Africans included rectangular house styles, drums, selected religious beliefs and practices, and some music and dance patterns. It is probably more accurate, however, to postulate syncretisms between similar trait sets. For instance, both the Island Caribs and South American Arawaks, like most Africans, revered their dead ancestors. Present-day Garifuna rituals and ceremonies, as well as many descriptions from earlier times contain elements from both culture areas (as well as from Europe), and the resulting whole resembles both, or neither. Thus, it is impossible to attribute these rituals to one or the other of their parent cultures in the face of such clear blending. Other cultural elements, however, certainly of Carib origin, were retained intact, or nearly so. These include the elaborate technology used to convert poisonous yuca or bitter manioc into the edible flatbread known as cassava; the manufacture of several different types of basket, including one that was water-tight; head-binding for both sexes, as well as the cosmetic binding of women's legs at the calf; and most importantly, perhaps, the language. Linguists have failed to find more than a handful of possible African loanwords in modern Central American Carib, the only extant form of the language, which, nevertheless, has borrowed heavily from French, English, Spanish and Miskito (Holm 1978).

In spite of the overwhelming evidence that early Amerindian/African relations had been relatively benign, if not friendly, the Europeans largely assumed otherwise. From both the 17th and 18th centuries we have European accounts of hostilities among rival Carib groups on St. Vincent. These do not appear to deviate from long-standing Carib chiefdom raiding patterns, yet the European accounts frequently portray the animosities in racial terms – as arising between what they perceived as darker and lighter-skinned Caribs. I am not convinced that these were based on race, or indeed, that there were political units of different “colors” among the Amerindians.⁵ Rather, I believe the European view

⁵ It is interesting that this unidimensionalism can be detected even among some modern anthropologists and historians. Gullick (1985:50-2), e.g., seems firmly convinced that there were Yellow Caribs and Black Caribs, easily distinguishable, and that the latter eventually killed or drove away the former, thus explaining the eventual discrepancy in their numbers. Never does he consider explanations offered by population genetics. I have read the same accounts, and I believe they are biased along lines suggested here. Certainly, there were frequent disagreements or hostilities among Carib groups, but I believe the Europeans introduced the racial (color) factor as an explanation. The distinction may well have been adopted by some of the

stemmed from their basic assumptions about race and culture, as just described, exacerbated by a change in their attitude toward Amerindians, who were replaced as the primary threatening "Other" in the area after 1700 by the increasingly large presence of African slaves. The fact that the number of escapees throughout the Caribbean increased steadily throughout the 18th century must have been an important factor in this new view, for the maroons, as they were called, provided a refuge for slaves they enticed into joining them. At the same time, they also lost no opportunity to raid European plantations. Red or yellow Caribs were seen, in comparison with blacks, as harmless, docile, friendly creatures. Europeans could fall back upon the romantic notion of the Amerindian as noble savage, blaming the blacks for having decimated the latter after first accepting their hospitality. On St. Vincent, Europeans supposed that the Black Caribs were in fact escaped Africans who had killed the Amerindian men, then taken their women as wives - exactly the pattern by which an earlier mythology claimed "warlike" Carib invaders had overwhelmed the "peaceful" Arawaks in a previous period. The Africans were said to have then adopted the Amerindian culture in order to camouflage their slave origins. It was even said that they took to deforming the heads of their infants so as to avert suspicion (Russell 1778,2:99; Martin 1836-37, 2:236; Coke 1808-11, 2:182).

I suggest another scenario: that individual Africans became acculturated when and as they escaped and took refuge with the Caribs. Since most of the escaped slaves were males, their children would have had Carib mothers, who believed that bound heads were beautiful, and who taught their children to be Caribs, even though they had physical characteristics different from their own. Black Caribs differed from most other African "maroon" societies elsewhere precisely because they were an amalgam. The sociocultural patterns and rules of their Amerindian ancestors, perhaps combined with other strengths inherited through their African fathers, evidently enhanced their survival, both before and after the takeover of their island by Europeans.

European political arrangements also contributed to Black Carib ethnogenesis on both St. Vincent and Dominica, since those islands had been set aside as Carib reserves by an agreement between the

warring groups in order to gain assistance from Europeans. It does not seem coincidental that it was more often the lighter-skinned (Yellow?) Caribs who were said to have sought help from Europeans.

British and French in 1659-60 (Oliver 1894, (1:xxvii), and again in 1748 by the Treaty of Aix la Chapelle. The fact that the Europeans – especially the French – violated the spirit of this agreement almost from the first, gradually infiltrating and settling on Carib lands on St. Vincent, set the stage for what happened in 1795.

Reciprocal Ethnic Relations

In this section I will describe evidence concerning racial and ethnic relations in two settings – St. Vincent during the Carib War (1795-96), and Central America during the first decades of the 19th century. As I will show, in 1795 there were several groups of what I have called “ethnic actors” on St. Vincent. I have loosely identified and labeled them as follows: Black Caribs; Red or Yellow Caribs; French settlers; British settlers; British military, including regular troops, local militia, and West India Regiments recruited in Africa; resident African slaves; and French “brigands” – black, white and mulatto.

My second, comparative situation immediately follows the first chronologically and will amplify the argument with illustrations from the Central American Caribbean coastline at the turn of the 19th century. In that setting, the ethnic actors included Black Caribs; non-Carib free blacks (French, British, Spanish); Miskito Amerindians, called Zambos; British settlers (missionaries, merchants, woodcutters); British representatives of the Crown; African slaves; Spanish colonial officers; and Spanish-speaking settlers – a mixed category, including peasants newly arrived from Spain, white creole peasants and townsmen, Catholic religious personnel, and mestizo and mulatto peasants and townsmen.

Racial and Ethnic Relations on St. Vincent on the Eve of the Carib War

1. Yellow Caribs/Black Caribs

St. Vincent in the 1790s contained people from several different racial and ethnic backgrounds. Many had some African heritage, but the descriptions and identifications given by contemporary European observers are vague, confused, and often inaccurate. If there indeed were two politically and ethnically separate Carib groups –i.e. Blacks

and Reds or Yellows – it appears that most observers were unable to distinguish between them with any precision (Miller 1979).⁶

As the 18th century wore on, the darker Caribs became more numerous, and thus, more prominent in dealings with Europeans, and by 1796 it was estimated that there were no more than two or three families of “yellow” Caribs left on St. Vincent (Anderson 1983:44), although other sources suggest there may have been some 100-200 (Young 1971:18). In any case, there must have been relatively few Caribs who did not show some degree of intermixture, and there would have been darker and lighter-skinned individuals within single families. A photograph by Ober in the 1890s, showing a group of “Yellow Caribs” on St. Vincent, clearly shows that they too had an African genetic heritage (Ober 1895, reprinted in González 1988).

Suffice it to say for now that the Caribs of St. Vincent, regardless of their color, may have numbered as many as 10,000 at the peak of their ascendancy there about 1770. Losses through disease, warfare and a major hurricane left them with perhaps only 7,000-8,000 on the eve of the major conflict during which the British tried to rid themselves of these people whom they considered intelligent, but devious, obstinate, warlike, and a hindrance to further development of the sugar economy on the island. The local planters sought to kill or deport them all; for the London-based officials, they were a resource that they hoped to employ to British benefit elsewhere, as we shall see.

From 1763, when the British first took formal possession of St. Vincent after the Treaty of Paris, negotiations about land purchases and the cessation of hostilities seem to have been primarily with persons they defined as Black Caribs. The British were frequently frustrated by the lack of a Carib paramount chief or king, and in spite of the fact that they were often told during negotiations that not all the chiefs were in agreement, they persisted in behaving as though they had achieved a treaty with all of them whenever they succeeded in persuading some of them to go along with their schemes. In 1768 twenty-three chiefs acquiesced to a proposal to purchase their lands, but the records do not throw light on how many more there may have been who refused, nor whether there were any Yellow Carib chiefs either for or against such sales (Young 1971: 38).

⁶ Craton (1982, Plate 16) shows a photograph of a painting that earlier historians identified as representing “Maroons” on Grenada. Craton suggests it may actually portray Black Caribs during the signing of the 1772 agreement on St. Vincent.

At the end of the Carib War, when more than 4000 surrendered or captured Vincentian Caribs were interned on the small offshore island of Baliceaux, there were said to have been only 102 Yellow Caribs among them. These were returned to St. Vincent instead of being deported to Honduras because the British could not believe that the Yellow Caribs had been involved in the war. When later forays turned up guns and ammunition in the huts of some of those they had thought were yellow, the British settlers, if not the home government, changed their minds about the allegiance of the latter, although still assuming them to be distinct from the blacks (WO 1/767:367).

There was never a suggestion in the European accounts that they were dealing with just one people whose skin color was variable. Repeatedly, when their expectations concerning what they perceived as the distinct character of the Yellow Caribs were not fulfilled, they merely expressed surprise. Although the British thought they had successfully captured and deported most of the Blacks, leaving only Yellow Caribs on St. Vincent, later sightings of what were purported to be Black Caribs persisted. Since even the Yellow Caribs showed African admixture, it is likely that these distinctions were primarily in the minds of the Europeans, that what may have been a Yellow Carib to one was seen as a Black Carib by another, and vice versa.

Today on St. Vincent the Carib culture has nearly disappeared. However, there are still some people who retain a sense of Carib identity. For the most part they do not distinguish among themselves in terms of yellow and black, although in modern times such identifications may sometimes be made or elicited (Gullick 1985:1-2).

2. Caribs and French Settlers

In addition to the Caribs on St. Vincent, there were some 1,450 French and British whites and nearly 12,000 slaves on the eve of the Carib War. The French white settlers, numbering 700 in 1763, lived primarily in the western, or leeward, part of the island. After 1763 the English settlers gradually insinuated themselves throughout the French-held areas, especially in the south, and succeeded in displacing the Caribs from much of their land, as well. They replaced the French small plantations of cacao, indigo, cotton and coffee with sugar as a monocrop, and indiscriminately destroyed forests in the Carib areas for the same purpose. By 1783 the number of French had declined to less than 500, and sixty-one British sugar estates had been established on the island (Martin 1837, 2:220). From at least 1770,

the Caribs, now mostly Black, periodically harassed these plantations, burning fields and houses, and often carrying off the slaves, some of whom adopted the Carib mode of living and, so far as the records indicate, *became* Caribs in an adoptive sense (Young 1971: 25, 38, 53).

Because I believe the Yellow and Black Caribs to have been essentially of the same racial and ethnic group, I will here treat them as a unit. Initial encounters between the French and the inhabitants of St. Vincent in the early 17th century had not been friendly, and several Jesuit missionaries were killed or driven away. This led to a show of French military force in which several coastal villages were completely destroyed. Gradually, however, as French small farmers moved in and trading relations were established, the two groups settled into a quasi-friendly co-existence. Even so, at times the French seem to have promoted hostilities between their closest Carib neighbors and those in other parts of the island, perhaps as a means of establishing a buffer to protect their own holdings. Some Caribs learned to speak French, and many loan words from that language were incorporated into everyday speech. Many, but certainly not all, accepted the Catholic faith at some time during this period. Most reported French given names when interviewed by Spanish authorities after their arrival in Central America in 1797 (Dambrine 1797).

From 1667 onwards the Caribs sided with the French against the British throughout the Caribbean, an alliance that by 1795-6 was reinforced by the spirit of the French revolution, as well as by the Caribs' increasing fear of being displaced, if not enslaved by the British as the latter escalated their sugar production on St. Vincent. At the same time, there is evidence of considerable ambivalence in Carib-French relations. It may be that neither side really trusted the other. Modern Black Caribs, or Garifuna, believe the major foe in 1796 to have been the French, and most of the Carib oral traditions throughout the centuries have blamed that nationality for having provoked wars in which the Caribs took the brunt of the fighting (Beaucage 1970:46, González 1988:16-21, Gullick 1985:81). It was the French who surrendered to the British on St. Vincent in June, 1796, leaving the Caribs stranded; although weak from disease and hunger, the latter fought on for nearly five more months.

It is clear that the Caribs – formidable guerrilla fighters and excellent marksmen – were an enormous asset to the French in their wars with the British (González 1990). During the 1795-97 conflict the numbers of French on St. Vincent were augmented by the arrival of white, free black, and mulatto Frenchmen from the neighboring

islands, most of whom took shelter among and were fed by the Caribs in the northeastern highlands and the adjoining windward coast. Together these forces briefly recaptured St. Vincent in 1779 and came close to winning the Carib War in 1796. The French struggle, of course, extended to the entire Caribbean, as well as to much of Europe, and the loss of one small island could not have meant to them what it did to the Caribs, for whom it was their ancestral homeland.

3. Caribs and British Settlers

Although there had been a series of incidents with the British over the years, it was not until 1763, when the latter formally acquired St. Vincent, that the Caribs began to interact with them on a more regular basis. At first they spoke no English, and even later they often pretended not to for tactical reasons. But as it became clear that the British were on St. Vincent to stay, the Caribs, or some of them, began to find ways to accommodate themselves to their new neighbors and potential adversaries.

Despite their refusal to embrace the Protestantism of the British, they did seek to learn to read and write English from Methodist missionaries in the 1780s (Coke 1793:308). Some adopted English given names, and according to Anderson (1983:65) male children often were placed as servants in English homes on St. Vincent. Chiefs frequently paid friendly visits to plantation houses, exchanging gifts with the owners, and leaving good impressions among their hosts. It is likely that at least some of this behavior was designed to spy upon these powerful new Europeans and to learn their ways in an effort to defend themselves when the need arose. Indeed, I have elsewhere interpreted the Caribs' ultimate survival in part as a result of their having learned diplomatic skills effective with Europeans (González 1988:46). It is also possible that some factions of Caribs chose to align themselves with the British throughout. Some accounts suggest that certain chiefs were closer to the British than others, and in the final deportation, the British appointed two brothers to be in charge of the entire group.⁷

It is important to note that Carib relations with the British officials appointed by the Crown were somewhat different from those

⁷ These were completely rejected by the Caribs who landed on Roatan, either because they were not chiefs in their own right, or because they were perceived to serve the British rather than their own people.

with the planters and settlers. The latter had come to fear Carib harassment and depredations, and increasingly wanted them either destroyed or off the island altogether. Although there was a softer attitude toward the so-called Yellow Caribs, even these were finally considered undesirable, and although ultimately given some lands upon which to settle, they were never accorded any respect or dignity after the 1796 defeat.

In late 18th century England, on the other hand, the press was often critical of the way in which indigenous groups were treated in the colonies. This caused the government to insist that the defeated Caribs be treated with courtesy and kindness. All of the accounts written by the military officers of the time show considerable regard for the welfare of their prisoners. The naval physician who attended them during an epidemic of what may have been either typhus or yellow fever on Baliceaux seemed genuinely sympathetic to their plight (Dickinson 1797). After an earnest plea from Major John Wilson, in charge of the deportation, a second supply ship was loaded in England to be sent to Roatan, a real expense in view of recent food shortages in England. Without doubting the goodwill of some of the officials on the spot, the acceptance of such apparently humane recommendations by British officialdom no doubt reflected the latter's expectation that the Caribs would take over the island of Roatan, defend it against the Spanish and eventually assist the British in defending their illegal possession of Belize. All these hopes were shattered when news was received that the Caribs had defected to the Spanish at Trujillo (WO 1/799:759).

Relations between Black Caribs and African slaves, including those recruited as Rangers to hunt down the Caribs in their mountain fastness, will be treated in the section below. There was one other section of the British military, however, that deserves comment here. Several units, known as the West India Regiments, were made up of slaves recruited directly in Africa to fight in the West Indies during the 1790s (see Buckley 1979 for the definitive treatment of this institution). Three of these units participated in the Carib War; one accompanied the Caribs as guards on the journey to Honduras, another was detailed to "mop up" in Carib country following the deportation, since local slaves recruited as Rangers too often deserted. The same regiment was then employed in keeping the territory formerly occupied by Caribs clear of runaway slaves (CO 260/16).

In 1817 what was left of the Fifth West India Regiment – the only one never to have served in St. Vincent – was retired to Belize. One

may wonder whether the selection of this particular regiment for a part of the world which by then harbored numerous Black Caribs, was entirely coincidental! Certainly, all the other West India Regiments would have had personal memories of St. Vincent and the Carib War and/or its immediate aftermath (Liss 1984), and there might have been problems between them and the Black Caribs, who by then had settled in the territory.

4. Black Caribs and Slaves

There is no doubt that at least by 1763 and continually thereafter, the Black Caribs feared being confused with slaves, and since such a large part of their ancestry had escaped from that condition, they would have taken every precaution to avoid being returned to it. The persistence of Amerindian culture, especially in its outward manifestations such as body paint and head deformation, was very important in this effort, as was their esoteric language. To be called "curly-head" was considered a great insult, and daily grooming included the straightening and slicking down of their hair with palm oil (Gullick 1985:). The abandonment or rejection of slave status was eventually subsumed in their denial of any African heritage whatever, a stance that is only now beginning to change in Central America and is still apparent in the way in which modern St. Vincent Caribs compete with the African slave-derived population on that island.

However, these 18th century reports also suggest some ambivalence in Carib attitudes toward slaves and their culture. One observer (Anderson 1983:67) remarked that Black Caribs stopped shaping their children's skulls during the late 18th century due to disparaging remarks made about the practice by other blacks. The John Canoe dance, still performed by Black Caribs in Central America and the United States, was most likely adopted from the slave culture on St. Vincent (Dirks 1976). Taylor (1951:152) believed that Belizean Carib riddles had been acquired through contact with non-Carib blacks in the Caribbean before the deportation. The same may explain Maypole dancing, English games and nursery rhymes, and certain elements of English food and dress among Central American Caribs today, although these may have been adopted from slaves or freed blacks in British Honduras as well or instead. These comments and observations suggest that the Caribs were sensitive to the values and opinions of other black folk, at the same time that they professed great contempt for them, and that some level of intimacy had developed between the two groups on St. Vincent, as well as in

Central America. Let us briefly examine the view from the perspective of the slaves.

The British slaves on St. Vincent were taught to fear the Caribs – in part to discourage their running away to join them. In battle, the Caribs were said to have been “extremely formidable [...] they neither give nor receive quarter” (Craton 1982:181). Their fierceness was directed equally to all enemies, regardless of their color, and especially so when they were defending their homes and lands. Although the Rangers – a locally recruited slave militia – were praised for their efforts in the Carib War, the overall impression one gets from the descriptions is that they were quite ineffective militarily in comparison with the Caribs.

It has also been suggested that the Caribs and slaves competed in the Kingstown market-place (Turnbull 1795:5; Edwards 1819, 4:15-16), that the slaves were envious of the Caribs’ freedom, and that they coveted their land. Some of them may have volunteered to fight the Caribs with the thought that they might defect and join them, or that they might be rewarded with freedom and land when and if the Caribs were defeated. One way or another, some of them did achieve this. In 1804 a hidden village was discovered on St. Vincent, inhabited jointly by Caribs who had escaped deportation and runaway slaves (WO 260/19).

Finally, there is incontrovertible evidence that some of the Black Carib chiefs themselves were slave owners at the time of the Carib War. Although earlier reports of Caribs enslaving Africans may well have been confused with the custom of bride-service, times had changed by the late 1700s, and it seems possible that some of the chiefs were emulating European plantation culture by growing cash crops using slave labor, albeit on a small scale. Forty-four slaves were identified among the captives sent to Baliceaux in 1796-97. These were said to have been returned “to their owners,” or, if no non-Carib owner could be identified, resold. It is not clear that the 44 were all enslaved by the Caribs, but one source states that two Carib chiefs between them owned nine slaves who worked in their cotton plantations (Young 1971:300). Thus, late Carib slave-holding seems to have more resembled that of the French than of the British or early Caribs. In part, this may have been a function of the small

size of their holdings. But the principle had been established, and could not have endeared them to other slaves, had they known it.⁸

5. *British and French*

Although it is sometimes thought odd that two groups of exploited and oppressed blacks might consent to fight each other in colonial situations, less attention is given to the fact that white Europeans, sharing a good deal of history and culture, might do the same. Most of the combat troops in the British Caribbean efforts were Irish. In fact, most of the actual fighting was done by mercenaries throughout much of modern European history, and the question then arises as to whether the Caribs might be considered as having been mercenaries attached to the French, as the West India Regiments and the Rangers were to the British. As mentioned above, there were really very few white French settlers left on St. Vincent in 1795. Though they might have preferred a French government to a British, even that is not entirely clear, especially considering the events following upon the French Revolution. Nevertheless, most of them did take up arms against the British on behalf of themselves and of France. They were joined in that endeavor by what the British called "Brigands," described by Craton (1982:181) as "Black irregulars eager to preserve their recently granted freedom, supplemented by black and *white* [my emphasis] militiamen." He points out that in 1795 such people had organized themselves as guerrillas in many of the northern French islands – especially Guadeloupe, Grenada, St. Vincent, and St. Lucia. The British invaders were faced with resistance in all of these, as well as with nearly simultaneous uprisings in St. Domingue (Haiti – then occupied by Britain) and in Jamaica in 1795.

In St. Vincent, the French forces, including regular troops, local militia and brigands, surrendered on June 10, 1796. Seven hundred and twenty-five brigands were taken prisoner on St. Vincent, and in August were ordered to England, along with another 600 from the islands of St. Lucia and Grenada. Instructions were to keep blacks separate from whites "as much as circumstances permit" (ADM/MT/416), showing that racial considerations overrode national or ethnic animosities. But fear of infection from yellow fever

⁸ There is also the possibility that these were serving some kind of indenture. Possibly they had agreed to work in this capacity for a specified time in return for being harbored and eventually freed. There is no evidence known to me that can settle the question one way or another.

caused the British to return them immediately to France instead. The officers were treated with special consideration, being allowed to keep their swords and uniforms, and local settlers were not deported, but sent back to their farms after declaring their allegiance to Britain. The virtual abandonment of the Caribs by the French regulars and most of the irregulars at this time does suggest that the French saw them as mercenaries, and may explain why the Caribs still remember the French as having been their enemies.

Central America, 1797-1900

1. Caribs and Non-Carib Blacks

The British deported some 2500 persons from St. Vincent, along with an unknown number of captured black brigands from other islands, in March, 1797. After a difficult month-long trip during which many were very ill and an unknown number died, about 2000 were unloaded on the southern coast of the island of Roatan off the coast of Honduras, within sight of the port of Trujillo. Although British accounts describe all of their passengers as having been Black Caribs, a careful reading of Spanish sources suggests otherwise. Shortly after their arrival the island was visited by the Spanish military governor of the coastal provinces. He found two separate groups of people – one on the northern shore and another on the south coast near where the British had originally landed them at Port Royal. A spokesman in the north informed him that some of the people on the island were French, others English, but most, like himself, were Caribs and owed allegiance to no European king. All of his group desired to remove themselves to the mainland, and begged the captain to take them back with him. He demurred, but informed them that if they pledged allegiance to the Spanish king henceforth, they would return at a later date and take them to Trujillo (Rossi y Rubi 1797).

Although it is not clear how they finally made the crossing, nearly 1800 Black Caribs were registered upon their arrival in Trujillo in October of 1797. Most had French given names; only a few reported surnames of any sort and less than a dozen names were indigenous (Dambrine 1797). I have found no mention of any non-Carib blacks transferred from Roatan to the mainland, but I believe it likely that there were some included in the group that the Spanish defined merely as “Caribbean blacks.”

In 1797 there were already other groups of blacks living in or near Trujillo and along the Central American coastline. The earliest mention I have found of blacks in this area is from 1653, describing maroons, presumably escaped slaves from Belize or from the interior of Guatemala, living in the Rio Dulce area, where they preyed upon travelers and caravans along the principal route to Guatemala City (AGCA A1.12/31537/4060).

In 1720 there were similar groups living at the mouth of the Motagua River, today the border between Guatemala and Honduras and only a day's canoe trip from the Rio Dulce (Feldman 1975:3). At about the same time there was a settlement of blacks at Chiquimula, about 50 kilometers inland. Descendants of this group later claimed their ancestors had escaped from Belize and been given land by the Spaniards (AGCA A1/53400/6048); a similar settlement developed at San Benito in the Peten area of what is now Guatemala.

During the 18th century the British had, in addition to their large settlement in Belize, 16 other communities between Black River (also known as Río Tinto or La Criba), Honduras, and Gracias a Dios, Nicaragua. In all of these, as well as in Belize, the population was predominantly black and enslaved; in time its character changed as both black and white men mated with local Amerindian women and then with the mixed offspring of these first encounters. Slavery on this coastline was quite a different kind of institution than on the plantations of the Caribbean. The primary work of slaves was cutting logwood (for dyes), and later, mahogany. Parties of workmen went into the interior for months at a time, often under the supervision of another slave. Needless to say, many simply disappeared into the forests; without a support group, however, life in the wilderness would have been difficult, perhaps impossible. As the number of maroon groups increased, the danger of losing slaves in this way increased. The Spaniards, in an effort to increase their own free work force, often assisted British slaves to desert. Nevertheless, British slavery remained a strong institution in Belize until emancipation in 1834, long after the British Mosquitian settlements had been routed by the Spanish in 1789. When the latter occurred, many of the slaves in those settlements simply remained behind, continuing to live on the land and intermarrying with the already mixed coastal population.

Cox (1984) has noted that blacks and mulattos captured after uprisings in the Caribbean were frequently "dumped" along the Honduran coast. Some of these may have found shelter with the Miskito or other indigenous groups, whose phenotypes today often reveal considerable past interbreeding with Africans. Others may

have joined black or mulatto communities already resident on or near the coast.

By the late 1790s there was, however, a somewhat more sophisticated group of black immigrants, refugees from what is now Haiti. These had been trained in formal military combat techniques and were quickly recruited by the Spaniards as a standing militia in Trujillo. They were given land and encouraged to settle and establish families. Given the fact that they had few women among them and that the sex ratio among the immigrant Black Caribs was about two women for every man, it seems likely that there was an early fusion of the two groups. Black Caribs in Livingston, Guatemala, told me in 1956 that their town had been founded by a Haitian, a tradition consistent with this hypothesis. An account of a visit to that town by a Frenchman in 1860 related the existence of an elderly French-speaking chieftain or "captain," who may have been the actual founder (Valois 1861). Some broken French was still known by a handful of people in Livingston in the 1950s; they insisted they had learned it at home and not in school.

The parish records of the Catholic church in Trujillo provide interesting information on the way in which Europeans viewed the black people of that city in the early 1800s. Baptisms and marriages generally provided some background information, when known, concerning the families of the principals. Some individuals were classified (whether by themselves or by the officiating Spanish priest is not clear, but I suspect it was the latter who made the determination) according to race, which was sometimes congruent with ethnicity, but more often based on color. Thus, people of African ancestry might be labeled "negros," "pardos," "mulattos," or "morenos." Miskitos were generally referred to as such, without comment on color, although occasionally the term "Sambo Miskito" or "Sambo" without other designation, might be used. Black Caribs were at first sometimes termed "Caribes" or "Caribes Morenos," but eventually they came to be called simply "Morenos" — a term usually defined as "dark one," but which came to be used as an ethnic, rather than racial indicator, in Central America. It is still the most common term by which the Garifuna are known along the more remote Honduran coast today, used even by themselves, and in reference to their language, as well.

In comparison with the modern Caribs of St. Vincent, those in Central America today are more uniformly black in color, although certain Amerindian phenotypic characteristics, including blood types, testify to their mixed origin (Crawford 1984). Yet the concept of

being "yellow" is non-existent; nor do they recall having heard of any such division on St. Vincent. Neither do most modern Garifuna specifically name blacks of non-Carib origin as ancestors. Even the Haitian founder of Livingston was said to have been a Carib. Despite what they claim, I have witnessed, in the course of ceremonies in honor of the ancestors, the "return" of several non-Carib individuals whose spirits possess their living descendants. In every case these were local Amerindians – either Miskito or Kekchi – and not more than two or three generations back. When I pressed informants on this, they admitted that there has been some intermarriage, although they otherwise tend to deny it (Kerns 1984). Older people in 1956 told me that their "race" had once been white, with blue eyes, and they pointed to occasional albinos in the community as "proof," – calling them "throwbacks." Dreams in which shamans learn their craft almost invariably include the vision of an old man with white hair and skin and blue eyes who instructs them in the secrets of their ancestors. No one ever suggested to me that he was other than an ancestor himself, presumably a Carib.

More recent black immigrants, having been brought to the Central American coast from Jamaica and other islands by the United Fruit company in the early 1900s, are called "ingleses" (English) by themselves and others. They, along with the Miskitos and Bay Islanders, still speak English and are proud of their English cultural inheritance. The Caribs have an ambivalent attitude toward these people, as they do toward the Creoles of Belize and as they did toward slaves on St. Vincent. On the one hand they claim to despise them, sniffing that they are descendants of slaves. Yet, they take to heart with shame and anger the standard reply that their own ancestors were primitives, perhaps cannibals.

2. *Miskitos/Caribs*

For more than 100 years before the arrival of the Black Caribs the Miskitos had been the British military mainstay along the coastline from Gracias a Dios to Belize. Their ties to the British had been strong enough to withstand numerous attempts by Spain to infiltrate the Miskito ranks and win them to their own cause. The establishment of indirect rule through a Miskito kingship (Helms 1971, Dennis and Olien 1983) that mimicked the royal establishment in England seems to have been a primary mechanism by which this loyalty was maintained. Gifts of "royal" paraphernalia, including items of dress, coronets, swords, and jewelry, as well as of arms,

ammunition and liquor, were also instrumental. Even today there are individuals who identify themselves and are recognized as members of the "royal family," and many Miskitos continue to harbor a certain resentment against having been incorporated into countries of Spanish language and culture.

In 1797 when the Black Caribs arrived in the area, the British crown ordered Belizean officials to foment good relations between them and the Miskitos, hoping thereby to win the Caribs over to the British side in the struggle for hegemony in Central America. As early as 1807 the Caribs of Trujillo, for reasons that neither documents nor oral tradition have elucidated, fled to the Mosquitia where they lived for some years under the protection of a powerful and well-known Miskito leader. During that time they adopted various items of Miskito culture, including a few loan-words (Holm 1978), some foods, and perhaps other culture traits. There is no doubt that they also intermarried, for, as suggested above, there are Garifuna today who still remember and revere occasional Miskito "grandfathers" during their ancestor rites. There are probably also Miskitos who knowingly or unknowingly have some Black Carib genetic inheritance.

But between 1797 and 1850 the once numerous and fearsome Miskito nation declined in both numbers and power. British attempts to get them to work for them or to convert to their protestant religion met with failure. They were widely viewed as being hopelessly lazy, untrustworthy, and addicted to alcohol. No longer called upon to serve as warriors, they became desultory horticulturalists and foragers, dependent upon European largess and an uncertain market for forest and sea products. Helms (1969, 1971) has described them as adapting to a cycle of "boom or bust" situations over which they have no control.

3. Caribs/Europeans

Black Caribs, on the other hand, experienced a population explosion after 1797, while at the same time building a reputation for hard work, honesty and reliability. They became the preferred workers in various coastal enterprises, and gradually displaced the Miskitos in British eyes as the most favored "indigenous" population. Archaeological evidence shows that their settlements once existed in many spots along the entire Honduran territory that has traditionally been thought to have been the Miskito stronghold (Cheek and González 1986). As the 20th century wore on, many of these were

abandoned by Black Caribs who increasingly preferred larger towns – especially the principal ports, or villages close to them, where wage labor could be employed. Before 1832 they were avidly sought by both Spanish and Creole revolutionaries as mercenary soldiers (González 1990), and throughout the century by the British as woodcutters and for their skills in transporting passengers and goods by small seacraft. British colonial government officials in Belize warned the settlers in vain not to employ them – citing their reputation as smugglers and for being untrustworthy because they so often made independent decisions. Despite all the warnings, they continued to interact ever more frequently with whites, adopting what they wished of their culture, but maintaining their own traditions as well.

By 1900, when a modernizing fruit industry was shaping the development of the north coast of Honduras and Guatemala, the Caribs were indispensable as stevedores and as servants and lower-level office and shop workers in the ports. They proved unsatisfactory as plantation workers; perhaps this was still too much like slave labor for them to be attracted to it, or more likely, it required residence inland away from their beloved sea, both practically and symbolically their highway home. Yet, when West Indian blacks were brought in to do the agricultural labor, the old animosity between Carib and non-Carib black was reawakened and strengthened.

In Belize there is still today a certain distance between Caribs and Creoles, the latter descended from people who were still enslaved at the time of the Caribs' arrival in that territory, but who adopted the English culture and outlook as they moved from slavery, to freedom, to middle class status. In 1956 I was informed by an educated Creole woman I had met in the United States that the Caribs were uneducated, uncouth, untrustworthy, and prone to smuggling, murder and cannibalism. Yet later I discovered she had a Carib grandmother!

British missionaries in the early 1820s found no cannibalism, but they were shocked and appalled by what they considered the Caribs' paganism, and they despaired of converting them to Methodism; yet, the Caribs were eager and apt pupils in English and other school subjects. By the second quarter of the 20th century, they dominated the ranks of teachers throughout the colony.

Nevertheless, in the early days the slaves were considered more educable because they were more prone to religious conversion, and by the time of their independence, most of them belonged to one or

another of the “dissident” protestant churches – especially the Methodist and Baptist. What the missionaries failed to appreciate was that the Caribs had already been converted to Catholicism, which tolerated their ancestral rites so long as they held them in relative privacy and secrecy, and continued to observe Catholic rituals and practices. The slaves, on the other hand, had not previously been Christian at all, and there is no record of any indigenous organized or formal (African) religious activity having been preserved among them.

Ironically, although much of their secret lore was African in origin, the Caribs continued to deny this, as well as any genetic debt to that continent until well into the 1960s or 70s. Only after massive migration to the United States following World War II, where they witnessed the rise of black power, did they begin to acknowledge their African heritage, and even today it is largely the younger, more acculturated Garifuna who do so.

Conclusion

I believe the best explanation for the confusion that has existed in the documentary and ethnohistorical literature over the racial and cultural definition of “yellow” and “black” Caribs is that the distinction was a figment of the European imagination brought about by ignorance and fueled by the political economy of the times. My reasons for coming to this conclusion are as follows: 1) The numbers of darker-skinned in the Amerindian population would have increased over time because of continued adoption of African runaways and captives and their incorporation into the breeding population. 2) Some lighter-skinned individuals would continue to be born, even to darker-skinned parents, due to the continued presence of recessives in the gene pool. 3) There is no evidence of any “revolt” of the blacks against their supposed Amerindian oppressors, nor are there any consistent data confirming two distinct political or ethnic groups. 4) No Vincentian Yellow Carib chiefs are ever named in the documentary sources, nor were any treaties made with them by the British. The French were said to have dealt with Yellow Caribs, but that was a century earlier, when presumably most were “yellow,” meaning lighter-skinned. 5) My suggestion disposes of the problem that the Central American Caribs have no recollection of any political division based on color, and the fact that such a distinction sometimes arises in St. Vincent today can be explained by the teachings in

government schools, which derive primarily from the British version of history.

These specifics are more meaningful, however, when considered as an aspect of the problems Europeans had in dealing with the concepts of the "wild man" and the "noble savage" in relation to culture on the one hand and race on the other. Rousseau, writing at the midpoint of the 18th century, and the Jacobins who dominated the philosophy of the French revolution, were more interested in the inequalities of their own social order than in the morality of colonial ethnic encounters. Their reference to "noble savages" was primarily a protest aimed at Christian notions of original sin and the evils of civilization, by which they meant the established "old guard" in Europe. Dissident Protestant voices spoke up all over Europe on behalf of slaves as abolitionist movements took shape and gained momentum during the same period, but their conception of fair treatment for these unfortunate people was total acculturation and adoption into the mainstream of European (i.e. Christian) life – in other words, annihilation of the sociocultural category of "slave" – in itself, commendable. The slave, however, was not seen as a culture-bearing creature, but as a utilitarian, undecorated empty vessel, needing to be filled with the elements of enlightened European civilization. There was no question then of an African heritage – again, out of ignorance and self-pride, Europeans considered Africa devoid of culture. Slaves were not the "Other" – they were nothing.

During the early years of the encounter the native Americans had been seen as the "Other" – despite the fact that many wondered if they could really be human. Attributions of cannibalism and of unusual abilities, such as being able to detect enemies approaching from the rear, were made. The Island Caribs, especially, commanded considerable awe, although they were considered fit primarily for enslavement or extermination. They were admired at the same time that they were feared. However, as their numbers declined, and as those remaining on St. Vincent were increasingly seen as having been conquered by blacks, the respect given them during an earlier period diminished.

Somewhere along the way, stereotypes of each group changed. By the mid-18th century Black Caribs were thought to be more dignified, more intelligent, more formidable, and more worthy of European respect than were either the imaginary and legendary Yellow Caribs or the African slaves. Their leaders were known by name and reputation, as well as by sight. The Yellow Caribs were seen as weak and subject to disease, but harmless, docile, and childlike, while the

slaves were strong and hardy, but largely untrustworthy and liable to either rebel or run away if not properly restrained. It must have been difficult for the European mind to reconcile these two personality types in one, even though Shakespeare and Behn had been able to do so a century earlier; simpler by far to simply postulate two racial-ethnic categories – one black, and one yellow. Yet, under the hate rhetoric aimed at Black Caribs is an unmistakable admiration and respect never accorded their lighter-skinned brethren.

It comes as no surprise, then, that the lighter skinned Caribs, thought to have been “purer,” did not fare better at the end of the Carib War. Although they were repeatedly described as being gentle and harmless, there is no evidence that they were treated on an equal footing with either the Black Caribs or with Europeans. Indeed, there seems almost to have been a benign, patronizing, neglect of their image during the Carib War period, when they were not even granted the dignity of recognition as the enemy. Individuals with light skins were suffered to stay on in St. Vincent when their darker brothers and sisters were deported, but their lot during the following years was not pleasant, and they were certainly not prosperous. Although also an Amerindian-African hybrid, this fact was overlooked or downplayed, and they were apparently viewed as a kind of degenerate, or adulterated remnant of the fearsome natives who once ravaged European ships and settlements and who had been highly respected as formidable foes. As individuals in 1796-97, they were saved from deportation, at the cost of their dignity and their loved ones – sacrificed to a European mythological construction. They ended by being scorned and/or pitied. Yet, if my above hypothesis is correct, this stereotype is really all that remained, for the Yellow Carib was no more and no less than a Black Carib – a true Garifuna.

Although in the final analysis the darker skinned Caribs were classed as blacks, they were seen as members of an autonomous nation that fought valiantly before being defeated. This grudging respect reminds one of how Shakespeare portrayed Calibán, and perhaps may be seen as a concession to the Caribs’ Amerindian heritage which, having nearly disappeared, was now granted “noble savage” status. Behn’s Prince Orinooko also combined the qualities of African and Amerindian, although her portrayal of him has uncomfortably European overtones.

In a real sense, miscegenation spelled survival for both the Amerindian and the African, thrown together in the Caribbean in the sixteenth century. The Africans contributed a new genetic and cultural stimulus to a rapidly diminishing population, and the Caribs provided

the Africans with a foraging and food-producing technology, well adapted to the environment, as well as with a fierce reputation and a political “cover” in their bid for freedom. The Caribs’ final revenge might be seen in the fact that they managed to continue interbreeding with blacks as they chose, while at the same time denying that fact in view of the European’s disparagement of that race. Unlike Calibán, they did manage to populate their island with half-breed offspring whose biological and cultural success story has become a classic in anthropological annals. The resulting ethnic group, known for nearly three hundred years as Black Caribs, was indeed a creation of the encounter, and one that evaded enslavement, survived wars, deportation, and continued acculturation to European ways before finally succumbing to the idea that its members were merely another among many groups of blacks.

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* Abbreviations Used:

- ADM Admiralty Records, Public Records Office, Kew, England.
AGCA Archivos Generales de Centro America, Guatemala.
CO Colonial Office, Public Records Office, Kew, England.
WO War Office, Public Records Office, Kew, England.

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