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CULTURE, RACE and CLASS
IN THE COMMONWEALTH CARIBBEAN
CULTURE, RACE and CLASS IN THE COMMONWEALTH CARIBBEAN

by
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with a Foreword by
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To Edna Manley
Foreword

The Commonwealth Caribbean is more than a geographical expression. It is the designation for a cluster of nations with a distinctive political character anchored in the realities of post-colonialism grappling with the problems of the redistribution, re-location, and administration of power recently transferred from the metropolitan centre. The Commonwealth Caribbean, otherwise known as the West Indies, is also a distinctive socio-economic order determined by experiences of a historical formation rooted in chattel slavery and the plantation system and all the consequences of the phenomenon manifested in social stratification, endemic economic disabilities and cultural contradictions. It stands to reason that the present preoccupations of all the Caribbean societies should be social transformation from colonial fiefs to self reliant, economically viable, technologically responsive, politically "stable", and culturally secure entities.

Described this way, the goal(s) of these societies suggest an agenda of appropriate policy options for those who take administrative and economic decisions for their development. Such policies however depend in large measure on thorough knowledge and understanding of the inner dynamics of social formation; and such knowledge and understanding in turn depend on rigorous and sustained investigation and analysis of Caribbean social phenomena drawing on the 'analytic tools' of such disciplines as history, economics, sociology, political science, psychology, social anthropology etc. The disciplines are singled out for good reasons since the variables of culture, class and race (in no order of priority) are central to Caribbean historical and existential reality. As such they challenge areas of intellectual concern to discovery, explanation and theory. The assumption, of course, is that Caribbean experience is capable of theory and explanation.

M. G. Smith, one of the region’s leading scholars, has never had any doubt about this. In 1956, he provided the world of scholarship with a seminal essay entitled “A Framework For Caribbean Studies” and has followed it with no less seminal works on Caribbean social structures and social stratification. He now returns to the task in
this monograph by way of review and examination of the literature covering numerous studies of Caribbean social structure over the past thirty years. In his own words his concern is not to "expound or defend concepts and models of pluralism and/or the plural society". Rather he is more concerned, "by reviewing some recent studies, to indicate the relative significance and modal relations of culture and cultural differences, race and class, or other modes of stratification as socially defined and decisive conditions of structure in Commonwealth Caribbean societies". (page 3)

This he has done with incisive, sometimes searing, analysis of arguments and counter-arguments that have surfaced as part of the competing paradigms - each claiming discovery of some immutable verity or other that presumably underpins the chaotic, unruly, disparate, contradictory and textured elements that constitute the Caribbean reality. That those who posit the primacy of economic categories in certain schools of social science analysis are unable to definitively discover the real nature of the complex relationship between the phenomena of race, class and colour, Professor Smith has little doubt. For, despite the importance of the legacy of Marx and Weber to the conceptual grasp of the Caribbean social order, history and contemporary reality point to the existence of categories other than the economic ones in a society differentiated no less, by "considerations of status, prestige, or honour and life-style on the one hand, and by positions within the prevailing distributions of social influence and power on the other". (page 237)

In Caribbean societies where the persistence of Plantation variables other than the economic ones is a fact, Marxist conceptions of class (devoid of race or cultural differentiae) or Weberian emphasis on status groups ("ranked categories of a population that are subjectively significant and share common patterns of interaction, living, consumption, behavioural codes and the like") (page 137) may prove inadequate or barely pertinent in coming to grips with the Caribbean social phenomena as they relate to race, class and culture. Professor Smith is clearly convinced of the analytic appropriateness of the pluralist models in ferreting form and meaning out of the complex, "more inclusive, fundamental and intricately interwoven differences of race and culture, history and political power which have together constituted, shaped and maintained these units [sc. varying Caribbean societies], while generating their differing developments as functions of differing racial compositions and ecological situations, internal and external political relations, and distributions of power". (page 2) "These units" refers to the wide variety of Caribbean societies emerging from a common history and colonial background. This presents yet further difficulties of analysis and interpretation for all aspiring theoretical frameworks as Professor Smith demonstrates in his review of the studies of the different representations of Caribbean social structure - Grenada, Jamaica, Trinidad and Guyana - all sharing a textured diversity and with differences sufficiently discrete to defy any single acceptable deterministic model.

No one knows this better than the creative artists whose "tools of social analysis" are made of different stuff from what Professor Smith, himself once a practising poet, is concerned with in this monograph. Yet the presence of the artists in the region and their examination, by way of artistic articulation, of the phenomena of race, culture and class separately and in their shifting relationships, needs to be considered as legitimate representation of Caribbean reality. The monograph makes fleeting reference to V. S. Naipaul but beside him rank writers like George Lamming of Barbados, V. S. Reid of Jamaica, Wilson Harris of Guyana and the poet-historian Edward Kamau Brathwaite working out of the Mona campus of the University of the West Indies. The popular artists of the ilk of the Mighty Sparrow (Francisco Slinger) and the late Bob Marley have thrown up material worthy of serious analysis. They force into the vocabulary of Caribbean social structure research, thematic and procedural focus on such factors as creolisation, marginalisation, Rastafarianism, cultural identity and the arts of the imagination, and the social aspects of language formation. All of this admittedly brings richness to the study of Caribbean social structures. But it brings, no less, confusion; and only validates Professor Smith's view that a confused state of thinking weighs heavily on "West Indian social structures". Such a state of affairs, he correctly insists, gives to analysis and clarification of Caribbean social structures and stratification a real sense of urgency "in order that we may advance our understanding of these societies, their current trends, problems and needs". (page 13) He is equally concerned about the need for methodological rigour and conceptual refinement and sees a "comprehensive basis for understanding of the biracial Caribbean Creole societies of today and yesterday" resulting only from the analysis of the diverse sets of data "within a consistent framework of method and theory". (page 39) (my emphasis)

Such a challenge of course addresses the intellectual pursuits of scholars beyond studies of the relations between race, class and culture in the region. But by focussing on this constituency of concern, Professor Smith offers a timely reminder to some key scholars of both Caribbean history and contemporary life, new-breed advisers
and consultants in both the private and public domains, that the textured diversity of the Commonwealth Caribbean is impatient not only of instant ready-made answers to deep-delved problems or facile readings of trends and deep social forces rooted in a peculiar set of historical circumstances, but also of alien models and analytic procedures that are not likely to lead to deep understanding of Caribbean societies. For in the search for administrative rationality and economic viability the Caribbean postcolonial order is likely to succeed more if there is, indeed, access to "detailed and accurate models" of the region's social structures. The centrality of race, class and colour to those structures has not been definitively disproven by any of the many scholars who have sought either to place them in perspective vis-a-vis economic priorities or to deny the importance of one or other of those variables. The more urgent and pertinent task of discovering the relationships between these elements now presents itself; and it is to Professor Smith's credit that he continues to stress the need for a "sound theoretical understanding of the nature and relations of culture, economic and other modes of stratification, race, colour and history in these societies". (page 142) (my emphasis)

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August, 1984

This essay reviews various accounts of Anglo-Caribbean societies from 1945 to the present that discuss the parts that culture, race and class play in them. It seeks to assess the cumulative contributions of these studies and to clarify the critical issues and relations with which they deal.

Following introductory outlines of the subject, of the literature and topic, and some clarifications of basic terms, attention is focussed on four West Indian societies, Grenada, Jamaica, Trinidad and Guyana, which have figured prominently in the debate so far and will probably continue to do so. Then, after evaluating several prominent 'models' or 'theories' that offer general 'explanations' of social structure in these Caribbean societies, it concludes with a brief statement of my own views.

The essay does not seek or pretend to discuss all, or even only, the important publications on Caribbean societies during the period under review, much less those published during the last three to five years. It also neither claims nor pretends to resolve finally the issues with which it deals, though I hope it may clarify their relations and some of the literature that describes and discusses them. Instead it seeks to review and explore certain approaches to the understanding of Anglo-Caribbean societies that seem together to offer the broadest and most useful introduction to the social anthropology and sociology of the region today.

The essay was first drafted early in 1982, but it has been set aside for most of the time since then, due to other more immediate tasks. During that period much has been published on the Caribbean and on the four societies discussed in the text; and much has happened to alter the region's situation and prospects. However, I have made no effort to treat either these recent happenings or publications in this essay, since it addresses perduring issues and features of Caribbean society that will persist with little if any change despite these recent developments, and should thus offer a useful alternative and supplement to the current flood of topically oriented studies of these units. Accordingly, I have made no attempt either to update or alter the content or scope of the essay, which con-
centrates on certain basic conditions of Caribbean social life, since these topics will retain their significance and interest for decades to come.

I am most grateful to the Hon. Rex Nettleford, O.M., for his decision to publish the essay in the series on Caribbean Affairs initiated by the Extra Mural Department of the U.W.I. nearly forty years ago; and especially for the strenuous efforts he has taken to make this publication possible. I am also delighted that he has contributed a Foreword to the volume, and happy that this essay will appear in the Extra-Mural Series on Caribbean Affairs that published A Framework for Caribbean Studies almost thirty years ago, since the two are complementary in several ways.

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Yale University
January, 1984

Chapter 1

Introduction

Over the past thirty years the nature and basis of Commonwealth Caribbean societies have been subjects of constant study and much dispute. These current disagreements have antecedents in the thirties, when W. M. MacMillan (1936) and Lord (Sidney) Olivier, a former Governor of Jamaica, published their differing accounts of that island society, MacMillan's falling within a general discussion of the then British West Indian colonies. For nearly two decades the only successors to these studies of MacMillan and Olivier (1936) were the rather general works of T. S. Simey (1946) and Paul Blanchard (1947). Only in the decade following the end of World War II did systematic academic studies of these West Indian societies get under way, following the establishment of the Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) and the University College of the West Indies (UCWI) at Mona, Jamaica. Since then studies and controversies about the nature and basis of social structure in these territories have grown apace with no sign of conclusion. It is with certain of these studies and some themes and theses of this prolonged but fertile controversy that the present essay is concerned.

As its title indicates, the essay seeks to explore and to clarify the roles and relations of race, class and culture in the structure of these West Indian societies. To that end, following brief discussions of the three critical variables whose nature, relations and relative influence on these social structures we shall try to determine, I shall review a representative range of recent studies devoted to these issues and aspects of Commonwealth Caribbean society. I undertake this task partly in the conviction that an accurate appreciation of the nature and complexities of the macro-structure of these Caribbean societies is essential, if ameliorative efforts and programmes to reduce their inequalities and instability, or to promote their development, are not to fail; but I also wish to tackle this subject because it seems appropriate at this stage in the study of the Caribbean to attempt a provisional stock-taking of our ideas about these societies in order to assess the progress to date, to identify the key issues, and to lay some foundations for further research and analysis. Naturally, in this attempt I anticipate the healthy critical
reaction of colleagues within and outside the Caribbean, together
with the usual indifference of local governments and political parties,
who could perhaps benefit most from objective analyses of the
peoples they represent. Fortunately, any conclusions that we may
reach about these societies are not dependent for their validity on
political support from anyone, but rather on sound critical under-
standing of relevant evidence concerning their nature and basis.

Before delving into these subjects it is necessary to introduce
the reader briefly to the perspectives and issues with which we have
to deal, including some that were first mooted in studies of Haiti
and certain mainland American communities in the USA and the
circum-Caribbean. For example, John Lobb (1940) and James
Leyburn (1941) both discussed Haiti as a caste society, given the
sharp divisions between its mulattoes and blacks. Meanwhile in the
United States, John Dollard (1937), A. Davis, Gardner and Gardner
(1941) and Lloyd Warner and his colleagues (1941) also applied caste
concepts to the black and white sections of the American people
and their relationships, much as Gerald Berreman (1960, 1967) has
done later. To describe and analyse these American patterns of
race relations, Warner invented the concept of ‘color-caste’ (Warner
et al., 1941). In 1952, describing the mixed society of Guatemala
with its two basic social categories of Ladino and Indian, Melvin
Tumin also decided to treat those sections as ‘castes’, and to present
the society that included them both as a kind of caste society
(Tumin, 1952).

A year later Ralph Beals concluded his penetrating review of
Latin-American forms of social stratification with the observation
that

"the use of strictly economic, or economic and political criteria
for a class analysis of Latin America is the least useful approach"
(Beals, 1953, 339).

More than ten years later, Rodolfo Stavenhagen, reviewing the same
subject from another angle, illustrated some of Beals' reservations
in his discussion of relations between Ladinos and Indians in Guate-
mala and Mexico. In Stavenhagen's view, while for

"Indians upward mobility means both a process of accultura-
tion and an elevation in the socio-economic scale . . . the
Ladino will always be Ladino, however he may fall in the
socio-economic scale. But an Indian, provided that he ascends

Together these reports from Haiti, the United States and Central
America indicate the uncertainty about the nature and type of the
social structure in those societies that then prevailed among social
scientists familiar and concerned with them all. It is thus not sur-
prising to find that similar uncertainties and disputes should accom-
pany the publication of more informed accounts of the Common-wealth
Caribbean societies in their closing colonial phase. However,
before reviewing these more recent assessments, it is best to sum-
mise MacMillan's account of these British West Indian colonies,
published before World War II, as it provides an excellent intro-
duction to the studies that follow.

Writing in 1935, MacMillan found that these Caribbean societies
contained the following components: "Europeans, home-born or
Creole (born in the islands)” (MacMillan, 1938, 47); the few
native Jews, Chinese and Syrians, who were primarily engaged in
commerce; the mixed “upper” strata of coloured people, “(who)
have absorbed after their own manner the European outlook and
'culture'” (ibid., 52); “Africans, the great majority of the people”
(ibid., 52); and “a growing middle class” which ranged from c. 10 per
cent of the population in Tobago to c. 22 per cent in Barbados
(p. 49); and, finally, East Indians who were most numerous in
Guyana and Trinidad.

It was the privations of these black and Indian workers and
peasants that stirred MacMillan to write his timely critique and
expose of the British colonial regime in the Caribbean. The year
after its publication, his 'warning' was validated by a wave of mass
protests and disturbances in Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad
that signalled the end of Crown Colony government and initiated
the hesitant British reorientations, first towards colonial reform,
and then towards decolonisation, thereby introducing the con-
temporary period of formally independent Commonwealth Carib-
bean mini-states.

Eric Williams, who subsequently ruled Trinidad as Prime Minis-
ter from 1957 until his death in 1981, discussing West Indian society
from the perspective of race relations, outlined a scheme not unlike
that of MacMillan, when he distinguished ruling whites, both ex-
patriate and native or Creole, the mixed or coloured 'middle class',
and the masses, all or mostly black, but divided economically into
peasantry and proletariat (Williams, 1946). His account clearly omits the East Indian populations, not only in Trinidad, Guyana or Suriname, where they were most numerous, but also in Martinique, Jamaica and other Caribbean territories.

In 1953 Lloyd Braithwaite published an account of the social stratification of his native Trinidad which designated the several strata and segments of that population as 'castes' or 'semi-castes'. Following Talcott Parsons and Edward Shils (1951), Braithwaite assumed that all societies must base their orders of stratification and subordination on some normative consensus, ascriptive or other, and so must either stress and reward particularistic and functionally diffuse values and correlated criteria, or universalistic and functionally specific ones. On these grounds he identified Trinidadian society after World War II as predominantly achievement-oriented, those values being in his view ascendant among the large coloured section or 'middle class' with which he was identified, in contrast to the ascriptive orientations typical of the higher ranking whites, the low-ranking blacks, and other racial segments such as Chinese and East Indians, to the last of whom, despite their number and significance, Braithwaite devoted little attention (Braithwaite, 1953). At the base of this model lay his presumption that the two great disprivileged sections of Trinidad society, the East Indians and blacks, both accepted the colonial social order-as legitimate and valid on nonmotive grounds rather than by coercion or force majeure. However, lacking direct evidence to confirm this improbable thesis, he was content to assert that

"the key to the unity in the diversity of judgments is the acceptance of the upper class as the upper class. In this case however we have the main common values shared by all the groups in the society" (ibid., 52, 53).

In 1952 Madeline Kerr, a British social psychologist, published a study of personality patterns and their formation in Jamaica, which she presented as a society with three social 'classes' (Kerr, 1952, ix-x, 194–195, 197, 199). As criteria that differentiated these 'classes', Kerr stressed race, colour and culture, distinguishing the European or white, the coloured and the black sections and cultures within the society much as Macmillan and Williams had implicitly done in their regional discussions. As regards race, and with special reference to the large voteless black population, she concluded,

"It is impossible to overstress the importance of role in relation to colour prejudice. While there is a government composed of English people, or white Jamaicans, it is difficult to see how to overcome the sort of role deprivation discussed earlier" (ibid., 200).

For his part, while asserting that "colour consciousness often poisons social relationships in West Indian life and adds to the number and bitterness of class distinctions", MacMillan stressed that "Colour, though unquestionably an important psychological factor, is only one element in the social structure" (MacMillan, 1938, 53).

In 1953 Fernando Henriques, a Jamaican scholar who had spent most of his life in Britain, described Jamaican society as a 'colour-class system' ranging from white to black. He summarised this rather puzzling 'system' as follows:

"This colour-class division is not at all rigid. In the first place, whereas it is useful to indicate economic status, it does not necessarily indicate social position. For example, a black doctor is not necessarily accepted as belonging to the upper class. Again, a definite distinction has to be made between the capital, Kingston, the tourist resort of Montego Bay, and the town of Mandeville ('Jamaica's Cheltenham') on the one hand, and the rest of the country on the other. The division made above does not apply to the former places, where the white element in the population, together with some of the fair coloured, so fair as to be indistinguishable from the European, constitute the upper class. The alien racial groups tend to have class divisions within their own ranks, and to a certain extent they participate in the equivalent class of what we will call the 'native' section of the population." (idem, 1953, 42–43).

In the following year Leonard Broom, an American sociologist, discussed Jamaica's social structure on the basis of his own first-hand observations and official statistics, including results of the most recent census. In his view,

"Social stratification in Jamaica cannot be understood as an uninterrupted continuum of status positions. No matter what empirical criteria are employed, gross discontinuities are to
be found. Given the historical forces briefly reviewed, this
should cause no surprise, but the extreme character of this
status cleavage affects all facets of Jamaican society” (Broom,
1954, 119).

To direct the reader’s attention from the very start to these
peculiarities, Broom identified his subject as the ‘social differentia-
tion’ of Jamaica rather than its ‘social stratification’, since that
was then conceived as an ‘uninterrupted continuum of status posi-
tions’.

Broom’s analysis indicated the sharp status cleavages that
divided the major sections of Jamaican society and restricted
mobility between them, an interpretation that differed radically
from Henriques’ rather flexible model of the ‘colour-class system’.
However, then as later, Henriques insisted on the appropriateness
of his model for Jamaica and other Commonwealth Caribbean
societies, all of which in his view display a pervasive ‘white bias’
at the basis of their colour-class systems and cultures. In formulating
this thesis, Henriques concentrated almost exclusively on the
modal Creole combination of black, white and brown elements
and ignored East Indians, Chinese and poor whites. He also ignored
Jews, Portuguese, Syrians and Lebanese who, though white, were
not regarded as such by Creoles in colonial times, and are still wide-
ly regarded as of different race.

A distinct view of West Indian society derives from Marxist
theory. This was first applied locally by Eric Williams (1946) and
Richard Hart (1952), and has since had several exponents, including
Trevor Munroe (1912, 1977, 1979), Norman Girvan (1975),
Kenneth Post (1978), Stuart Hall (1977, 1979), Jacobs & Jacobs
(1980), and Susan Craig (1982). As originally applied by Richard
Hart, this perspective combined a brief account of the historical
evolution of Jamaican society with an economic classification of
its population as wage-earners and unemployed, own-account
workers and employers, which clearly reflects the Marxist definition
of classes by their relations with the means of production. (Hart,
1974, 24–26). For modern Marxists, Caribbean societies con-
sist of foreign and local capitalists, some of whom are compradors,
petite bourgeoisie, urban and rural proletariats, peasants, and a
lumpenproletariat that has grown rapidly in recent years. Modal
differences of race or colour that distinguish the majorities in each
of these social strata are not regarded as particularly significant
by Marxist authors, though some, including Hart (1974), Post
(1978, 159–201) and Hall (1977, 165–170), either try in different
ways to interpret this racial stratification in historical terms, or treat
it as a redundant feature of the ‘over-determined’ ‘class structure’ of
these societies.

In 1956 I first described contemporary Jamaica as a plural
society of three culturally distinct social sections which could be
distinguished as white, brown and black by reference to the modal
race or colour of most of their members (idem, 1956). In order of
rank, these white, brown and black social sections differed in
culture, population, size, institutional practice, political status,
historical evolution and social organization as well as in their
economic roles and endowments.

In presenting his own classification of the population of
Kingston, Jamaica’s capital, Carl Stone (1973) criticised and re-
jected this plural model of Jamaican society as well as the Marxist
alternative, and offered instead a series of ranked ‘occupational
classes’ which included big businessmen, professionals, small busi-
nessmen, white collar workers, self-employed artisans, blue collar
workers, and a residual lower class, part of which he later identified
as the lumpenproletariat (idem, 1973, 123, 145–158). Accord-
ing to Stone, “the material goals and values” of these seven occupa-
tional strata are the decisive elements of Jamaica’s social stratifica-
tion, and neither the classes of Marxist theory nor the plural sec-
tions I had identified (ibid., 14–21). It will therefore be neces-
sary for us to reconsider carefully the various models and arguments
presented by Stone, Henriques, Marxists and other students, in our
attempt to determine the nature and social structure of these
Caribbean societies.

Though aware of their quite different racial and socio-cultural
structures, apparently on the assumption that the occupational
model of social stratification Stone had devised for Jamaica applies
equally to Trinidad and Tobago, Ryan, Greene and Hatewood
(1979) attempted there to replicate Stone’s survey of political
attitudes in urban Jamaica, with minimal adaptations. By contrast,
in his study of the 1968 Guyanese general election, Greene tried to
determine the role of race in the political process by direct analyses
of electoral returns and sample data unweighted for occupational
class, thereby implicitly setting aside Stone’s scheme as inappropria-
te for Guyanese conditions (Greene, 1974). Nonetheless, whatever
modifications may be necessary to adapt Stone’s occupational
classification to the segmental organizations of Creoles and Indians in
Guyana and Trinidad, some variants of his general approach are
commonly employed in discussions of Jamaican and other modally
biracial Creole societies, such as Grenada. For example, in his study of violence and politics in Jamaica, Terry Lacey distinguished the plantocracy, peasantry, national bourgeoisie, labour aristocracy, proletariat or urban poor, and lumpenproletariat (Lacey, 1977, 32–35). Writing of Grenada, A. W. Singham also distinguished its proletariat (1974), argues that this development occurred by processes through which Caribbean models of social structure and stratification in these Commonwealth without attention to the modified Parsonian model put forward by R. T. Smith among others. Having already referred to Lloyd Braithwaite, the Trinidadian Creole who foresaw that his social section would succeed to power in Trinidad once the British withdrew, Marxist accounts and plural society models of these colonial West Indian societies were undeniably hard to accept, both in themselves and for their implications, and perhaps most clearly because in different ways both these accounts denied the legitimacy of the colonial regimes and their immediate successors, thereby implying the initially plural features of these slave-based societies have been dissolved and replaced by common institutions, values, interests, orientations and demands for social mobility, which find expression in the inclusive stratification structure that emerged during the periods of Crown Colony rule and limited responsible government before final decolonisation (idem, 1967, 1970, 1971, 1976).

As we shall see, there are certain problems with this interpretation. For example, it seems rather odd that Raymond Smith's intermediate model, the Creole society, which is presented as consensually and normatively integrated, spans the decades during which large numbers of Indians settled in Guyana and Trinidad, though they were excluded by law, by definition, and by practice from the local 'Creole' societies. It is equally clear that the so-called 'modern' society created by decolonisation of these territories still remains in increasingly urgent need of 'modernisation', a process and condition which is very poorly defined in Smith's account.

It is equally worthy of note that Raymond Smith, an Englishman, rarely mentions the colonial exploitation and oppression of West Indians by the British, though this was often executed with a ruthless and indiscriminate brutality. Instead he either treats British policies, decisions and action in these colonial territories as beyond scrutiny and analysis; or he tends to regard and present them as benevolent in intent and beneficial in effect, however illiberal and undemocratic the political regimes in which they were expressed, such as slavery or the Crown Colony (R. T. Smith, 1955). Unlike MacMillan, Raymond Smith is clearly disinclined to consider or even mention the evil and inhuman consequences of British rule for these Caribbean societies, whether or not these effects were intended. On these grounds among others, despite his long association with the region and concern for its countries and peoples, Raymond Smith's discussion of their cultural histories and social orders is perhaps better understood and appreciated as a sustained and sophisticated apologia for British colonialism in this area than as a dispassionate and comprehensive analysis of the structure and development of these societies.

For R. T. Smith, the sympathetic expatriate, as for Lloyd Braithwaite, the Trinidadian Creole who foresaw that his social section would succeed to power in Trinidad once the British withdrew, Marxist accounts and plural society models of these colonial West Indian societies were undeniably hard to accept, both in themselves and for their implications, and perhaps most clearly because in different ways both these accounts denied the legitimacy of the colonial regimes and their immediate successors, thereby implying
the latter's instability. In opposition to such elitist and conservative interpretations of Caribbean society, during the late 1950s and 60s two differing ideologies of racial rejection or Black Power emerged, both ultimately traceable to the teachings of Marcus Mosiah Garvey (1968), the Jamaican national hero and proponent of black separatism, self-reliance and return to Africa.

Of these racial protests, the earlier took an explicitly religious though radical form in the doctrine that the Emperor of Ethiopia, Haile Selassie, was the Messiah Ras Tafari who had returned to overthrow the colonial regime in which blacks were oppressed by whites, together with all other works of 'Babylon' (M. G. Smith, Augier, Nettleford, 1960; R. Nettleford, 1970, 39-112; Post, 1978, 159–201). Reviewing that movement in 1960, it was noted that

"For Jamaican leftists the violent part of the Ras Tafari spectrum is a gift: capitalist, bourgeoisie and proletariat can be directly translated into white, brown and black. Revolution becomes Redemption with Repatriation as the issue provoking bloodshed. The Marxist vanguard wears a Nabiingi cloak. Ras Tafari brethren themselves often speak of the wolf in sheep's clothing among them" (M. G. Smith, Augier & Nettleford, 1960, 25–26).

Some years later during the sixties, secular doctrines of Black Power generated by West Indians such as Stokely Carmichael in the United States were brought to the West Indies by Walter Rodney, Richard Small and others (Rodney, 1969). According to Rodney,

"Black Power in the West Indies ... refers primarily to people who are recognisably African or Indian ... Black Power is not racially intolerant. It is the hope of the black man that he should have power over his own destinies. This is not incompatible with a multiracial society ... Black Power must proclaim that Jamaica is a black society - we should fly Garvey's Black Star banner, and we will treat all other groups in the society on that understanding. They can have the basic rights of all individuals but no privileges to exploit Africans" (idem, 1969, 28–30; his italics).

The problems, ambiguities and reservations intrinsic to that position need no elaboration.

On Rodney's return to Jamaica from Canada on October 15, 1968, the Jamaican government forbade his entry, following which students at the University demonstrated, and a mob seized the chance to riot and plunder in central Kingston until police reasserted their control of the streets (Lacey, 1977, 94–99). Thereafter Black Power ideology took root and flourished at the University and beyond through the journal Abeng, as Rex Nettleford has shown in his careful account of the movement in Jamaican society during the late sixties and seventies (idem, 1970).

For Ras Tafari, the Jamaican people consisted of blacks and their oppressors. Some blacks had seen the light and joined the Brethren, while others, confused by Babylon, had not yet done so, but could presumably be educated and converted. The oppressors, brown, black and white, were irredeemable. In effect the society consisted, to use current folk terminology, of two 'sects', seen from its black base. In some secular proclamations of Black Power ideology, the oppressed of the Caribbean and their champions such as Fidel Castro, irrespective of race or phenotype, were black; but the privilege of classification always remained with the bona fide leaders of blacks - i.e. those of pure or virtually pure African descent, who could thus decide whether or not to recognize a Castro, an Eric Williams, Michael Manley, or some other as sufficiently 'black' to 'pass' or merit acceptance. Thus fortunately, as Rodney perceived, "the racial question is out in the open, in spite of all the efforts to maintain the taboos surrounding it" (idem, 1969, 14).

Finally, to conclude this introductory review of competing perspectives of Caribbean society, I will briefly outline my view of its plural nature and structure. In an early general discussion of pluralism I stressed the need to distinguish "between pluralism and 'class' stratification because of the profound differences that underlie their formal resemblance" (M. G. Smith, 1960, 769). At the same time I argued that as

"race differences are stressed in contexts of social and cultural pluralism ... the rigorous analysis of race relations presupposes analyses of their context based on the theory of pluralism" (ibid. 775).

Anticipating the responses of Lloyd Braithwaite and R. T. Smith, I also questioned the presumption

"of common values in culturally split societies that owe their form and maintenance to a special concentration of regulative power within the dominant group" (ibid, 776).
Later, to see whether Lloyd Braithwaite's claim was true that there must always be "a certain minimum of common, shared values if the unity of the society is to be maintained" (idem, 1960, 822), or whether, as J. S. Furnivall argued, such normative consensus is absent from plural societies, which have no common will (Furnivall 1948, 308), I analysed the distribution and conditions of social status in Grenada in a detailed study based on more than a year's intensive field work. Analysis of those data revealed

"a substantial divergence of values among the Grenadian elite. The strata that hold different values differ also in institutional practices and commitments. At one extreme, among the highest ranking Westernised Creole 'whites', we find an undiluted ascriptive orientation with solidary, particularistic stress: at the other, in the dark, low-ranking elite levels about the folk, the prevailing set of values is individualistic and achievement-oriented. These two value sets challenge and crash with each other. Their co-existence at different levels of the elite hierarchy represents dissensus rather than the prevalence of a common system of values. In effect, the Grenadian elite exhibits these pluralistic features as a direct function of its position in the plural society in Grenada" (M. G. Smith, 1965a, 253).

Later, when Neil Smelser and S. M. Lipset redefined social stratification in terms of rewards, sanctions, opportunities and the like, I undertook a comparative review of race and stratification in Caribbean societies using their criteria, in order to examine the different theories of Eric Williams, Tannenbaum and Hoetink on the relations of these phenomena (M. G. Smith, 1974, 271-346). The survey showed that in Caribbean societies racial segments

"must either confront one another as contraposed corporate groups that compete for power and parity, or they may collaborate symbiotically in some consociation, while maintaining their closures, or they may relax their cunnubial exclusion and amalgamate by symmetrical miscegenation if their cultures and social organisations are sufficiently similar to permit this" (ibid. 45-46).

Together these formal alternatives include all ways in which racial differences may be employed, separately or together, to incorporate and articulate collectivities within a common society. However, in that essay I made no attempt to analyse the empirical relations of race and culture in Caribbean society, which is one of the three central topics now under discussion, the other two being respectively the relations of race and class or stratification on the one hand, and of class or stratification and culture on the other.

Evidently the ambiguous character and structure of West Indian societies have generated a variety of persuasive analytic models ranging from the strictly racial to the almost purely economic, including various intermediate alternatives such as Henriques' conception of colour-class, Braithwaite's concepts of 'caste' and 'semi-caste', and so on. Nowadays, when Caribbean peoples and their governments are urgently constrained by demographic, economic and other considerations to try somehow to redress the appalling inequalities and deprivations from which the overwhelming majority of their populations have always suffered and still suffer, correct conceptions of the structure of these societies are particularly important and necessary to guide the programmes and policies of the movements and governments that struggle with them, remedially or otherwise. Accordingly, academic study of these aspects of social structure in the Commonwealth Caribbean also has practical significance and implications. In any event, the currently confused state of thinking about West Indian social structure identifies its analysis and clarification as the most important immediate task to be undertaken in order that we may advance our understanding of these societies, their current trends, problems and needs.

The preceding sketch of competing analytic approaches implicitly emphasises three aspects of Caribbean society: first, the salience of race and colour; second, the importance of economic and economically relevant conditions such as property, employment, occupation, education, income, etc. in these social orders; and third, the great status disparities these societies exhibit, along with disparities of wealth, race and colour. Internal differences of culture and political status are equally prominent features of these recently colonial societies and condition their structures. It should therefore surprise no one that students and citizens of Caribbean societies often hold differing models of these structures, or that they differ also in their assessments of the prevailing relations and relative significance of such key conditions as race, colour, occupation, wealth, descent, family background, education and political position. Such different interpretations are easy to understand once the objective complexity of these social structures, and the obscurities that characterise current sociological theories and concepts of social
stratification, are brought to mind. Thus the first essential step toward clarification is to review briefly these sociological conceptions.

To that end, in the following chapters I shall try to see how class, race and culture interrelate in Caribbean societies, using the notion of 'class' in both its Marxist and non-Marxist senses, together with the concept of stratification. I do so since the various uses and meanings of the terms 'class' and 'stratification' are so commonly met with in the literature that it seems best, while discriminating between them, to treat them all together so that the same general discussion of these dimensions of Caribbean society may hold for all. In like fashion, I shall use the term 'culture' below to connote those cultural differences within and between populations that indicate cultural pluralism and focus attention on the nature of the differing cultures. Of course the concept of culture includes a good deal more than such differences, since it denotes all the modes and ways in which a people perceives and interprets the world and their experience within it; or, more briefly, the ideas that underlie a people's way of life. However, being normally taken for granted by those who live by them, such collective modes of perception, understanding and representation are generally regarded as the objective structures of phenomenal reality.

In the following discussion I shall restrict attention to those contexts in which cultural differences are juxtaposed so repetitively and variously that the nature, significance and variability of culture are brought fully into the consciousness of all those involved. Once this occurs, while all who share a common culture will share the sense of belonging together, those of differing cultures will also know that on that score they do not belong together, and will become correspondingly uncertain of their mutual understandings and relationships. Social situations of this kind involve and display conditions of cultural pluralism that continuously confront all living in them with questions of the relative primacy of culture, race and economic class as alternative bases of individual and collective identity and alignment. For insofar as inclusive aggregates of this kind are racially mixed and stratified, then cultural pluralism pervasively confronts everyone in them with the problem of the significance and relative priority between race, culture and class, wherever those conditions conflict or their implications as bases for action diverge. To pursue these issues, while discriminating between stratification and class in the following chapters, I shall discuss these concepts and structures together with race and colour, while employing the notions of culture and pluralism interchangeably. I shall do so in the attempt to determine under what circumstances identities based on culture, race or class, separately or in various combinations, take precedence over each other as bases for individual and collective relations and action in contemporary Caribbean societies.
Chapter 2

Class and Stratification

Contemporary concerns with social structure, including stratification, may be traced back to Rousseau (1755) and his leading successors, the Scottish eighteenth-century authors, Adam Ferguson (1767), John Millar (1771), and their contemporaries. These pioneers of social science identified the division of labour and the ‘distinction of ranks’ or ‘stratification’ as two important and closely related aspects of social structure that varied modally in societies of differing type and ecological base. Together with the theories and ideas of classical economics, of German philosophy, and much else, these studies formed part of the background for Marx’s famous theory of classes in society.

For Marx, classes are divisions of a population differentiated by their relations to the means of production, as, for example, in industrial societies are capitalists or bourgeoisie, proletarians, peasants, and the petite bourgeoisie, who are own-account professionals, artisans and small merchant factors (Bottomore & Rubel, 1963, 186–209). In his most extensive statements, Marx sometimes wrote as though capitalist society — perhaps all societies — consisted of two grand classes, the propertied and the propertyless (Marx & Engels, 1848), but in his studies of France during the mid-nineteenth century (Marx, 1850, 1852, 1871), he discriminated clearly the various blocs of people who acted together under the influence of common or similar interests as effective groupings or classes in those social contexts. Marx distinguished from such collective actors those aggregates whose distinctive relations to the means of production constituted them as distinct classes despite their unawareness or denial of the fact. When overtly aware of the commonality and distinctness of their interests and determined to act collectively for common ends, such ‘classes in themselves’ become ‘classes for themselves’ (Bottomore & Rubel, eds: 1963, 194–195). This important distinction contrasts analytic categories distinguished by objective economic conditions, namely, in Marx’s scheme, relations to the means of production, and social groupings which, having recognized their common and distinctive interests, act to pursue them.
For Marx, the structure of a capitalist society consists of an order of classes with capitalists and large landholders at the top, the proletarians and peasantry at the base, the petit bourgeois professional and service classes in the middle. Since Marx's classes consisted of economic actors distinguished structurally by their diverse relations to the means of production, they unavoidably differed in their material interests as well as their existential conditions; and, being normally contraposed by their places in the economic structure, they were either allied or in potential or actual conflict with one another. When such conflict is consciously pursued, Marx speaks of 'class struggle'. The more intensive and extensive the class struggle, the greater the numbers of people in the contending classes and their allies who are thereby freed from 'false consciousness' to understand clearly the class structure and dynamics of their own society, and thus to play effective roles in shaping its history and direction.

Marx's theory of classes refers primarily to economic stratification of capitalist societies, even though in The Communist Manifesto, written with Engels, he says that

"The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, and carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes" (Marx & Engels, 1848).

As that passage shows, while discriminating slavery, feudalism and other pre-capitalist modes of production from the formal freedoms of the wage market that then characterised industrial capitalism – the economic system that always stood at the centre of his attention – Marx sometimes conceived these older formations as differing kinds of 'class' structure, given what he regarded as their decisive features. At other times, however, he emphasized the differences between various modes of economic organisation and social stratification (Marx 1964, 67–148; 1973, 471–514). Such variable usage is unfortunately a common feature of Marx's writings on classes and their conflicts, concepts he never systematically elucidated, though both are central to his economic and social theory and programmes. In consequence, Marxists and others frequently differ in their interpretations of Marx's views on these matters, as well as their analytic applications. For some scholars, slaves cannot form a class since they are property rather than agents of production. For others, slaves, serfs, peasants, proletarians are all varieties of a common exploited class. For some scholars the lumpenproletariat, or 'reserve army' of surplus unemployed labour, is a potential revolutionary force, whereas for others they are incapable of effective 'class' action, independently or together with the true proletariat (Jacobs & Jacobs, 1983, 30; Stone, 1973, 145–158). For such Marxists as Stalin, peasants are incapable of revolutionary action, while for others such as Mao Zedong and Ho Chi Min, they provided the vanguard as well as the backbone of the revolutionary forces. Such differences of opinion among Marxist scholars and leaders indicate some of the problems and ambiguities presented by the large corpus of Marxist writings, published and unpublished, given the vast scope and incompleteness of his work. Accordingly, despite their awesome claims and tortuous phraseology, interior and exterior meanings, convoluted reasonings and ponderous exegeses, we should not accept too readily as authentic and conclusive the latest philosophical revelations by Althusser or others, whether speaking officially or as private oracles, concerning what Marx meant, or may have meant but said obscurely, or implied but did not say. Notably, having indoctrinated a generation or two, such exercises in textual divination are likely to be rejected and repudiated by their proponents and critics as some form of bourgeois error. Thus even for the devout, such scriptural hermeneutics are surely no substitute for sociological study and analysis of empirical situations, and neither is the epistemology of Marx's thought an adequate alternative. As we shall see, some recent Marxist studies of West Indian countries seem to suffer in these respects.

The most fundamental development in our understanding of social stratification since Marx formulated his theory of class and class struggles was made by Max Weber who, like Marx, wrote on this topic near the end of his life, and who also, like Marx, was not able to edit or revise what he had written. As a critical admirer and lifelong student of Marx, Weber greatly appreciated the importance of Marx's emphasis on the economic classification of human populations, but being, like Marx, preoccupied with advanced societies, he distinguished economic classes within them by differences in their relations to the market rather than to the means of production. Implicit here is the presumption that all productive instruments such as labour, material, equipment, etc., are marketable, though not equally so in all societies. For this reason among others, Weber
supplemented his economic classification of society by stressing the analytic distinctness and social relevance of two other scales or distributions, namely, status or honour, and power or influence, the latter designated by him as 'party'. For Weber, then, a class analysis only described the objective distribution of people in the market of a given society. Beyond and beside such an economic distribution, sometimes coinciding, and sometimes overlapping or cross-cutting it, are other objective distributions of the same population in terms of relative status or prestige, and power. While distributions along these three scales might coincide for a given population at a given point in time, this could not be assumed universally or in advance, as Marx had seemed to do. For example, in many historical contexts, the economically dominant stratum did not enjoy the highest prestige and/or the decisive political power. In short, for Weber a purely economic classification was not sufficient to describe the complex, hierarchic ordering of the population in an advanced or developed society. To grasp this complexity he identified two other distinct and significant scales or dimensions of social value as essential for adequate understanding of the stratification of human societies.

It should be noted that while for Marx the class structure was normally sufficient as a model of society, for Weber that structure, somewhat differently derived, is only one of three equally extensive scales which together constitute the social stratification. That said, it should also be noted that one major problem of the class model, which Marx himself recognized but did not fully resolve, consists in the use of the same term, 'class', to designate both those analytic strata which lack collective awareness of common interests, and those groupings of identical base in which sections of a population are consciously mobilised, each to pursue its distinct collective interests. Much of Marx's political programme was concerned with engineering the transformation of classes in themselves into classes for themselves, particularly, of course, the urban proletariat or working class. To a degree Weber's emphasis on status groups attempts to resolve this problem by identifying as objective strata those ranked categories of a population that are subjectively significant and share common patterns of interaction, living, consumption, behavioural codes, and the like. In like style, Weber's scale of power distribution is anchored in empirical realities rather than analytic distinctions drawn from some scholar's model of the polity, in the way that Marx's class categories reflected his particular conceptions of the economic system and its core, the mode of production.

Following the work of Weber and Marx, Lloyd Warner's descriptive analyses of social stratification in a New England town, Yankee City (Warner, 1950; Warner & Lunt, 1942; Warner et al., 1954), perhaps represent the next landmark in the evolution of modern concepts of social stratification. To determine the social placement of his sample population, Warner chose to describe the social order of Yankee City as a hierarchy of six 'social classes' — upper-upper, lower-upper, upper-middle, lower-middle, upper-lower, and lower-lower — distinguished by complex combinations of self-evaluation, observable interaction and participation, and by such material indicators of status as housing, residential location, furniture, etc. Evidently unaware of Weber's work, Warner sought by his notion of 'social class' to combine those economic and prestige scales which Weber had isolated in his model, but Warner's concept omitted the distribution of power.

Warner's attempt to generalise about the USA on the basis of his Yankee City study invited and received extensive critical attention. Perhaps Walter Goldschmidt's response (idem, 1950) most neatly illustrates the academic awakening that Warner provoked. For Goldschmidt, studies of 'stratification' have to deal with the following varieties of class:

1. Defined classes — culturally defined groups, in which classes have the objective reality of cultural recognition, as in the castes of India or the estates of Europe.
2. Cultural classes — segments having objectively divergent sub-cultural patterns of behavior.
3. Economic classes — groups having basically differentiable economic activities or differentiable relationships to the instruments of production.
4. Political classes — groups having differing degrees of power or authority in the affairs of the community.
5. Self-identified classes — groups having a unity based on self-identification, and ranged in an hierarchical scale of prestige evaluation.
6. Participation classes — groups separated on the basis of participation, where social access is freely had between members but is forbidden, inhibited or limited between groups.” (Goldschmidt, 1950, 491–492).

Goldschmidt's debt to Weber is obvious in this catalogue; but his definition of economic classes allows Marxist conceptions to be
conflicted with the fashionable American view of ranked occupational classes, though they are rarely the same.

Continuing, Goldschmidt argues that

"a true class-organized society is one in which a hierarchy of prestige and status is divisible into groups, each with its own social, economic, attitudinal and cultural characteristics and each having differential degrees of power in community decisions. Such groups would be socially separate and their members would readily identify. We may say that a society approaches a class system if either (a) the groups are clearly identifiable, but do not differ with respect to all the characteristics noted; or (b) the groups to differ in these characteristics, but are not sharply separated" (ibid., 492).

Whether or not Goldschmidt intended by these stipulations to eliminate the possibility that American society could be seen as 'class-organized', it seems clear that he tried to translate and fuse Weber's three distinct scales of power, status and economic position with such criteria as cultural recognition and difference into a unitary concept of class, thereby virtually excluding this aspect of social organization from several other advanced societies as well as the USA. However, Goldschmidt's effort illustrates nicely the extraordinary complexity and variance that characterise class concepts when these are used on their own to describe the stratification of complex societies. We need to bear these points in mind when reviewing recent efforts to describe West Indian societies in such terms.

The critiques that Warner provoked led to the adoption by many American sociologists of occupation as the basic and critical criterion of status and class (Hatt, 1950). Since then, there have been three conceptual developments of relevance to our study. Firstly, in an influential essay Talcott Parsons identified social stratification as the order of prestige ranking in societies. He went on to argue that "the principal criterion of priority of evaluation of functions, hence differentiated sub-systems, is strategic significance for system-process" (Parsons, 1953, 110; his italics). In this way Parsons sought to incorporate the prevailing occupational prestige scale regarded by some of his colleagues as decisive, within a more complex, integrated rank order which in his view constituted the social stratification. Of course, given Parsons' rejection of force and constraint as primary conditions of social systems, such prestige rankings presupposed acceptance of "common value-systems as central theoretical assumptions in all societies" (ibid., 1953, 93).

Parsons' emphasis on common values as preconditions of social order and stratification stimulated Ralf Dahrendorf's forceful critique of this normative consensualist theory. In an analysis of modern industrial societies which followed in the path of Weber and Marx, Dahrendorf pointed out that divergent interests linked with their differential positions in the socio-economic structures of industrial societies inevitably contrapose the have-nots and the have-nots, the capitalists and the proletariat, the bosses and the bossed, though the occasions and tendencies to conflict are essential features of the system (Dahrendorf, 1958). Following Dahrendorf's critique, Neil Smelser, a student of Talcott Parsons, and S. M. Lipset redefined social stratification as 'the differential distribution of sanctions' or resources (Smelser & Lipset, 1966, 6 ff.).

Adopting that definition for a comparative study of race and stratification in the Caribbean, I argued that

"Concretely, stratification is manifest by and in the differential distribution of resources, opportunities, rewards and sanctions among the members of a society... Analytically, stratification can be reduced to a set of specific principles that generate and organise the prevailing distribution of resources and opportunities" (M. G. Smith, 1974, 271–272).

Earlier, and with special reference to Lloyd Braithwaite's conclusion that in Trinidad

"There was only one common value strongly held by the whole society, of a type inherently productive of tensions" — namely, racial difference (Braithwaite, 1960, 822).

I had examined the social stratification of Grenada to determine, inter alia, whether or not it exhibited the basic normative consensus assumed by Talcott Parsons and his colleagues, or the lack of common will that J. S. Furnivall claimed to prevail in plural societies (idem, 1948, 306–308). Given the complex methodological issues that enquiry involved, I made every attempt with the resources at my command to develop and analyse the data comprehensively and with especial care (M. G. Smith, 1965a). However, that study
Chapter 3

Race and Pluralism

Following the preceding discussion of the differing meanings of the terms class and social stratification, it remains for us to clarify the concepts of race, culture and pluralism before proceeding to review the recent literature on the Caribbean, in which these concepts, together with ideas of class and stratification, play such prominent parts.

Biologically the term race denotes any branch of mankind that differs phenotypically from others in hereditary physical characters. Such phenotypical differences indicate corresponding differences of the genotypes that underlie and produce these differing features, many of which appear to have no obvious adaptive values. The physical characters that commonly serve to distinguish human races are based on polygenic inheritance and are thus, unless altered by interbreeding, more persistent and uniform in their distributions within a given population than such other characteristics as differences of blood type, which are controlled by single genes. As yet, little is definitely known about those polygenic combinations that determine the most general and familiar criteria of racial difference, namely, skin colour, eye colour, hair type, facial structure and features, body stature, limb lengths, and body hair. Nonetheless it is evident from direct observation that when individuals of the same race mate and have offspring, the latter normally share the common racial characteristics of both parents, whereas when individuals of differing race mate and have offspring, the latter differs phenotypically in several respects from either of the parents; and at least in certain features seems to be their intermediate. In short, the phenotypical differences of hybrids from both their parents of differing race illustrate the biological basis and nature of racial identity and difference.

Following Blumenbach, the five major races of mankind have been generally identified by skin colour, hair type, eye colour and
skull shape, and by certain other distinct physical features as Caucasian, Mongol, African, Amerindian and Malay, or, to denote them by skin colour, as white, yellow, black, red and brown (King, 1981, 10). These five major divisions of mankind developed historically in relative isolation on different continents, or at opposite ends of such a large continent as Eurasia. In short, their geographic distribution and isolation over many generations facilitated the development and stabilisation of distinctive phenotypical features within the parental populations of modern racial stocks. With the greatly increased mobility of people over the past five centuries, this pristine biological isolation has been steadily eroded as opportunities for racial interbreeding have increased, with the result that there is now a larger and more varied category of hybrid populations descended from these five basic stocks than probably existed before the voyages of Columbus.

Most contemporary biologists do not classify mankind by race, partly in order to avoid the errors and confusions of their predecessors who did so, and partly to avoid saying anything that might seem to support or justify racism. Most human biologists now prefer to speak of varieties or sub-species of mankind; but on rather inappropriate bases, some assert that “there are no races, only clines” (Livingstone, 1962, 179), that is, gradients in the frequency distributions of particular genes within populations of similar or differing phenotype. It is obvious that its advocates base this view of human variation on genes which are neither involved in nor relevant to the ordinary racial classification of mankind, since singly or together these genes are not linked with any of the gross phenotypical characters by which the various human varieties, sub-species or races have been and still are distinguished (M. G. Smith, 1982).

It is important to stress that raciation, or the processes of race formation and change, has always been underway and is still going on, partly through the intermixtures of different racial stocks referred to above, partly through environmental adaptation, partly through human intervention, and by other means. In short, belief in the immutability of races is a major illusion which has done grave scientific and political harm over the past four hundred years. Thus, given that races are always evolving, members of any race will display phenotypical variations that affect the precise ways and degrees in which they approximate the average or ideal-typical phenotype of their stock. Similar ambiguous gradients occur in almost every realm of human experience, such as our perceptions of colour, sound, space or time. They are thus neither peculiar to racial classifications, nor sufficient in themselves to demonstrate their invalidity.

Even today, by far the overwhelming majority of mankind display in their persons the phenotypical diacritica of their racial identities; and this condition seems likely to persist indefinitely, even despite the extraordinary recent advances in global communications and increased opportunities for the intermingling of stocks.

Writing of race, Pierre van den Berghe says that the term refers to “a group that is socially defined on the basis of physical criteria” (idem, 1967, 9). Racism he defines as

“Any set of beliefs that organic, genetically transmitted differences (whether real or imagined) between human groups are intrinsically associated with the presence or the absence of certain socially relevant capabilities or characteristics, hence that such differences are a legitimate basis of invidious distinctions between groups socially defined as races. According to these definitions of race and racism, it is clear that the two concepts are closely related” (Ibid., 11). Within racial stocks “socially defined . . . on the basis of physical criteria,” van den Berghe distinguishes “ethnic groups” which “are socially defined . . . on the basis of cultural criteria”, but notes that “in practice, the distinction between racial and ethnic groups is sometimes blurred by several facts” (Ibid., 9–10).

Unfortunately, for all its clarity and insight, this view of the nature and relation of race and ethnicity is somewhat mistaken. Under Adolf Hitler, German Nazis expropriated and virtually exterminated the Jews of Central Europe on racial grounds, despite the patent lack of hereditary phenotypical differences between German Jews and other Germans. They did so, moreover, with the most elaborate and virulent racist ideology in the historical record. There are many similar cases, such as the Matabele of southern Africa (Hughes,1956), that demonstrate how racist ideologies and racialist practices may prevail within populations of identical racial stock. France and Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries provide excellent illustrations of this, as the monumental works of Arthur de Gobineau (1854) make clear. In short, racism does not require phenotypical differences of a biological kind between populations in order to arise and flourish. There are also of course many situations in which phenotypical differences of a racial kind occur among a people without significant social effects. In such cases, it is nonetheless useful to distinguish the various racial stocks that coexist, on the basis of the biologically distinct characteristics evident in their modal phenotypes.
Official and popular definitions of races based on physical criteria may or may not correspond with one another or with the objective evidence of such phenotypical differences. It is therefore always necessary to distinguish first the biological stocks within a population on the basis of the relevant objective physical criteria; and then, secondly, to record and analyse the folk classification and criteria that relate to race, to ethnicity, and to other biological conditions, paying special attention to their relationships. It is most unlikely that these collective ideas will correspond exactly with the biological situation and its objective differentiae. Instead, they will normally depart from these in several ways, all of which are of great sociological interest.

With this clarification of the biological status of the concept and categories of race, we can now turn to consider the criteria and concepts of pluralism, as derived from the fundamental work of J. S. Furnivall (1948, 303-312) and Rudolph van Lier (1950). For Furnivall the plural society is "a medley of peoples who mix but do not combine" (idem, 1948, 304). For van Lier (1950) it is a consoication of culturally, socially, politically and economically disparate segments of differing historical and racial origin. Yet even without reading Furnivall or van Lier, and before returning to the Caribbean in 1952 after field work in Northern Nigeria, it seemed to me fairly evident that Jamaica and other British Caribbean territories were neither homogeneous in culture and population like the simple 'tribal' societies of anthropology, nor were they integrated around a common institutional core, as, for example, were France or Britain during the first half of this century. The basic distinction I sensed between the Caribbean and these other kinds of societies thus seemed to demonstrate their composite nature and artificial combinations of elements from differing regions and traditions, brought about by the forcible domination of one racial and ethnic group with the resources, organization and will to rule the rest. On these grounds I swiftly adopted Furnivall's concepts and basic criteria of the plural society and tried to apply them with various adaptations to the British West Indian colonies during and after their slave centuries. In several early papers and in a detailed study of Stratification in Grenada, these conceptions of plural society were used to generate analyses of historical developments and contemporary conditions in Creole Caribbean societies. Near the end of these en-

quiries, in 1960, I tried to summarise and generalise my ideas of pluralism and the plural society (M. G. Smith, 1960) in a paper which drew critical comments from several colleagues (Braithwaite, 1960; Rubin, 1969; R. T. Smith, 1961; Wagley, 1960; Benedict, 1962; Morris, 1967; LaPorte, 1967; Hoetink 1974), notably on the ground that I advocated some form of cultural determinism in place of detailed study of society. However, two brief quotations from that essay are sufficient to illustrate some of the misunderstandings that underlay such criticism. First,

"Cultural pluralism is not confined to plural societies, although it is their basis. Furnivall noted this point long ago" (M. G. Smith, 1960, 773);

and second,

"Since a plural society depends for its structural form and continuity on the regulation of inter-sectional relations by Government, changes in the social structure presuppose political changes, and these usually have a violent form." (ibid., 776).

In that essay, having identified pluralism with the condition of institutional and cultural diversity within a given population, I went on to distinguish plural societies as those culturally split societies governed by dominant demographic minorities whose peculiar social structures and political conditions set them apart as a category worth special study (M. G. Smith, 1960, 773; 1969a, 29-32). If these stringent demographic and political criteria are relaxed the class of plural societies will then include all that incorporate social sections or segments which are distinguished institutionally by such factors as language, race, ethnicity, religion, social organization and other cultural features, regardless of demographic and political differences. Stated more formally, pluralism will then denote the

"condition in which members of a common society are internally distinguished by fundamental differences in their institutional practice... Such differences... normally cluster, and by their clusters they simultaneously identify institutionally distinct aggregates or groups, and establish deep social divisions between them. The prevalence of such systematic disassociation between members of institutionally distinct collectivities within a single society constitutes pluralism. Thus pluralism
simultaneously connotes a social structure characterised by fundamental discontinuities and cleavages, and a cultural complex based on systematic institutional diversity ...

“Pluralism may be defined with equal cogency and precision in institutional or in political terms. Politically, these features have very distinctive forms and conditions, and in their most extreme state, the plural society, they constitute a polity of peculiar though variable type. The specific political features of pluralism centre in the corporate constitution of the total society. Under these conditions, the basic corporate divisions within the society usually coincide with the lines of institutional cleavage” (M. G. Smith, 1969a, 27).

As differences of race, language, religion, ethnicity, culture, regionalism and the like may, separately or together, provide the criteria and bases for corporate divisions within societies, pluralism is clearly a variable, since these factors and divisions may occur separately or in differing combinations, thereby complicating and deepening the corporate boundaries or cross-cutting and fragmenting them.

Pluralism also varies as regards the modes of incorporation of plural units. Where one culturally distinct section dominates others, we commonly have a hierarchic plurality founded on the differential incorporation of rulers and ruled, as, for example, in Caribbean colonialism. However, it often occurs that two or more segments are incorporated de jure or de facto as peers within a common society, as, for example, are the Walloons and Flemings in contemporary Belgium, the Chinese and Malays in Malaysia, or the Germans, French and Italians in Switzerland. If such consociated segments are culturally different, then the result is a segmental plurality. This may have various political forms but always excludes the domination of one bloc over the others.

Sometimes, as in South Africa before and after it withdrew from the British Commonwealth, we encounter combinations of differential and segmental incorporation with varying degrees of complexity. For example, under General Smuts the Union of South Africa was a complex plurality which displayed segmental incorporation within each of its two principal sections, the ruling whites and the dominated blacks. South African whites were divided by language, ethnicity, religion, history and culture into two competing groups, Britons and Boers, while the blacks were divided by tradition, language, homeland and culture into a number of equivalent categories or segments such as Zulu, Xhosa, Pondo and so forth. Thus, as this example shows, when combined, equivalent and differential incorporation establish societies that simultaneously display both the hierarchic and the segmental modes of plurality, as for example did colonial South Africa, with its Boer and British segments in the ruling section, its Xhosa, Zulu, Sotho and other segments among the black disenfranchised majority.

As noted in 1960, “cultural pluralism is not confined to plural societies, although it is their basis” (M. G. Smith, 1960, 773). Among whites in Canada, the USA and several European societies, cultural differences of a kind sufficient to demonstrate pluralism normally obtain without corresponding differences between their adherents in the common public domain, which includes government, law, economy, politics, the market place and all collective interests or agencies regulated by or directly pertaining to the state. Thus in New York, Chicago or Los Angeles, the domestic language, culture, cuisine, religion, and many other preferred practices of white individuals and groups are all formally irrelevant to their juridical, political and public status. Unfortunately, this is not yet the case with blacks, Amerindians and certain other American citizens of differing race, most of whom remain differentially incorporated in differing ways and degrees. However, setting these latter aside, it is evident that cultural pluralism prevails among American whites without social pluralism, since all whites are equal in the common public domain of national politics, economy and related activities. Such formal and substantive equality within the public domain illustrates the universalistic incorporation of “citizens” — though in this case only whites — as full and equal members and co-partners in the state.

With these qualifications, we can briefly summarise the principal varieties of pluralism in terms of their modes of incorporation as follows:

“Structural pluralism consists in the differential incorporation of collectivities segregated as social sections characterised by institutional divergences. Cultural pluralism consists in variable institutional diversity without corresponding collective segregation. Social pluralism involves the organization of institutionally dissimilar collectivities as corporate sections or segments whose boundaries demarcate distinct communities and systems of social action” (M. G. Smith, 1969, 444).

Thus while hierarchic pluralities display structural pluralism, and segmental pluralities display social pluralism as an effect of the equival-
ent incorporation of some segments, separately or within one or more of their hierarchic sections, complex pluralities combine both those modes, and cultural pluralism will only prevail without social and structural pluralism under conditions of universalistic incorporation.

It is evident, then, that plural societies are constituted and distinguished by corporate divisions that differ culturally, and that these may be aligned in differing ways to create hierarchic, segmental or complex pluralities. It is also evident that the various modes of incorporation which are so critical for the constitution of a plural society simultaneously relate individuals and collectivities to the society’s public domain. For this reason, white Americans, some of whom maintain ethnic and other corporations as well as cultural differences in the private domain, participate equally and on formally identical terms in the common public domain, since such ethnic corporations are irrelevant to the set of individual rights established by the law of the state.

Finally, as indicated above, we need to recognize that sometimes de jure and/or de facto aggregates incorporated in the private domain by criteria of race, ethnicity, language, religion or other cultural features, however active at that level, may have no status or role in the public domain, as, for example, is true of the various ‘national’ or ‘ethnic’ associations and other units through which various groups of white Americans try to preserve some vestige of their ancestral traditions, along with institutional and informal linkages of considerable affective, material and symbolic import among themselves. Conversely, when culturally distinct aggregates have the attributes of corporations and function without jural recognition in the public domain, their de facto existence and operations demonstrate the plural character of the society that includes them. In short, while the coexistence of culturally distinct aggregates is sufficient and necessary to constitute pluralism, to constitute a plural society such divisions must also operate as corporations, de jure or de facto, within the public domain. It is thus quite sufficient for such corporate units to have de facto existence and effect at the public levels for the society of which they are part to display the characteristic structure and properties of a plural society.

Under slavery, these British West Indian societies exhibited an almost perfect coincidence of de jure and de facto incorporation of several culturally distinct sections, namely, the whites, the free coloured, free blacks (a mere handful) and the slaves, some of whom were coloured, while most were black and of African birth. After emancipation, the coincident de jure and de facto incorporation of these social sections underwent progressive change, slavery being replaced at the political level by a property franchise that allowed some affluent browns and blacks to participate as voters, or even as candidates in their colonial politics, while excluding the overwhelming majority of the former ‘free people of colour’ together with the ex-slaves and their descendants on identical grounds. Other laws decreed by such unrepresentative legislatures reinforced the prevailing structures of differential incorporation, and enabled the labour-hungry dominant whites to import ‘liberated Africans’, Portuguese, and increasing numbers of alien workers from Asia under onerous conditions of indenture, to replace the ex-slaves who had quit their service soon after the abolition of slavery.

With the introduction of universal adult suffrage after World War II, all adults in these Caribbean societies became formally identical and equally free to participate in the public domain of politics, government, economy and all state-regulated activities. However, in the Caribbean the de facto realities and de jure prescriptions of identical legal, political and civic status differ substantially for most of the people, notably as regards language skills and literacy, law enforcement and adjudication, industrial organization, occupation and employment, property forms and market relations, with consequences that contradict the presumption of equality implied by universal suffrage. Until 1944 all members of these Creole West Indian societies belonged to one or other of three culturally distinct sections which were differentially incorporated de jure at the political level, as well as by their institutional distinctness and internal cohesion. These sections were, respectively, the disenfranchised black or Afro-Caribbean majority, the disfranchised brown, coloured or hybrid middle section, and the white Creole-expatriate ruling class, these being their respective cores and majorities. However, in more complex Caribbean pluralities such as Suriname, Guyana, Trinidad or Belize (British Honduras), the Creole grouping formed only a primary segment contraposed with such others as the Indians in Guyana or Trinidad, East Indians, Javanese, Amerindians and Bush Negroes in Suriname, or in Belize with Black Caribs, Mestizos, Maya of differing kinds, and, more recently, with German Mennonites.

Insofar as these racial or ethnic blocs, Creole and other, mobilized under differing political parties, their de facto incorporations within the public domain preserved and intensified their cultural identities and social distinctness, as we shall see. By contrast, in those biracial hierarchic pluralities consisting of black, brown and white, after World War II, universal suffrage and decolonisation dissolved
the former *de jure* distinctions of corporate units; but clearly by themselves those events could neither eliminate nor dissolve the *de facto* corporate categories and groups based on other conditions and on criteria rooted in differences of institutional action, social organization, economic conditions and cultural understandings that persist unaffected by constitutional change. It is evident that despite universal suffrage and party politics in several contemporary Caribbean societies, despite unionisation and more liberal industrial laws, educational provisions and the like, the majority of the people remain as poorly integrated and as remote and distinct from their superiors as ever, primarily on cultural, linguistic and social grounds, including race and colour, education, wealth and economic activity. This is equally true of the poorer, ill-educated blacks in the biracial Creole societies and in the Creole segments of more complex societies; and of their peers in the Indian and other racially distinct segments whose members, all in their differing ways and degrees, uphold distinctive cultural traditions, values and forms of social organization.

In contemporary Jamaica, for instance, despite the integrative effects of prolonged two-party competition, it is perfectly clear that different sections of the society pursue and interpret party politics in radically different ways. The murderous ‘tribal warfare’ between supporters of rival political parties in Kingston and other Jamaican townships is confined to the poorest and least educated strata of the black population, not all of whom are *lampionproletariat*, but who live in the most overcrowded and insanitary conditions. At the other end, the directorates of the political parties and industrial unions consisted almost exclusively of the ‘brown section’ or ‘coloured middle class’, not all of whom are phenotypically brown. Such variance is also true of large numbers who support the Ras Tafari criticism of Jamaica as Babylon, whose *de facto* corporate core consists in the Ras Tafari brethren and other urban black disprivileged. The brown section, from which the current political and industrial elites, most of the clergy, the established civil service and many professionals are drawn, shares a very different set of cultural ideas and social institutions which categorically rejects the Ras Tafari ideology and critique that pervade the ranks of the poor. Beyond and above the brown political elite stand a tight handful of expatriate and Creole whites who, by virtue of their economic assets and contacts, are largely able to dictate economic conditions to the people and government. This white section, despite its divergent economic and other interests, also shares a very distinct complex of values, ideas, interests and understandings which, together with equally distinct patterns of social relations and interaction, constitute and perpetuate their *de facto* corporate core, in contraposition to those of the black and/or Indian populations, and the coloured Creole section of this society. Together these culturally and racially distinct *de facto* corporate groupings ensure that beneath the facade of modernisation, universalistic incorporation and universal suffrage, the basic components of the colonial society and political order persist with astonishing resilience, once we look below the surface of social life and party politics, as do many natives who participate in these processes and who are most directly affected by them.

It should be evident from this review that race differences, social stratification and class differences affect and are affected by the conditions of institutional pluralism that pervade Caribbean societies, though in rather diverse ways. In our terms, modally biracial societies such as Antigua, Jamaica, St. Lucia and Barbados illustrate varieties of Creole hierarchic plurality, while Guyana, Trinidad, Belize or Suriname are rather more complex, since they combine conditions of hierarchic plurality with a basic division into contraposed segments that differ in race, culture, numbers, political status, economic interests, religion, and in other ways. Clearly the relative significance and intricate connections of pluralism, race and stratification in these different kinds of Caribbean society require careful study if we are to untangle the reciprocal influences of these factors on one another and determine their respective places in the social structure.
Chapter 4

Problem and Procedure

As the relations of race, class and culture are crucial for the understanding of Caribbean society, and have been grievously misunderstood for so long, it is best to pause here to set out the empirical patterns and analytic issues their study involves as simply and clearly as we can. To this end I shall first discuss these relations in the more common biracial Creole society based on whites and blacks, whose miscegenation produced brown or coloured hybrids. Thereafter I shall review the situation briefly in such complex multiracial societies as Guyana, Belize or Trinidad to indicate their greater complexity and difference.

In contemporary biracial Creole societies it is often the case that a few black and brown persons belong to the same economic stratum or occupational class as the resident white elite, native and expatriate. In that case it is also usual for whites, browns and blacks respectively to be distributed in at least two economic strata of those societies, defined in Marxist terms, and in three or more occupational 'classes'. Such distributions mean, inter alia, that while certain whites, blacks and browns have the same economic or occupational positions, they differ correspondingly from others of their own racial stock whose economic positions and occupations differ.

In addition, these biracial Creole societies consist of people who differ in such cultural practices and institutions as religion and worldview, language, literacy, mating and family, property, economic organization, savings and credit associations, art, recreation, etc. In consequence, members of differing cultural sections participate differentially in such sectors of the public domain as education, industry, commerce, agriculture and tourism, trade unions, political parties, the government bureaucracy, army and police. Typically in such biracial Creole societies the greatest cultural differences fall between the educated affluent white elite and the impoverished, illiterate or poorly educated black folk, while those hybrids and
others whose practice combines elements drawn from these differing institutional cultures fall between these extremes.

Besides those divergences of race and class noted above, as may be seen from the study of social stratification among the elite in colonial Grenada (M. G. Smith, 1965b), many, whose cultural identities and practices differ clearly, belong to the same race and economic class, while others of the same cultural section differ in race and/or economic class. Finally, while most members of a given racial stock (whites, browns or blacks in Grenada) commonly practise a distinctive set of institutional patterns and follow different cultures, in each racial category some differ from the racial mode in their cultural practices, with or without corresponding differences of economic position and/or occupation.

Given such variable alignments of race, culture and economic class in biracial Creole societies, the following important questions confront the student of their social structures. First, we need to know the characteristic distributions of these key variables in contemporary and historical Creole societies; and, whenever distributed otherwise, we need to know their principal atypical combinations. Secondly, we should investigate these aspects of the historical and contemporary structures of these Creole societies with special care to determine as objectively and conclusively as the data allow what conditions and/or factors have generated, sustained and modified these structural features, separately and together. Thirdly, when the distributions of these variables most closely coincide, so that the majority of each racial stock forms the core of a distinct economic class and a distinct cultural section, we need to know how these triply differentiated populations are aligned and articulated. Fourthly, when the distributions of these variables diverge or scatter, we need to know their characteristic combinations and alignments, qualitatively and quantitatively, together with the conditions that underlie these distributions, and the relative significance of each of the variables for status placement, social relations and collective articulation.

To illustrate these last points: in a biracial Creole society, where a black man of considerable wealth shares the ideational and institutional culture of dominant whites, under what conditions and in what spheres of action do such shared cultural and economic attributes overrule and cancel differences of race and historic status? With which racial stock does this affluent black identify himself and associate? Under what conditions is this self-identification likely to change and how? How is he regarded and treated by whites and non-whites in that society? In Grenada in 1952 a black man of great

wealth who continued to behave like one of the folk was excluded from 'polite society' by whites and browns alike. At that date the position of Grenada's 'poor whites' was much the same. Although affluent whites and poor whites — sometimes called 'backra johnnies' or 'redlegs' — belonged to the same race and shared certain institutional forms of family and religion, they differed so greatly in other cultural features, in economic condition and in political status, that they belonged to two different social and cultural sections.

In these biracial Creole societies the most variable phenotypical category of brown or coloured folk is also the most variable culturally in qualitative terms. Such folk are also widely distributed by occupation, wealth and economic condition, across whatever hierarchy of classes or strata may be defined in those terms, even though modally they form the core of the intermediate cultural section, or 'coloured middle class'. Accordingly, some coloured hybrids belong to every cultural section and economic class of these societies. While some brown elite of varying phenotype and hue are members of the economically dominant class, many belong to the most severely disprivileged sections of the society; and others, perhaps one-half of the total, occupy positions in the middle range. In much the same way, while some coloured folk are culturally indistinguishable from resident whites, others are culturally indistinguishable from blacks, and yet others, whose values, ideas and practice reflect these two traditions in their synthesis, have a distinctive intermediate culture of their own.

Thus for this biracial population we need to know if, when, how, and at what level do objective identities and differences of economic circumstance, of cultural practice, or of racial phenotype take priority over one another, separately or together. For an understanding of these biracial Creole social structures it is equally important to know precisely how others, of differing culture or race but the same economic or occupational circumstances, regard and treat these hybrids, and vice versa; and also how those of differing race or economic condition but identical cultural practice regard and relate to these hybrids and vice versa. Only by analysing these diverse sets of data within a consistent framework of method and theory shall we finally develop a comprehensive basis for the understanding of the biracial Caribbean Creole societies of today and yesterday.

Yet even a perfect grasp of the social structure of these biracial Creole units cannot provide adequate guidelines for those more complex multiracial societies such as Belize, Guyana, Suriname or Trinidad, that contain other large populations besides the black.
white or brown Creoles, such as East Indians, Amerindians, Javanese, Hispanic Mestizos, Chinese, Bush Negroes, Black Caribs or German Mennonites. Clearly, where peoples of such diverse race, culture, language and history form a common society together with 'Creoles', we cannot take for granted that the characteristic Creole forms of social and economic organization, their criteria of social status, and correlations of racial, cultural and economic similarities and differences, will prevail among peoples of such differing history and stock. Instead, at both societal and ethnic levels, it seems likely that factors intrinsic to the cultural traditions of these diverse stocks will modify or take precedence over Creole patterns and alignments. In consequence, to develop an adequate understanding of social structure in any of these multiracial Caribbean societies, in addition to internal analyses of the Creole segment as sketched above, we need equally detailed analyses of each non-Creole culture and population, together with an inclusive model of the societal structure that differentiates and articulates them all. Clearly the structures of these multiracial Caribbean societies should differ and be more complex than those of the biracial Creole units, since each multiracial society contains as one of its basic components a Creole bloc structured like those of the biracial units already discussed, but with special features that reflect its specific socio-historical experience and milieu.

*Prima facie* it seems more likely than otherwise that the inter-relations, situational dominance and reciprocal influences of race, culture and economic condition within each of the constituent sections of these complex pluralities will differ in content, kind and complexity from those that define the structures of biracial Creole societies. But in any event we need reliable empirical data on the situationally varying significance of the three key variables, and any others that are necessary for us to know and understand the social structure of these poly-segmental Caribbean societies with three or more racial stocks.

Coexistence of large Creole and non-Creole populations within self-governing Caribbean territories clearly reinforces solidarity within either bloc, through their implicit or explicit contraposition. This enhanced segmental solidarity automatically reduces the divisive effects of such differences as race, religion, language and other cultural practices and economic status in either bloc, while directing attention to the potentially antagonistic implications of similar differences between the members of rival blocs. As a consequence of these conditions, we cannot extrapolate directly from models of structure in biracial Creole societies even to the Creole segments of the more complex, multiracial communities, although the methods and data employed to study both are much the same. At best, we may use the knowledge of Creole social structure gained elsewhere to guide our study of the interior organization and external articulations of the contraposed segments of these multiracial societies.

These remarks indicate the need for a carefully planned and systematic study of the roles and relations of race, cultural practices and economic conditions in structuring these biracial and multiracial Caribbean societies. The primary objective of such enquiry should be to determine the relative and precise significance for social relations of each of these factors in differing contexts, contemporary and historical, together with their specific implications, separately and in differing combinations, for individual and collective interactions in either milieu, in all situations, and at all levels of the social structure. To resolve conclusively the prolonged dispute about the relations and relative influence of these three variables, ideally we should undertake a comparative study designed to assure their systematic controlled comparison. To this end, we should first vary in turn the value of each variable in constant conditions, while leaving the others unchanged, for standard actors and situations at different levels of the social structure. We should then do likewise for all possible combinations of two variables at all structural levels, while holding the other constant. These enquiries should be made in biracial and multiracial societies alike, and they should be supplemented by equally systematic studies of racially, culturally or economically homogeneous units to discover or demonstrate effects associated with the absence of these differentiae.

It is evident that such a systematic programme for the study of Caribbean social structure would require ample funds, careful design and organization, a team of several qualified researchers, and several years to execute, analyse and publish. Accordingly, until such an exercise is undertaken, we must perforce remain uncertain of the precise weight and inter-relations of these key variables in the formation, maintenance and operation of social structure in these biracial, multiracial, and racially homogeneous Caribbean societies, unless we can find and pursue some alternative path which, however imperfect, may deliver useful provisional conclusions pending completion of the researches just outlined. While no attempt to resolve these issues in the absence of a systematic plan of empirical research in contemporary societies, bucked by detailed historical studies of their de-
velopment, can be definitive, such an attempt is necessary on substantive and methodological grounds; and in the absence of the appropriate research, may be of value nonetheless.

With those conditions and the limitations of any substitute for a carefully planned regional programme of field and historical research into Caribbean social structure clearly in mind, in the following chapters I shall review some recent accounts of certain Caribbean societies, citing appropriate academic analyses, to illustrate and evaluate the current state of knowledge and opinion on these issues and relationships. I do so in the hope that by this process it may be possible to clarify the value and relationships of each of the key variables, economic status, race and cultural identity, that together establish or change the structure of these societies. To this effect I shall first review selected analyses or interpretations of four Caribbean societies separately, and then of all together, on the rationale and lines laid out below. At the least such comparative study of these differing accounts should help to correct some of our conceptual errors, and may supply guidelines for the empirical research programme outlined above. It should also alert students to the salience of race, culture and economic status in these societies, to the complexity of these conditions, and to some implications of their relations. Accordingly in reviewing the various studies cited below, I shall focus attention on their treatments of race, culture, economic position and other variables, and shall try to evaluate their conclusions for validity and comprehensiveness. However, at best, an exercise of this sort is only a stop-gap until the comparative and historical studies listed above have been organized and executed.

In today's Commonwealth Caribbean, as in yesterday's British West Indies, we find societies of three broadly differing kinds (Lowenthal, 1960). Some of the smallest and most isolated societies such as Isle la Ronde, Union or Canouan in the Grenadines, or the Turks and Caicos Islands, may be racially homogeneous, but normally they contain two racial stocks, blacks and whites, who have lived apart despite their approximate status parity with little intermarriage until recently. Larger biracial societies of the familiar Creole type differ more significantly in their character and complexity than in mere size from such miniscule and virtually unstratified dependencies. These typical Creole societies evolved from historic bases of white-dominated plantation slavery, the slaves initially being all imported blacks, but later including Creoles, some of whom were mulattoes, the product of miscegenation. Under and after slavery these biracial Creole societies were ordered and operated as hierarchic pluralities consisting basically of three ranked sections that differed modally in culture and colour (M. G. Smith, 1965b, 92–115). Their component social sections are commonly identified and ranked as white, brown and black, blacks being the overwhelming demographic majority while whites, a diminishing minority, historically controlled the government, economy and such central institutions as the church. In some contemporary Creole societies we shall find other important ethnic minorities such as Chinese, Portuguese, Lebanese, Syrian, Jews and some East Indians, each of these groups being occupationally specialised and entrenched in some ecological niche, and all except the Indians being concentrated in the towns.

The third kind of Commonwealth Caribbean society differs from those already mentioned, primarily by the addition of one or more substantial populations of differing culture and racial stock, as, for example, East Indians, Amerindians or Hispanic Mestizos. Excluding Belize, which has the most diverse racial and cultural composition but whose social structure is not yet adequately documented, Guyana and Trinidad illustrate this complex multiracial type of Caribbean society very nicely. In both countries East Indians and Creoles of African descent, black and coloured, constitute the two largest population blocs; and in both countries these racial segments are politically organized under parties that compete for dominance to control the government and state. In Guyana, though without much influence on the government of Forbes Burnham, Indians are now the demographic majority. In Trinidad the black and brown Creoles together outnumber East Indians and retain political power, but may not do so in the near future, given the high East Indian birthrate. In both countries East Indians and Afro-Creoles assert their equality as individuals and as collectivities, thus manifesting their segmental structure, social pluralism, and de facto corporate organization. Formerly, under colonial rule, both societies were complex pluralities of the kind described above, since the ruling British differentially incorporated their Afro-Creole and East Indian populations together, while preserving their segmental differences. To some degree, such hierarchic conditions may still persist sub rosa in Trinidad, where both the ruling Creole elite and their white allies differ culturally from the black masses on whose support at the polls their power depends.

Given the differences of structural type and racial composition in these contemporary Commonwealth Caribbean societies, in order
to clarify the relations of race, stratification and pluralism in these units, it may seem that we should consider these issues separately for each structural type, beginning with such miniscule and weakly stratified units as Union or Carriacou (M. G. Smith, 1962), then proceeding to the biracial Creole societies of moderate size such as Grenada or Jamaica, and so to the more complex multiracial societies of Guyana and Trinidad. However, given their isolation, marginality, dependent status and relatively egalitarian structures, I shall not discuss the nature and relations of these variables in the miniscule units, but will instead refer interested readers to Lowenthal's survey (idem, 1972), and to my earlier remarks on these questions (M. G. Smith, 1974, 289–297). I do so partly because casual observation of several Grenadines during the summer of 1981 provisionally confirmed these expectations, and partly because we lack adequate contemporary accounts of these communities. Lacking such data, I shall therefore restrict my discussion to the larger societies of the Commonwealth Caribbean, and will analyse the social structures of two hierarchic Creole units and two complex multiracial societies, to provide an implicit comparison of them all. Selecting Grenada and Jamaica to illustrate the former variety, I shall first review recent analyses of the roles and relations of race, class and pluralism in their social structures before attempting to do likewise with the comparable literatures on Trinidad and Guyana.

In choosing these four societies I have been influenced partly by their prominence in the long and continuing controversy about the relative significance of race, class or stratification, and culture or pluralism in Caribbean society; partly by their relatively large sociological literatures which, while uneven in quality, are on average superior to those of other Commonwealth Caribbean territories; and also partly because, individually and typologically, these four societies perhaps have the greatest significance for students and natives of the Commonwealth Caribbean. As regards the method by which I propose to investigate and clarify the reciprocal relations and relative influence of race, class and pluralism in each of these societies, I shall simply summarise and consider the treatment of these issues in recent influential studies of these several societies, beginning with the simpler hierarchic pluralities of Grenada and Jamaica, and following with similar discussions of social structure in Trinidad and Guyana. Before attempting to generalise about the relation of these variables in either or both of these societal types, I shall then summarise and review some general statements about the nature and basis of Commonwealth Caribbean societies in order to see what light they might shed on the issues that concern us. In conclusion
Grenada

With a mid-1976 population of 110,000 and per caput GNP of US$410, Grenada is clearly a much smaller and less 'prosperous' society than Jamaica, which then had a population of 2.1 million and a per caput GNP of US$1,150 (IBRD, 1978. 20). Structurally, however, the two societies had many common features. Both derived their populations and traditions principally from Europe and Africa, supplemented by relatively small communities of East Indians, and in Jamaica by Syrians, Chinese and Jews. In either island most of the agricultural land still remains in the hands of a fairly small fraction of landowners, many of whom are not nationals and reside abroad. Both societies exhibit severe inequalities in their distributions of wealth, income, housing, occupational opportunities, employment, and most material values and indicators of economic condition. In these and other ways, both displayed hierarchic structures of economic class, race or colour, culture and status. During the seventies both societies experienced prolonged political unrest and adopted socialist governments. In 1980 the Jamaican electorate voted to replace this socialist regime by a capitalist-oriented government which proclaimed its intention of attaching the Jamaican economy to that of the United States as a favoured client. In Grenada, when this essay was written, the People's Revolutionary Government led by Maurice Bishop remained in power, despite heavy pressure, overt and covert, from the United States, but in October 1983, following a military coup in which Bishop was killed, American forces invaded the island and eliminated Bishop's party on the invitation and with the active support of Grenada's Governor-General, Sir Paul Scoon, and several Commonwealth Caribbean governments.

The two island societies also differ in several respects. Despite its low levels of industrialisation and modest urbanisation, those conditions are more prominent in Jamaica than Grenada. Jamaica also maintains a more diversified economy with heavy reliance on bauxite and alumina production and tourism, as well as exports of sugar and rum, bananas and other tropical crops. Grenada derives its foreign incomes mainly from tourism and from exports of cocoa, nutmeg, mace and bananas. During this century both societies have
had small resident white populations. In Grenada most whites belonged to the poor white communities at Mount Moritz and at Windward, Carriacou; in Jamaica poor whites are numerically and structurally marginal, while the residual white plantocracy, white merchants, expatriate and other professionals are still disproportionately prominent and influential in public affairs. Effectively, Grenada lost most of its white elite between 1870 and 1910, following which most local planters have been coloured Creoles who also dominated the island economy until twenty years ago.

Unlike Grenada, which remained under the spell of Eric Gairy’s leadership from 1951 until 1979, even though he and his party were not always in office during this period, Jamaica has boasted a relatively stable two-party system with several changes of government from 1944. However, since 1967 Jamaican politics, especially in the urban areas, have been increasingly associated with violence, bloodshed and terror as gun-gangs contested territorial dominance in ghetto areas (Lacey, 1977; Chevannes, 1981). By contrast, in Grenada Prime Minister Gairy’s reliance on ‘mongoose gangs’ and on ‘police aides’ with criminal backgrounds to harass people and terrorise suspected opponents first drove Maurice Bishop and his colleagues in the New Jewel Movement to take precautionary steps to assure their defence, and ultimately to seize the government during Gairy’s absence on March 13, 1979, following a pre-dawn raid on Gairy’s troops at their camp near Point Salines. Nonetheless, before that date, and until October 1983, Grenada lacked the kind of party political violence that has been endemic in Jamaica from 1967 to 1981 (Government of Grenada, 1975; Jacobs & Jacobs, 1979).

In 1952–53 I studied the structure and stratification of Grenadian society to determine as precisely as possible whether it illustrated either of the conflicting theses of Talcott Parsons (1953) or J. S. Furnivall (1949), that is, to say, whether or not it exhibited the normative consensus that Parsons assumed, or rather that lack of ‘common will’ based on common norms, understandings and values, which Furnivall claimed to prevail in plural societies. As the island was then passing through the critical early phase of Gairy’s rise to power, I also tried to identify the forces that had precipitated its crisis and to assess their structural implications, paying special attention to a recent account of these developments by Simon Rottenberg (1952), an American labour economist who had visited the island almost immediately after Gairy’s first successful general strike in 1951 to observe its industrial relations (Smith, 1965a, 1965b, 202–203).

During the sixties Grenada was studied by a political scientist, A. W. Singham (ibidem, 1968) in the wake of political confrontations between the then Governor and Prime Minister Gairy, which provoked a constitutional crisis. Combining Weberian concepts of bureaucracy, charisma and its routinisation with David Easton’s systems model of political processes, Singham focussed attention on the nature and limitations of Gairy’s leadership of his political party, trade union, the government and the island society in these terminal years of colonial rule. In 1974, when Grenada received its formal independence from Britain, that event was the occasion for a conference at the UWI campus in Trinidad, in which participants discussed the Grenadian social order. Three years later Fernando Henrques and Joseph Manyoni compared ‘ethnic group relations’ in Barbados and Grenada for a UNESCO symposium (1977, 55–109). Finally, after Gairy’s fall in 1979, W. R. Jacobs and Ian Jacobs employed a Marxist model of Grenadian society to analyse its development under Gairy’s rule, (ibidem, 1980). To evaluate and compare the alternative models of Grenadian society in these differing accounts, I shall summarise each briefly in the order of their appearance.

First Rottenberg (1952) concentrated on labour relations between planters and ‘peasant-labourers’ on the estates, which more closely approximated the hacienda than the plantation (Wolf and Mintz, 1959; M. G. Smith, 1963, 22–29; 1965b, 267–271). He was struck by the economically irrational behaviours, interests and priorities of planters and workers alike, but failed to pursue their implications, namely, that economic values were not decisive in relations between planters and people (Rottenberg, 1952).

Following Rottenberg in 1953, I found Grenadian society divided

“between a Western-oriented elite which contains less than seven per cent of the people, and the rest, among whom rural traditionalism and African orientations prevail. . . Correlations between social status, pigmentation, association and family are extremely high. . . Occupation and educational achievement are ambiguous criteria for placement. Family groups of approximately equal status and colour tend to intermarry. Members of the highest, richest, smallest and whitest stratum, most of whom own land, are almost all schooled in Britain, as were their fathers before and their legitimate children after them. Each stratum tended to form an exclusive field for informal
association as shown by clique, mating and club behaviour. Marked upward mobility in 1953 was represented by five men only, of whom four were East Indians whose produce-dealing profits had been invested in land, while the fifth and wealthiest Grenadian was a black ex-policeman who, if literate, was still quite unrepresentative, and is said to have made his millions from gambling in Chicago. This gentleman was regarded by all as a social conundrum, and by his actions indicated that he shared this view” (M. G. Smith, 1965b, 276–277).

My data showed that in 1953 as before, the “Western-oriented elite” which dominated the society, differed modally from the people or “folk” who ranked below in

“language, appearance, housing, property form and value, occupation and organizational status, employment conditions, kinship, birth, status and descent, intermarriage, education, recreation, settlement patterns, religious belief and practice, and modes of voluntary association. They differ also in political and occupational organizations for the pursuit of special or sectional interests.” (M. G. Smith, 1965a, 237),

as well as values and behavioural norms. Moreover, within this minute elite, detailed study demonstrated four ranked strata distinguished as ‘participation classes’ and ‘status groups’, as well as by race, colour, occupation, wealth, political influence, culture and institutions (ibid, 191–194, 237–246). As regards correlations of status and race or colour among the elite and throughout the society, if we exclude the deviant poor white communities at Mount Moritz and Windward, decline in status correlated mechanically with increasing pigmentation (M. G. Smith, 1965a, 158–166) and with genotype (ibid, 166–168). Excluding four East Indians who do not fall within the black-white colour scale that Creoles used to classify themselves by phenotype, a subsample of 76 landowners drawn from 376 ranked elite whose pheno-types and status scores were known showed that while status declined rigidly as pigment increased, acreages owned varied more freely (M. G. Smith, 1974, 304–305: 1965a, 142–147). As might be expected, on average those who owned most land had the lightest colour and highest mean status, both of which declined on average along with acreage owned. Even so, the closer correlation of colour and status, as against colour and acreage owned, or status and acreage owned, should alert us to the uncertain significance of economic factors, including occupation and income, for status placements in Grenada at this date. It was also notable that

“certain categories of professionals, such as doctors, priests, jurists, and accountants, have average scores that place them above planters. Clearly, not all planters we have defined occupationally as planters belong to the ‘planter class’, which . . . includes many who do not engage in planting on their own, or on anyone’s account” (M. G. Smith, 1965a, 121).

These findings support Rottenberg’s observations on the relatively low priority Grenadians attached to economic activities for status placement.

In a brief discussion of Grenadian stratification, Beverley Steele (1974a, 7–17) summarised my observations and argued inter alia that, during the intervening twenty years,

“the old ascriptive order had not been able to withstand the new order based on achievement and individual merit” (ibid, 16),

concluding that

“far from being a society stratified socially and culturally, Grenadians share the same cultural tradition” (ibid, 17).

However, despite such statements (ibid, 1974b, 35–38), her very brief discussions of family structure and religion in Grenada illustrate obliquely the cultural differences I had found in 1953, and she provides no substantial data on education, economy and politics. Neither does she reveal what kind of social stratification, if any, Grenada had in 1973–74, though she refers, without elucidation, to ‘upper strata’, to ‘people of high status’, to ‘people of low status’, to ‘the younger generation’, ‘the old elite’, ‘the new elite’, and the non-elite. Since she began by saying that she would use

“the term ‘social stratification’ as a heuristic device not only to describe the class structure of Grenada but also to indicate variety in the society and culture – differences which are sometimes seen as social divisions closely paralleling the ethnic origins of the Grenadian people” (ibid, 7).
we cannot be sure precisely what she means.

In his account of the Grenadian polity under Gairy, Archie Singham first examined the agrarian economy, identified its peasant labourers as ‘agro-proletarians’ (Singham, 1968, 25), and then considered the social structure, paying attention to occupational and racial differences (ibid., 72–76). Quoting the census of 1960, he noted that over 90 per cent of the population at that date had no education beyond the primary school, while 60 per cent had not proceeded beyond Standard V. Less than 8 per cent had been to secondary schools, and less than one third of those had secured School Certificates. Less than one per cent of the population had been educated abroad, at university or otherwise. Singham did not integrate these and other relevant data into an explicit model of the social stratification, though he referred to ‘middle’ and ‘lower classes’ (ibid., 86–88), and, besides the ‘peasantry’, to ‘agro-proletarians’ and to an ‘urban working class’. He also identified an elite and a middle class, one segment of which was ‘counter-elite’, as collective actors in the political process (ibid., 189–199).

By 1974 Singham’s views on Grenadian society had changed, evidently under the influence of Marxism. Arguing then that social scientists must be ideologically committed – presumably on Marxist lines – in order to deal adequately and positively with such societies as the Caribbean, he asserted that

“we have not yet come to terms with the phenomenon of class in Caribbean politics” (Singham, 1974b, 39).

He proposed to do so by identifying as relevant, among other classes in West Indian society, “a comprador intellectual class” (ibid., 40) concentrated in the University, together with the comprador bourgeoisie, the Grenadian ‘ruling class’, a small landowning class, a ‘capitalist class’, and a ‘service working class’ (Singham, 1974a, 38) in and around the capital, St. George’s, as well as workers and peasants. The difficulties of finding a set of economic categories appropriate to distinguish and describe the Grenadian society comprehensively and insightfully, whether defined by Marxist or by other criteria, are evident from these efforts by Singham in 1968 and 1974.

After Gairy’s downfall the structure of Grenadian society was tackled again by W. R. Jacobs and Ian Jacobs. For this they adopted Lenin’s definition of class as

“a large group of people differing from each other by the place that they occupy in a historically determined system of social production, by their relations (in most cases fixed and formulated in law) with the means of production, by their role in the social organization of labour, and consequently by the dimensions of the share of social wealth of which they dispose and the mode of acquiring it” (V. I. Lenin, 1975, 172; cited in Jacobs & Jacobs, 1980, 27).

They then developed a class model of Grenadian society that distinguished (ibidem, 29) “two principal classes . . . based on the relationship to the principal means of production – the land”, each allied with various ‘social strata’, and with others dependent on it. For the Jacobs, the two main classes in Grenada are

“the capitalist class (the principal owners of the means of production) and the working class (the workers in the means of production which face each other as exploiter (the capitalist class) and exploited (the working class)” (ibid., 28–29).

In their view, the capitalist class in Grenada had the following composition:

“(a) A foreign-based ownership group, the foreign bourgeoisie
(b) A local-based ownership group, the local bourgeoisie
(c) A comprador sector (import and export merchants) consisting of local and foreign elements.

Closely aligned with the capitalist class are:
(d) Large sections of the professional strata, e.g., medical doctors, lawyers, administrative personnel, high levels of the civil service (the bureaucratic bourgeoisie), high levels of the teaching and other intellectual professions, and commercial managers (the managerial class)
(e) That section of the petite bourgeoisie that developed the capacity to generate a surplus, e.g., ‘successful’ shopkeepers and retailers, small businessmen and the more prosperous peasants
(f) The political directorate operating the capitalist political economy” (Jacobs & Jacobs, 1979, 29).
According to the Jacobs, the other basic class, the Grenadian working class,

“consisted of a closely interwound group of agricultural, manual, industrial, intellectual and clerical workers who can be categorised into several strata:

(a) The industrial workers — to be found mostly in the urban areas and in the hotel industry — includes also non-administrative, manual and intellectual wage-earners in all sectors of the economy. This strata (sic) came into its own with the increasing diversification of the Grenadian economy in the mid-1960s.

(b) The agro-proletariat — those who do exclusively agricultural work

(c) The peasantry proper — those who are involved in peasant cultivation only

(d) The semi-peasantry — those who are both agricultural labourers and small-scale peasants.

Allied to the working class are:

(e) Large sections of the emergent petite bourgeoisie, including students and youth, lower level teachers, and lower civil servants

(f) The progressive sectors of the professional strata (the progressive or radical intelligentsia)

(g) The unemployed” (ibid., 30).

They were also concerned to distinguish the ‘unemployed’

“from the lumpen-proletariat — that largely urban group which is not interested in employment but whose major concern is to live in an unprincipled way off the earnings of the workers. This element is entirely opportunistic and are as capable of allying themselves with capitalists as they are capable of supporting the workers” (ibid., 30).

Pointing out that a concrete study of “the Grenadian political economy reveals the existence and significance of strata not found in the more extensively studied, and therefore better known, European experiences” (ibid., 31), Jacobs and Jacobs quote Lenin and others to legitimise their innovations, as cited above. However, I have some difficulty in including the ‘comprador sector’ of import and export merchants as members of the ‘capitalist class’, if class is defined by ‘relation to the means of production’; and I believe Marx would also do so. Likewise I find some difficulties with the concept of ‘a bureaucratic bourgeoisie’ as distinct from the category of commercial executives, since the notion of the bourgeoisie has historically been identified with capitalist entrepreneurship, and, at least officially, that is not the role of the civil servant in Grenada. I am also uncertain whether ‘intellectual wage-earners’ can legitimately be included in the ‘industrial working class’, since on Marx’s criteria they produce nothing except words. Such words and services are clearly not the kind of material commodities by which Marx identified production, its means and mode. The same point applies to the clerical worker, since as defined by Marx (idem., 1977, 83–98, 108–111, 272–273) production excludes administration and clerical activity, along with education, intellectual activity, entertainment, art, religion, politics and much else. On the other hand, I cannot agree that the unemployed are not members of the working class, since in Grenada as in other West Indian societies, many workers are chronically under-employed or seasonally unemployed according to their work and place in the local economy. The Jacobs’ view of the lumpenproletariat also differs from the assessments of other writers such as Carl Stone (idem., 1973, 146) and Ken Post (idem., 1978, 149–150).

What is most striking about the Jacobs’ class model of Grenadian society is its utter indifference to race, colour and culture, none of which figure, however obliquely, in their scheme, though, as indicated above, historically and today these are basic conditions and aspects of Grenadian society as an orderly arrangement of individuals, their activities and relations. The fact that most Grenadian workers, industrial and agricultural, urban and rural, are black, near-black or East Indian, poorest whites being isolated in closed communities, while in the Jacobs’ scheme, most capitalists, both foreign and local, are white, and their allies are largely brown, could not be gathered from anything in this Marxist model. Neither could the historic and continuing social and political significance of racial and colour distributions be suspected or intelligible. Finally, under Gairy the political directorate was by no means a reliable ally of the ‘capitalist class’, as the Jacobs’ assert (ibid., 29). Precious few of the planters whose estates were seized by Gairy’s government ever received compensation therefor. There were also several other ways in which Gairy used his political power to attack or uproot the interests of planters and other local ‘capitalists’.

The Jacobs’ attempt to reduce the complexity of Grenadian society to two major economic classes, the exploiters and the ex-
ployed, is overtly contradicted in their account by the alliance of "large sections of the emergent petite bourgeoisie (and) ... progressive sectors of the professional stratum" (ibid., 30) with the exploited classes, while the lumpen and the political directorate are both regarded as active or potential allies of the capitalist class; and 'prosperous peasants' are classified as petite bourgeoisie and exploiters, even though they may hire no one, nor have tenants.

These comments on the Jacobs' class model of Grenadian society should not be taken to mean that I am opposed to class analyses of Grenadian or any other society within or beyond the Caribbean. Surely the economic structure of any society is always an important and sometimes a decisive guide to its understanding. However, as Rottenberg found, despite his economic assumptions, status considerations have priority over material interests among Grenadian 'peasants' or 'agro-proletarians' as well as planters. My study of the society in 1953 found this to be equally true of other strata. It is thus misleading to present an economic class model of Grenadian society as though members of these economic classes or strata ordinarily act according to their presumed economic interests. The divergent behaviour of class actors from such expectations presents the Jacobs' with some awkward problems in their account of Gairy's administration and downfall. To a degree Singham's earlier efforts at the application of class categories to Grenadian society illustrate some of the difficulties that confronted the Jacobs', whose commitment to Marxism is clearly, on the record, and on Singham's self-identification as a 'comprador intellectual' (1974b, 39–40), much purer than his.

As we shall be concerned at several points below with the appropriateness and adequacy of class analyses of Caribbean society, it is perhaps as well to indicate my position on this issue here. Following Weber, I fully appreciate the significance of an appropriate economic classification of its population for the analysis of any society, particularly where productive and other economic roles are diverse and differentially distributed among the population. In the descriptive analysis of any society such an account is always essential. However, I am by no means sure that in all cases such a classification is either sufficient as a description of the social order, or adequate as a basis for understanding its structure and development. Particularly in colonial and other multiracial societies, and especially in plural societies, it seems clear that an exclusively economic classification ignores fundamental differences of race, language, culture, history, religion, numbers, location, values and social organization which may or do differentiate the various segments, sections or strata of the population. Of course, some Marxists simply deny the fundamental difference between exploitative economic structures within such racially homogeneous societies as 19th century Holland or Britain on the one hand, and the grosser systems of exploitation imposed by dominant elements of one race on populations of differing stock, culture, social organization, language, religion and ecology. As we shall see, other Marxists try to subsume these differences under such labels as 'over-determination' or 'dominance' (S. Hall, 1977, 171; 1979). To such authors it sometimes seems that "Race is ... the modality in which class is 'lived', the medium through which class relations are experienced, the form in which it is appropriated and 'fought through'" (Hall, 1979; 341).

The fact remains, as Rodney pointed out, that within these colonial and ex-colonial territories, though class positions and relations may and do change, racial differences are not only immutable but modally decisive for distributions of economic, educational, political and social opportunities. To presume the uniform distribution and correlation of such a radically different factor with Marxist conceptions of economic class, on accidental grounds and without regard to historical change, is clearly anti-empirical and self-contradictory nonsense. Yet for Caribbean societies this is precisely what the economic determinist approach to their organization and change seems to assume. For example, neither in his early essay (R. Jacobs, 1974, 21–33) nor in his joint publication with Ian Jacobs, does Richard Jacobs devote more than two pages to the Grenadian society and economy before Gairy's advent in 1951. Not only are societies subjected to such analyses thereby deprived of their essential individualities as reflected in their social compositions, cultures, ecologies, linguistic, religious and other features, but they also risk losing their histories in order to fit the Marxist model. My response here is simply that while economic classifications in terms of relationships to the market or means of production may be extremely helpful in arriving at dynamic structural models of these societies, it is often, indeed commonly, the case in the Caribbean that such economic classifications do not coincide with their most significant social divisions. This was shown, for example, in some detail for Grenada in 1953 (Smith, 1965a, 1965b, 262–303; Rottenberg, 1952). Neither, unless we initially assume the universal priority and
determinism of economic interests and relations, which then presents the problem of explaining away the overwhelming mass of contradictory historical and world ethnographic data, should we ever think that an economic model is sufficient, however necessary, for the descriptive analysis of any society.

The last account of Grenada I shall cite is a discussion of its 'ethnic group relations' by Fernando Henriques and Joseph Manyoni (ibidem, 1977), which seeks inter alia to demonstrate the invalidity of my plural society model for Grenada and the West Indies at large by comparing Grenada and Barbados. That essay simultaneously urges the value of Henriques' notion of 'white bias' as an analytic principle sufficient to 'explain' these social structures. However, I shall only consider here the brief discussion of Grenada in their essay (Henriques and Manyoni, 1957).

Of nineteen pages on Grenada in the article, eight (ibid., 86–93) summarise the island's social and economic history as chronicled by Gittens Knight (1946, 19–21). The following nine pages (Henriques & Manyoni 1977, 93–101) outline the society and its stratification in the early 1970s, citing Rottenberg and myself liberally, while the remainder (ibid., 101–105) demonstrate excellent first-hand knowledge of Grenadian tourism, before and since 1967. Although the data marshalled are neither impressive nor appropriate and adequate for the paper's purpose. However, despite their declared rejection of my claim that Grenada in 1953 was a plural society (ibidem, 68 f.), unlike Steele (1974a, 1974b) these authors agree that the cleavages I then found with regard to status, colour, culture and institutional practice

"do exist that they act to reinforce the social distance imposed by the fact of colour, and that they serve as a rationalisation for the 'white' elite's attitude and behaviour towards the mass of the people. While there is a superficial homogeneity in the everyday behaviour and relations between elite and masses, this conceals a very real cultural and institutional cleavage" (ibidem, 98–99).

To illustrate this cleavage, they cite differences of language, marriage, family, religion, life style, housing, education and colour.

shade off into the proletariat. The system, however, cannot be regarded solely as a manifestation of a class divided society. For this to be so mobility would be essential. Mobility is minimal, basically because pigmentation, irrespective of economic opportunity, is a powerful inhibitory factor" (ibidem., 99–100; M. G. Smith, 1965b, 257).

Thus, despite their differing conceptual bases, data and interests, Henriques and Manyoni appear to support my descriptive analysis of Grenadian society for the early fifties, rather than those of Beverley Steele, Singham or the Jacobs, even while rejecting my theoretical model.

We may now turn to consider some differing views of Jamaican society advanced by scholars between 1945 and 1975.
Modern study of Jamaica begins with the monographs of Madeline Kerr (1952), Fernando Henriques (1953) and Edith Clarke (1957), when the country was passing through the closing decade of colonial rule. Kerr, an English social psychologist who worked with Edith Clarke on the West Indian Social Survey of 1946, concentrated mainly on Jamaican personality formation and did not pretend to analyse the social structure. Asserting, without evidence, that very few Jamaicans “are of pure African descent. Most are of mixed origin” (Kerr, 1952, ix-x), she studiously excluded white elements of Jamaican society from her study. However, though demographically minute, that group has always been economically and socially dominant and remains so. Kerr’s conclusions obliquely indicate the presence and influence of these whites by their restriction to the middle and lower classes, and by her references to colour prejudice in a society where the ‘ideal figure is white or near-white’ (ibid., 93–5), where ‘to be white is to get innumerable privileges’ (ibid., 197), and where ‘there is a government composed of English people or white Jamaicans’ (ibid., 200). Despite Adam Kuper’s reading (Kuper, 1976, 55; 1977, 124), it seems clear that Kerr, a social psychologist, perceived Jamaica as divided into three ranked strata which she distinguished as white, coloured and black (Kerr, 1952, 93–104), the latter being the disprivileged majority.

Edith Clarke, the Jamaican who directed the West Indian Social Survey, was a wealthy member of the white Creole planter class who had studied anthropology under Malinowski at the London School of Economics. She also said very little about whites and the stratification of Jamaican society. However, to introduce her account of Jamaican family patterns, she gave a brief sketch of the background of the three communities she had studied. In the process she distinguished ‘a coloured middle class’ and a black majority descended from African slaves (Clarke, 1957, 17–21), thus implicitly dividing the society into three social strata that differed in colour and other features, including ‘cultural traditions’ (ibid., 18 ff).
In 1955 the American historian Philip Curtin reviewed the history of Jamaica from 1830 to 1865, and identified its two major traditions anchored in contraposed strata, namely, an Afro-Jamaican culture, which before and after Emancipation in 1838 prevailed among the black slaves and ex-slaves; and on the other side, the Anglo-Jamaican culture of the white 'caste' and free coloured 'castes' (Curtin, 1955, 23–60). The very title of Curtin's monograph, Two Jamaicas, stressed these black-white antinomies. However, as just illustrated, he repeatedly discussed these oppositions and relations in terms of a 'threefold racial division' which variably approximated 'caste' lines (ibid., 112, 173), noting the cultural, economic and political differences between and within these ranked racial strata. In claiming otherwise, it would appear that Adam Kuper has misunderstood and oversimplified Curtin's model (Kuper 1976, 55; 1977, 124) as well as Kerr's. Since Curtin distinguishes the ruling class of white planters from the coloureds and blacks, whose cultural differences he describes, it seems evident that despite its dichotomous label, his account identifies three racially and culturally distinct strata as the major elements of the Jamaican slave society whose attempted adjustment to the abolition of slavery terminated in the bloodbath of 1865 and suspension of the constitution.

In 1953 Fernando Henriches published his first monograph on Jamaica. Though a Jamaican by birth, he had 'left the island at an early age and ... only maintained intermittent contact (with it) since', but regarded himself as a member of the 'upper class', though of a family with 'dark but European-like features and hair' (Henriches, 1953, 46). Originally a historian, Henriches presented the first draft of his book as a thesis for the doctoral degree in anthropology at Oxford, after briefly revisiting Jamaica. According to him, Jamaican society is readily understood as a hierarchy of colour-classes which has evolved from the historic slave order of whites, free people of colour, free blacks, and slaves, black and coloured. In his view, by 1950 the society consisted of an upper class dominated by whites but containing a fair coloured component; a middle class dominated by coloureds but containing a black (lower middle) stratum; and a lower class in which coloured also ranked ahead of blacks (ibid., 36 ff., 42 ff.).

Evidently for Henriches, 'colour' is profoundly important and pervasive in Jamaican society, socially and culturally. He therefore discusses this feature at length, noting that in Jamaica 'colour' is evaluated in terms of actual colour, hair formation, features, and skin texture' (ibid., 47). He elaborates on these criteria and combinations, and concludes that "the society in its class and colour attitudes is motivated by ... the 'white bias'" (ibid., 51), which means the preference for whites and all things white, such as language, cuisine, religion, women, wealth, high status, government, dress and whatever has been historically associated with whites in Jamaica. Thus, despite Macmillan's early warning that 'colour, though unquestionably an important psychological factor, is only one element' (1938, 53) in West Indian society, Henriches seeks to express virtually every dimension of the social order and its inequalities in chromatic terms as functions or effects of the postulated 'white bias', without apparently realising that such a label can at best merely describe, but can neither analyse nor explain the structures in which it appears. H. Hoetink later did much the same thing in his essay on Caribbean race relations (Hoetink, 1967; M. G. Smith, 1968). Nowhere does Henriches systematically discuss and analyse the military and political conditions that enabled Britons to maintain their racial, cultural and economic domination of Jamaica until and during the first half of this century, much as the French did in Haiti until Toussaint, and still do in contemporary Guadeloupe and Martinique, or the Dutch in colonial Suriname, the Spanish in Cuba until c. 1890, and so on. As in Hoetink's later analysis, we are simply presented by Henriches with a disembodied 'white bias' or 'somatic norm' as the irreducible and independent determinant of a social order historically grounded in black slavery and white colonial rule; but unlike Hoetink, Henriches claimed that for non-whites also this white 'somatic norm image' is the accepted ideal and measure of excellence in cultural and physical matters alike. Twenty-five years after publication of this early account of Jamaica, when comparing 'race relations' in Grenada and Barbados, Henriches merely repeated without re-examination or further development his 'hypothesis of the white bias' (1977, 86) as if by itself the notion is self-evident and explanatory.

In 1956, following various studies in Jamaica, I outlined the plural framework of that society in the course of a long unpublished memo to the then Chief Minister, Norman Manley. That section of the memo was first published in 1961 and reissued later (M. G. Smith, 1961; 1965b, 162–176). In those paragraphs I tried to summarise the institutional patterns characteristic of the major strata of local society at that date. Three ranked social sections differentiated culturally and otherwise were identified and labelled heuristically as "the white, the brown, the black, this being the order of their current and historical dominance, and the exact reverse of..."
their relative numerical strength. Though these colour coefficients are primarily heuristic, they indicate the racial majority and cultural ancestry of each section accurately” (Smith, 1965b, 163).

Having noted that

“race concepts are cultural facts and their significance varies with social conditions”.

I argued that

“to understand the local attitude to race, we must therefore begin with the society and its culture” (ibid., 163).

The essay accordingly reviewed the major institutional sectors of Jamaican society and culture in 1955–6, namely, kinship, mating and family, religion and magic, education, occupation and such economic institutions as property, savings and credit, exchange and marketing, labour, etc., the law and its administration, the political order, recreational patterns, association and values. In concluding I noted that

“This summary describes a society divided into three sections, each of which practises a different system of institutions . . . Patterns of interpersonal relations do not always correspond with these cultural divisions; and in every cultural section there are some persons who habitually associate with others who carry a different cultural tradition, more regularly than with those of their own cultural community” (ibid., 175).

I then pointed out that while some may hold that the account had only identified two institutionally distinct sections, since the white and brown strata could both be regarded as ‘two social classes which form a common section because they have a number of institutions in common’, nonetheless the institutional differences between these sections, coupled with the tendencies for sectional systems of institutions to be ‘integrated separately’ obliged me to distinguish three sections rather than two (ibid., 175), even though at that time both whites and blacks used dichotomous models of local society, each of which placed the coloured or browns with the ‘opposite sect’.

In 1960 the Ras Tafarians of Kingston protested against the grinding inequalities of Jamaican society and their punitive effects on black Jamaicans. As one of a team from the University College, I was assigned to study and report on the movement, its “growth, doctrines, organisation, aspirations, needs and conditions” (Smith, Augier & Nettleford, 1960).

Following the turbulence, Katrin Norris, a British journalist, published a concerned and incisive account of Jamaican society which stressed its colour consciousness, racial stratification and cultural dualism. Adopting legalistic criteria, she argued that while

“Jamaica is virtually free from racial discrimination . . . the black masses are openly discriminated against. The emphasis is on the word masses, not black. Discrimination, if it can be called that, is against the masses as a historically-determined economic and cultural class, not as a racial group” (Norris, 1962, 61).

This view, which gives class considerations priority over race, does not adequately represent the relations of white, coloured and black Jamaicans at that time. For Norris, the society was structured in three classes, all of which were racially mixed. In order of rank, they were predominantly composed of whites, browns and blacks, and were distinguished institutionally and culturally as well as politically and economically (ibid., 61–70). Her view of class and colour in Jamaica corresponds closely with that of Gordon Lewis for the West Indies as a whole.

“The class-colour correlates of the West Indian social structure are real. But they are not the absolutes of a rigid caste system. Skin colour determines social class, but it is not an exclusive determinant. There are many fair-skinned persons who are not upper class, and many dark-skinned persons who are. The real divisions of the society are the horizontal ones of social class rather than the vertical ones of the colour identification” (Lewis, 1968, 20).

While this correctly qualifies the ‘white bias’ as sole determinant of the social order, its ambiguities are similar to those in Norris’s essay.

Visiting Jamaica in the aftermath of the Ras Tafari protests of
of the disprivileged (Nettleford, 1970, 115–170). In these respects, Black Power reasserted certain themes of the earlier Ras Tafari movement and fulfilled some expectations based on its study.

“For Jamaican leftists, the violent part of the Ras Tafari spectrum is a gift; capitalist, bourgeoisie and proletariat can be translated into white, brown and black” (Smith, Augier & Nettleford, 1960, 25).

Ambiguities in the use of race and colour terms in Black Power ideology are amply illustrated in the writings of Rodney (idem, 1969, 28–30) and others. Yet

“In Jamaica true Black Power does not attack white as white, brown as brown. All men are equal. The attack is on white, brown or black as oppressing the Afro-Jamaican, and as an oppressive economic and social class.” (Abeng, vo. 1, 33, September 13, 1969, their italics; cited by Nettleford, 1970, 127).

Elements of Black Power ideology were subsequently assimilated by the People’s National Party under the leadership of Michael Manley, before and after the election of 1972. In a general way the ideology still exercises great influence on Jamaican politics and society. However, its composition and themes, despite their superficial congruence with certain Marxist ideas, should demonstrate beyond doubt the inability of a strictly economic classification of the Jamaican population to give adequate weight to those differences of culture, race and colour which have saturated the society from its earliest days and which still pervade it. Accordingly, when we consider the most extensive and careful attempt to date to describe Jamaican society in Marxist categories, as an order of classes differentiated by their relations to the means and process of production, we should bear in mind the indifference of that scheme to those differences of race and institutional culture which loom so large in Jamaican reality (Post, 1978, 77–86, 174–187, 193–5).

Kenneth Post, who was in Jamaica in 1967–69 during the height of its Black Power crisis, bases his reconstruction and analysis of

1960 and their Mission to Africa of 1961, Norris was struck by the ambivalence and ambiguities surrounding race at all levels of Jamaican society, and by their heavy personal and social costs. The Ras Tafari protests of 1960 had forced these issues into public consciousness and unleashed some frank exchanges in the press (West Indian Economist, 1961, vol. 3. no. 10; Mao. 1965, 258–270). Norris’s pamphlet contributed to this long overdue public discussion of the place of the black man in Jamaican society, the relations of race and class within it, and the foreign economic domination of the island economy, which probably increased after the island’s independence in 1962, given its government’s decision to pursue economic development by seeking foreign finance and tourism under very liberal conditions.

These developments encouraged several important reorientations among those Caribbean social scientists at the University campus in Jamaica. First, they began to study the conditions and implications of economic dependency for the Caribbean and other Third World societies. This in turn led to their adoption of economically grounded perspectives and interpretations of Caribbean society variably influenced by Marxism; and finally, these orientations encouraged their reception and development of Black Power ideology before and after the riots of October 1968, when the Jamaican government forbade Walter Rodney, a Guyanese lecturer at the University and a leading advocate of Black Power, to re-enter the island on charges of subversion.

From slavery until the present, Jamaican history can be viewed as a series of efforts by its black people to improve their position. In order of historical succession, these included the struggles of the country’s National Heroes, Nanny, Sam Sharpe, Paul Bogle, Gordon, Marcus Garvey, and the strikes and disturbances of 1937–38 which initiated the political movement towards decolonisation, the Ras Tafari protest of 1960, Millard Johnson’s short-lived ‘Black Man’s Party’ of 1961–62 (Norris, 1962, 57–60), and finally the Black Power movements of Walter Rodney and his colleagues (Rodney, 1969; Nettleford, 1970, 113–170; Edmundson, 1974). Rex Nettleford’s careful discussion of the Black Power ideology and critique of Jamaican society shows clearly that, besides its emphasis on the rights and dignities of black people, the movement combined searching criticisms of the Jamaican power structure and of the comprador relations of its economic elite with overseas capital. It also rejected the doctrine and practice of ‘multiracialism’ advocated by the two main political parties, the country’s administration and law as unjust and oppressive, and proclaimed fundamental illegitimacy in the eyes...
the economic and social crises of 1937–39 firmly on a Marxist model, while stressing that

"since the historical evolution of social formations is combined and uneven, classes as they emerge will be influenced by the existence of determinants of social organization — prior class relations, kinship, perhaps racial divisions — which are not only earlier, but have their origins outside the given social formation. This is above all true of colonial instances of capitalism like Jamaica" (Post, 1978, 78).

 Accordingly, on

"the Marxist view (that) only the capitalist and proletarian classes are of determinant significance in a capitalist social formation" (ibid., 79, his italics).

Post first describes the capitalist class and its components in the Jamaica of 1933–38, distinguishing big and small capitalists, and also

"fractions differentiated by their agrarian, manufacturing, finance and mercantile interests. While the larger and lesser capitalists represent strata within the capitalist class, the fractions represent competing divisions of these strata" (ibid., 84–5).

Allied with the capitalist class Post found the middle class and the petite bourgeoisie.

Among the middle class Post distinguished three ranked strata, the highest consisting of wealthy lawyers, other leading professionals, and senior colonial officials, mostly British born, who associated closely with local capitalists. The middle stratum of the middle class consisted of middle-range colonial officials, professionals, school-teachers and the like; while the lower middle class consisted of 'clerks, shop assistants, and others whose incomes only just met their immediate needs' (ibid., 99).

Post points out that the lines he drew between the lower middle class and the upper working class are rather thin and uncertain (ibid., 100); and says that in Jamaica c. 1935, the petite bourgeoisie consisted of three sub-groups, namely, peasants, shopkeepers and craftsmen. Against some other Marxists he argues for classification of the peasantry as petite bourgeoisie (ibid., 104), and also includes the higglets, their market factors, in that category (ibid., 105–6). Among shopkeepers he notes that ethnic and racial differences between Chinese, Syrians and Creoles intensified their rivalry and exacerbated relations with other categories of the petite bourgeoisie. His other major class, the workers, Post divided into two main groups, namely, peasants and workers, a substantial number of whom were unemployed (ibid., 114–158); but he refused to distinguish the lumpenproletariat from the proletariat proper (ibid., 149–50).

Many of the points already made in reviewing the Jacobs' class model of Grenadian society apply equally to Post's outline of Jamaica in 1938. Since Post's classes are defined solely by their relations with the means of production, and since merchants, financiers, shopkeepers, state bureaucrats, colonial officers and professionals are not engaged in activities that Marx recognized as productive (Marx 1973, 272–3), they can neither figure in a strictly Marxist analysis as classes, nor as strata or fractions of a class. Another weakness of the analysis is its failure to distinguish clearly the comprador capitalists and their allies from those foreign capitalists who controlled the local economy. In Post's view, senior colonial officials, most of whom were British-born, served as local representatives of those foreign interests, which can only be true as a metaphor.

As regards Post's model of Jamaican class structure and its composition in the 1930s, the preceding summary indicates its main inconsistencies and deviations from Marxism. For example, peasants are simultaneously classified as petite bourgeoisie and as workers; the lumpenproletariat and the proletariat are treated as one and the same; the various middle class strata and 'upper working class' are distinguished by differences of income rather than by differing relations to the means of production, though clearly such own-account workers as leading professionals, peasants, higglets and shopkeepers differ more sharply from clerks, schoolteachers, officials, farm and company managers in this respect than in income levels.

Finally, despite some genuine efforts to incorporate divisions and antagonisms of race, colour and culture (ibid., 94–98, 102–103, 140–150, 159–201), in Post's model these dimensions figure either as historical residues and aberrations, or as inessentials superadded to the basic class differences, and thus as so many modes of false and underdeveloped consciousness (ibid., 159–60, 167, 174–6, etc.). On the basis of Post's text, it is difficult to believe that he passed the critical years of the Jamaican Black Power movement in its ideological centre at the Faculty of Social Sciences at Mona, or that he knew
of the strenuous efforts of Black Power ideologues to forge equations, however ambiguous, between race, class and economic status in Jamaican society. Presumably he regarded such equations as either illusory, insignificant, or as poor substitutes for incisive Marxist analysis.

In an illuminating study of the relations of political attitudes and behaviour in Kingston, Jamaica to the social stratification, Carl Stone puts forward a rather different economic model of social stratification in the capital, and stresses its difference from Marxist and plural society alternatives. Stone based his 1971 survey of political attitudes in Kingston on a stratified quota sample designed to represent accurately the composition of the urban population (Stone, 1973, 4–5, 176–177). He does not generalise beyond Kingston to rural Jamaica; but his classification and findings are interesting and significant.

Of 605 persons in Stone’s sample, 3.5% (21) represented big business; 6.6% (40) were professionals, and an equal number were small business men; 28.9% (175) were white-collar workers; 4% (24) were self-employed artisans; 33.2% (201) were blue-collar workers; and the remaining 17.2% (104) were labelled ‘lower class’ (Stone 1973, 4–5).

Stone justifies his sample on the grounds that its

“seven occupational categories were selected on the basis of income and non-material status distinctions. These include big business men, professionals, small business men and white-collar labour, self-employed artisans, skilled or blue-collar labour, and unskilled or lower-class labour. As in the case of the distinction between non-manual and manual labour, the distinction between self-employed and employed manual labour is one of occupational status rather than income. The operational definition of the first four strata is quite unambiguous. The blue-collar category includes all manual labour with a modicum of skill or respectable working class status. The artisan class includes tailors, hairdressers, dressmakers, barbers, and other self-employed manual occupations. The lower class is a somewhat loosely defined residual category of unskilled and low-status labour such as casual workers, domestic servants and itinerant street vendors. The occupational hierarchy therefore clearly reflects both income and non-material status distinctions” (ibid., 12).

Stone’s major thesis is that

“material affluence and income are the main determinants of social status in contemporary urban Jamaica, although race, education, training and class acculturation clearly affect the economic life chances of the individual. This is not to suggest, however, that other factors such as race, colour and occupational prestige do not influence social status. It merely implies that in the weighting of these categories income level is the principal determinant of status” (ibid., 11).

Stone provides no firm evidence of the income levels of his sample or of any or all of these seven ‘occupational’ classes in Kingston or Jamaica at the date of his survey. Nor could he, given the secrecy that surrounds such information, and the gross levels of tax evasion and other corrupt practices which are traditional features of income declarations in Jamaica.

To complete the data needed to study the social stratification of Grenada, under the law I had to wait seven years to record self-assessments of income accepted by the Commissioner of Income Tax for the year 1952–53 from 264 taxpayers whose status scores had been determined by nineteen independent rankings. Occupation­ally, these elite Grenadians included professionals, investors, traders, Government employees, Government pensioners, planters, and private employees. Product-moment correlation of their log. taxable incomes and status scores was .307, giving a regression angle of 137.2° (M. G. Smith 1965b, 130–136). In like fashion the product-moment correlations of status and log taxable income for all six divisions of that status scale were uniformly negative. At no level of this Gren­adian status scale was there any positive correlation between income and status (ibid., 136–141). Consistent with this, status scores correlated uncertainly with occupation on the one hand, and with such other indicators of wealth as acreages owned, and rateable value of houses occupied by sample members, on the other. Even when occupational and employment status were combined to discriminate own-account and wage-employed executives in such different sectors as commerce, government, agriculture, services etc., the correlations were ambiguous, while the standard deviations of the
status scores of these occupational personnel in any categories were unusually high (ibid., 106–129). However, although the statements of income were accepted by the Commissioner, their accuracy seems open to doubt. Of course Grenadian society in 1953 was far less complex and developed than Jamaica then, and much less so than Kingston in 1971 when studied by Carl Stone. By 1971 Kingston was a burgeoning city with massive unemployment, and large ghettos characterised by overcrowding, poverty, violence and crime (C. Clarke, 1975; T. Lacey, 1977), in which the familiar urban tendency to depersonalise individuals and classify them by such crude attributes as sex, race, age and appearance prevailed, the latter often being regarded as the only sound indicator of income or class position.

In place of the income data he needed to demonstrate those differences of income that he assumed as the basis for his rank order of seven ‘occupational’ categories, Stone substitutes, as if it were adequate, a table indicating the subjective self-classifications of the survey respondents in each of his seven categories; but this is unacceptable procedurally or as evidence of individual incomes. Perhaps anticipating such criticism, Stone claims that “there is a strong relationship between the occupational hierarchy, and the subjective identity” (Stone 1973, 12) on a four-point status scale which distinguishes upper, middle, working and lower classes. That conclusion does not follow from the data he presents. For example, one half of the big business men in his sample claim upper class identity, while the rest claim to be middle class. A third of the professionals claim to be upper class as against three-fifths who claim to be middle, and a few who claim to be working class. Small business men divide almost equally in their self-identifications between the middle and working classes: and, while half of the self-employed artisans identify themselves as working class, one in five claim to be middle class, and the other quarter see themselves as lower class. In like fashion, while 60 per cent of Stone’s blue-collar workers see themselves as working class, 10 per cent identify themselves as middle and 30 per cent as lower class. Of Stone’s skilled manual workers, 60 per cent place themselves in the lower class, while 40 per cent claim to be working class (ibid., 12). On the basis of such subjective self-placements, ambiguous categories, and inappropriate methodology, it is not valid to claim any positive correlations between occupation, class and income, as Stone has done.

However, based on this sample and its underlying assumptions, Stone claims to demonstrate the primacy of material considerations and interests over racial, cultural or any others in Kingston in 1971.

Since he holds that in Jamaica, “material or economic role relationships are the principal determinants of both status and power” (ibid., 7), it follows in his analysis that “material goals and values” are also the primary forces generating societal conflict in Kingston and throughout Jamaica (ibid., 13–14). In his view, this conclusion refutes what he regards as an essential implication of the plural model of Jamaican society, and therefore demonstrates the inadequacy of that conception of Jamaica. However, as we have seen, his order of seven occupational categories is neither based on income nor clearly differentiated by status. As if further to compromise the set, while some of its categories, on Stone’s criteria, are distinguished rather by employment than by occupation, in this scheme the residual ‘lower class’, includes the lumpen and other unemployed. If so, then the urban ‘lower class’ was at least twice as large as their fraction of his sample indicates (Government of Jamaica, 1972; Lacey, 1977, 33–34). Thus, however interesting the ‘social classes’ on which Stone based this analysis, they cannot be regarded as accurate and objective representations of the ranked strata that constitute society in Kingston, perhaps because, like others of a materialist persuasion. Stone first assumed the correlations between ‘economic’ and social status he wished to prove, and then ignored those correlations of status, culture and race he preferred to dismiss; but also because his four classes are indeterminate, ambiguous and overlap, and because on Stone’s statements the sample severely underrepresents the numbers of the unemployed, the lumpenproletariat, and lower class while overrepresenting the upper and middle classes.

In criticising my account of Jamaica in the mid-fifties, Stone says that in my view “the subjective definition of contending strata and the conflicting objectives are culturally rather than materially determined” (ibid., 8). This conclusion is sound but calls for comment; for as culture organizes and includes the structures through which populations perceive, interpret and evaluate their experience, and as it provides the codes by which people conduct their relations with one another, then clearly perceptions of material interest will vary culturally, and may be said to be culturally determined, if that unfortunate term has to be used. There is nothing intrinsic to a cultural perspective which prescribes subjectivity in the perception and evaluation of material conditions and interests since cultures are essentially public and collective phenomena. However, Stone seems to propose a misleading antinomy between ‘cultural’ and ‘material’ values and interests as determinants of social status and analytic models.
As regards Marxism, Stone distinguishes his position sharply from that of Marxists.

"Contrary to the earlier disaggregation of the urban working class into manual, non-manual, skilled and unskilled categories, traditional Marxist theory focuses on the inherent antagonism and conflict between wage-capital and the owners of capital. The occupational classification of strata is based on recognition of the fragmentation of interests in both the capitalist and working classes because of the differential benefits that accrue to various categories of wage labour and owners of property. The emphasis on distribution reverses the Marxist emphasis on the relationships to the means of production. Despite differential access to material and non-material social resources within the Marxist classes of labour and capitalist, Marxist class divisions should be the prime determinants of attitudes to class conflict. Material dispossession will, however, be more important in influencing attitudes to race conflict.

The theory of class conflict developed by Marx emphasises the antagonistic interests between wage labour and capital in capitalist societies. An alternative approach to this view of class conflict suggests that the antagonism between rich and materially dispossessed strata is a more central source of conflict. Thus the Marxist thesis dichotomises conflicting classes into capitalists and labour, which, however, overlaps with the rich and materially dispossessed categories.

A more useful approach to classifying strata according to material dispossession elaborates the rich-poor dichotomy by distinguishing several levels of relative material dispossession between occupational strata, as attempted in this study" (ibid., 14-16).

One problem with this approach is that Stone nowhere specifies precisely what he means by material dispossession or poverty on the one hand, or affluence on the other. It is clear from his own statement that his occupational classification is intended to incorporate non-material factors as well as material differences of income and employment status, but skills and race are superfluous to those conceptions of material dispossession and affluence on which Stone bases his arguments against the Marxist and plural society analyses almost equally. Stone also presents the concepts of material dispossession without indicating the criteria and procedures that enable him to segregate material from non-material interests, factors, goals and values other than race, which he generally treats as a factor subordinate to the 'material goals and values' he asserts for each of the seven ill-defined and unsubstantiated income/occupational classes in his sample.

Two other weaknesses of Stone's model should be mentioned before we move on. First, as noted above, his sample seems grossly to underestimate the relative size of the employed and unemployed 'working class' in the population of Kingston in 1971. The official Labour Surveys for that year indicate a national unemployment rate that fluctuated between 22 and 23 per cent of the labour force as against 17 per cent in Stone's sample for the entire 'lower class', in which he includes the 'unemployed' (ibid., 5, 12).

An alternative socio-economic classification of the Jamaican population that was widely employed by Jamaican market researchers in the early seventies distinguished the following six socio-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Per cent of adult population</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>Top managerial and occupational persons, e.g., doctors, dentists, lawyers, company directors, head teachers, architects, qualified accountants, etc.</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>Supervisory and highly skilled personnel, e.g., qualified engineers and technicians, shop managers, senior secretaries, nursing sisters, police inspectors, etc.</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>Semi-skilled and other clerical workers, e.g., trained carpenters, telephone operators, plumbers, police constables, bus drivers, etc.</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Unskilled manual and service (fully employed), e.g., domestic helpers, unskilled factory workers, labourers, delivery men, junior shop assistants, garbage collectors, etc.</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Casual workers and unemployed</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
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<td>100%</td>
</tr>
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economic categories, occupationally and as fractions of the adult population.\(^1\)

The differences of number, composition and relative size in the occupational categories of Stone's stratified quota sample and this breakdown are obvious and call for explanation, since the second classification has been much used and has proved reliable in market research. For example, while Stone estimates the lower class of 'unskilled and low status workers' at 17.2 per cent on his criteria, the market research breakdown estimates it at c. 68% of the adult population. While Stone estimates artisans and blue-collar workers together at 37 per cent of the labour force in Kingston, the other breakdown gives a figure of 17%.

The discrepancies are equally large for Stone's four superior 'occupational classes'. Thus, the national ratio of 15 per cent for the three top managerial, professional and supervisory strata in the market research breakdown (A, B and C1) increases to 26 per cent in Stone's sample (idem., 17–18), while that for the lower three strata, (C2, D and E) falls from 85% to 74%. By contrast, 16.7% of his urban labour force were professionals and businessmen, big and small, while 28.9% were 'white-collar' workers most of whom would fall into the C2 market research category. Together, Stone's top four strata account for 45.6% per cent of his sample, as against 26 per cent for corresponding categories in the market research breakdown. Such differences require further explanation and justification before we can accept Stone's breakdown of the population of Kingston or the conclusions he derives from that 1971 sample survey.

Nonetheless, despite these and other difficulties, Stone's scheme has been applied to other Caribbean societies (Ryan, Greene and Harewood, 1979) with quite different social structures. It has also encouraged a number of similar social classifications of a 'materialist' kind. For example, in setting the social context for his study of violence in Kingston during the sixties, Lacey distinguished the 'plantocracy' as a 'spent force'; then the 'peasantry'; then a 'national bourgeoisie' which included the coloured middle class of civil servants, bureaucrats, professionals, teachers and white-collar workers, together with the Lebanese, Syrian, Cuban and Chinese trading and commercial elites who were, in his view, "distinctly un-British". He also distinguished a 'working-class aristocracy' who owed their high wages and relatively decent working conditions to the Trade Unions on the one hand, and to their favourable ecological situations in highly-capitalised and profitable enclave industries on the other (Lacey 1977, 22–35). The urban poor or proletariat and the lumpen-proletariat completed this 'materialist' account of the social order. Following this classification, Lacey discussed race, colour, family and religion in Jamaica, focussing primarily on the Kingston lower class, but without adequate data or analysis.

In 1968–69 Nancy Foner studied the village of Cocoa Hill (Bamboo, St. Ann), and lived there for some fifteen months. She provides the fullest account of a contemporary rural Jamaican community in the literature. At Cocoa Hill she found "five broad status groups characterised by occupation, land ownership, income ... (namely) wage labourers, small independent farmers, big farmers and entrepreneurs, white collar workers and large estate owners" (Foner 1973, 20). She also noted that the villagers, "in speaking of the whole society ... tended to refer to categories such as "we the poorer class" and the "up-class people-them" (Foner, 1973, 32). Continuing, she generalised that

"Within Jamaican society, occupational and status differences closely parallel educational and color distinctions. The middle and upper classes are still predominantly white or colored, the lower classes overwhelmingly black. This correlation is recognized by Cocoa Hill residents, particularly wage labourers and the less successful farmers, who most frequently identify the upper classes in Jamaica as white and the lower classes as black" (ibid., 32).

No clearer statement of the criteria employed by poorer rural Jamaicans in placing themselves, their kin and neighbours within the social order is available. As mentioned above in the discussion of Curtin's dichotomous and tripartite models, this folk model of the 'black lower class' either excludes the 'coloured Creole middle stratum' entirely, or assimilates it to the 'white upper class'. Notably, the decisive criteria that order this classification are not specifically economic.
During the late sixties and early seventies Errol Miller, a Jamaican educator and psychologist, published a series of studies of self-perception and self-evaluation of colour and class among Jamaican adolescents (Miller, 1969, 1971, 1973). Employing standard techniques of controlled comparison, Miller sought to determine and compare the relative self-evaluations of white, brown, black and Chinese students in selected high schools, on the assumption that "race and colour are important criteria by which self-worth is evaluated and assessed" (Miller 1973, 422) in Jamaica. His results show that students "are definitely evaluating themselves according to the racial criteria" (ibid., 422); and that "white students evaluate self to be more worthy and significant than brown, who in turn evaluate self to be more worthy than black and Chinese (students)" (ibid., 421).

However, since the teachers took account of unspecified 'class differences' among the parents in dealing with these students, and treated the latter accordingly, Miller's data also showed that "class is an important variable, in the context of high school, in determining both self-evaluation and manifest anxiety. Teachers; it would appear, perceive and evaluate (students) in the context of the class criteria" (ibid., 423).

He concluded that "the social frame of reference and habitual mode of self-evaluation characteristic of members of the society has not been fundamentally altered by any recent developments" (ibid., 424).

"Black and Chinese and lower socio-economic background adolescents... come to undervalue and underestimate their own worth and significance" (ibid., 424); "Jamaican high school girls evaluate self according to certain socio-economic and colour criteria" (ibid., 424).

Generalising these findings to the population of Jamaica as a whole, it seems obvious that differences of race and colour, given their historic roots and implications for individuals at all levels of society, operate as significant and laden factors in the social structure, independently, as well as by association with cultural and economic differentiae.

Miller's findings are obliquely supported by the anthropological studies of Alexander (1977) and Austin (1974, 1979), both of whom concentrated on the study of race and class in Kingston. Among the modally brown urban middle class, Alexander found that "For informants, the link between race and stratification is one of historical fact" (1977, 431). Race establishes the historical rootedness of the society and its members' place in it... It refers them through their bodies to a historical hierarchy and solidarity of races that have been constantly fragmented by historical processes of mixture" (ibid., 432–433).

In short, middle class Jamaican ideas of race subserve the needs of coloured hybrids to place themselves prestigiously in the chromatic social scale, and so to manipulate the historical ideology that serves to 'explain' the social structure and their places in it.

Austin's comparison of the status models of Jamaican society current in two neighbourhoods of Kingston, one "predominantly working class, the other predominantly middle class" (1979, 500), presents an 'ideology' that differs radically from the finely graded and nuanced order of colour-differentiated rank which Alexander found among his middle-class informants (idem., 1977, 413–435). According to Austin, middle-class informants set themselves apart from "the working class as uneducated outsiders" and also by reference to descent and enculturation, but only obliquely by reference to colour. The working class, for their part, sharply distinguished themselves from the 'middle class' whom they classified as wealthy exploiters responsible for their economic dispossession. In Austin's view, "Jamaicans describe their society as a dichotomy between two classes who are inside and outside (encultured) society. Thus the human inferiority of the working class is built into the conceptual apparatus for identifying the classes... The condensation of meaning within this limited vocabulary of 'education', 'wealth', 'inside' and 'outside' allows the vocabulary to carry a total interpretation not only of contemporary society, but also of Jamaica's class history" (ibid., 504).

Austin's inside/outside dichotomy restates in other words the old distinction drawn by poor black Jamaicans between themselves and the 'opposite sects' which Foner found at Cocoa Hill (Foner...
Adam Kuper's two discussions of Jamaican social structure (1976, 1977) also address the nature and relations of race, culture and class in the society, and compare subjective models of the stratification, including those of 'native' scholars such as Henriques and myself, with others yielded by objective indices of socio-economic status. As both discussions cover much the same ground, cite the same data, literature and arguments, and sometimes include identical passages, it is appropriate to consider them together.

Following R. T. Smith (1970), Weber (1946, 180–195; 1947, 390–395) and Marx, Adam Kuper argues that stratification is "a system of groupings, hierarchically ordered, and with differential access to wealth, status and power" (A. Kuper, 1976, 42). There are or may be objective indicators of these distributions which together would accurately describe the stratification and differentiate its component parts; but these are rarely if ever available when needed by students or members of the society. Accordingly, people tend to rely on their own subjective models of the stratification, which are operational and not analytic devices, designed primarily to orient and facilitate individual and collective action. According to Kuper, social scientists who are natives tend thus to mistake the 'home made' or 'folk' models (ibid., 41) of their own society for analytic models, as Henriques. Edith Clarke and I have done, even though we all used different criteria, data and conceptual frameworks to construct the three-level stratification models he says we found in Jamaica.

As noted above, Kuper argues on rather weak grounds that Madeline Kerr and Philip Curtin both found only two strata in Jamaica (Kuper 1976, 55; 1977, 124). Presumably he does so to show that in adopting three-level models, inescapable cultural biases have led Henriques and me as natives into common error, though by different routes, and made it impossible for us to deal objectively with local realities. Kuper does not criticise the 'erroneous' models of Leonard Broom or Carl Stone on these grounds, since Broom was an American sociologist and, like Stone, attempted to employ 'objective' (i.e. quantitative) occupation/income criteria. Nonetheless, as we shall see, he rejects the schemes advanced by both authors scathingly, even though Broom wrote with reference to the country more than a generation before Kuper's visit, and based his analysis heavily on data from the census of 1943.

As for Stone, having first rejected the latter's occupational classification of the population of Kingston (Kuper, 1976, 66–67) as a guide to its stratification, Kuper then proposes a 'rough occupational classification' which consists of "wealthy business and professional people, the salariat, skilled workers, unskilled urban workers, and the smallholders and rural labourers. The main divisions would be between unskilled urban workers, smallholders, rural labourers, and the rest" (ibid., 71). Allowing for the exclusively urban reference of Stone's classification, both as regards its structure and its reliance on implicit differentials of cash income and occupational rank as key criteria of social status, there appears to be little substantive difference in the two models, except that Kuper's includes the rural population.

In similar style, Kuper dismisses Leonard Broom's observation that social stratification in Jamaica exhibited 'gross discontinuities', as illustrated by the racial and ethnic distributions of education, land ownership, illiteracy, wage levels, and other conditions drawn from the 1943 census (Broom, 1954) as "not unexpected, given the history of differential 'insertion' of various groups into Jamaican society at different periods" (Kuper, 1976, 65). Though Broom's data clearly answered his objection, Kuper argued that "the problem is whether the average of a 'racial category' is of particular significance" (ibid., 65), asserting that "None of these racial groups is closed, nor is social mobility blocked by racial origin" (ibid., 65), which is simply false.

Evidently, as a white South African studying a less rigidly stratified multiracial society, despite his awareness of the influence of their native cultures in biasing the perceptions and analytic capacities of social scientists such as Henriques and myself. Adam Kuper was unable to recognize or conceive the objective significance of race and colour in Jamaica, since people of differing race
and colour can be found at differing occupational levels "above the level of labourer" (ibid., 65), a restriction that is hardly insignificant, given the large numbers and ratios of unskilled workers in the Jamaican labour force, as noted above. However, on this basis Kuper interprets Broom's observations that whites and light skinned figures disproportionately in the clubs and other contexts of 'polite society' "as a consequence of the distribution of money, occupation and education" (idem, 1954), and as proof of the racial openness of Jamaican society, though Broom clearly thought otherwise of the situations and structures he observed.

In his analysis of the ethnic and colour distribution of Jamaican lawyers and doctors in 1950–51, using samples drawn from official lists of registered professionals, Broom distinguished an 'olive-skinned' category between the 'white and light' and the 'light brown' Creole professionals. Having assumed against this evidence that Broom could not 'mean that to be olive in shade is a specific advantage or disadvantage' in Jamaica (ibid., 66), Kuper claims that 'the argument itself demonstrates its own absurdity' (ibid., 66); and he goes on to argue that

"If colour does not in itself necessarily imply either a particular social position or economic potential, then Broom's gross averages say no more than that if your ancestors were poor, you will be much less likely to be well off than another man whose ancestors were rich. The average black is worse off than the average coloured Jamaican; but then in England, the average descendant of a mill hand is no doubt worse off than the average descendant of a millowner" (ibid., 66).

On this argument, it seems clear that nothing less than a de facto racial apartheid would satisfy Adam Kuper that race has any independent social significance in Jamaica and other multiracial societies that lack de jure apartheid. It is thus particularly unfortunate that as an anthropologist he allowed the beam of his own culture and home-made folk models so to cripple his perceptions of Jamaican society that he could only find moles in the eyes of native scholars who asserted local realities that he could neither accept as significant nor subjectively appreciate, however strongly they were supported by quantitative distributions of objective conditions and values. For example, having asserted that "the problem is whether the average of a 'racial' category is of particular social significance" (ibid., 65) on one page, on the next he rejects such averages as useful indicators, and instead demands the invariance of necessity, such as apartheid attempts to ensure unconditionally. "If colour does not in itself necessarily imply either a particular social position or economic potential ..." (ibid., 66; my italics).

Clearly Adam Kuper is correct in pointing out, as many others have done, that race is a complex symbol for status and related values in contemporary Jamaica. To conclude therefore from it is of marginal social significance because the country contains some isolated communities of poor whites, and some wealthy and prominent non-whites, and thus that the 'clear, gross correlation between 'race' and social class' (ibid., 60) has limited objective value, since "gross averages are meaningless unless the averages correspond to some conscious social facts" is a nice non sequitur that illustrates the overwhelming power of the author's native South African culture on his scholarship and objectivity. According to this proposition, and its decisive criterion, "some conscious social facts", Marxist analyses of classes 'in themselves' are clearly meaningless. Since there can be no 'classes in themselves' irrespective of distinct objective criteria, such as Marx applies, as such 'classes' by definition are not 'conscious social facts'.

In much the same way that he tried to discredit Broom's analysis by lampooning Broom's category of olive-coloured professionals, Kuper seeks to discredit Stone's work on the grounds that some of his queries employed such terms as 'upper class' and 'middle class', though these terms are very vague in Jamaica; and he affects to be surprised that workers in Stone's sample, while moderately opposed to the 'upper class' were not against the middle class (1976, 66 67). However, as indicated above, these class terms are equally ambiguous in academic studies and in most societies, where they are nonetheless commonly used and undoubtedly loosely applied, but understood by people. The same point holds for other general terms such as family, race or nation, without which we could make no progress in the study of those phenomena.

Though Broom's emphasis on status discontinuities in Jamaica implies a set of distinct and separate social strata, Kuper argues that, whatever the folk models and conclusions of other social scientists. the quantitative distribution of objective status variables, and thus the stratification, is not discontinuous; however, he provides few empirical data to support this claim, and though he evidently prefers 'objective' indices to 'subjective' criteria in formulating models of social stratification, as for example in the occupational scheme of Carl Stone, he offers few of those. He
also refrains from anywhere presenting a summary account of the social stratification of Jamaica as he sees it, on his terms. Evidently too, though he regards 'conscious social facts' or collective representations as the criterion of social reality, Kuper regards people's experience or model of their own society as inherently subjective and misleading, a datum only to be learned and rejected (idem, 42).

Reviewing briefly the historical evolution of Jamaican society from its slave foundations, when laws distinguished the major strata as corporate categories. Kuper says that I regard contemporary Jamaica as

"a plural society, made up of corporate categories, black, brown and white being arranged as lower, middle and upper classes, each with a distinctive culture" (A. Kuper, 1977, 114).

Comparing the island society with South Africa and Uganda, he remarks that

"None of these statements can be made without considerable hedging, if at all . . . Jamaica is not a plural society, though it may have been once" (ibid., 115).

He then argues that because differences of race and/or culture never coincided perfectly with differences of legal status, even during the period of slavery, at no time did the island society represent a "properly plural society" (ibid., 116–121). This implicitly defines as plural societies only those that incorporate their populations differentially by law, as in South Africa today. Moreover, as the divergence of de jure status from de facto disjunctions of race and culture has widened since slavery ended, Kuper concludes that contemporary Jamaica is neither racially nor culturally plural, but presents an order of 'social classes' "justified in terms of the cultural and racial superiority of the rulers and the inferiority of the ruled" (ibid., 119). To this end he contrasts my accounts of the society in 1820 and 1950, noting that for the latter period I remarked that while some would only identify two cultural sections — in folk terminology the 'opposite sects' of disprivileged blacks on one hand and the fortunate few on the other — I distinguished three sections on the grounds that

"although these two upper sections (the whites and browns) do share certain institutions, each also practises a number of institutions which is quite specific to itself, and since these sectional systems of institutions each tend to be integrated separately, I have regarded them as quite distinct." (M. G. Smith, 1965a, 175: cited in A. Kuper, 1977, 117).

Below the polemical surface of Kuper's critique, much of which seems equally indifferent to ethnographic fact and theoretical issues, his chief difficulty seems to lie in the assumption that a perfect and simultaneous coincidence of de jure and de facto corporate boundaries with criteria of race and culture is essential to establish Jamaica or any other country as a plural society. In his view,

"very summarily, plural society theory operates in terms of a model of certain societies in which there is an official classification of the population on the basis of racial or pseudo-racial characteristics, into ranked segments, each with a distinctive cultural pattern, and only one of which . . . has access to full citizenship and the means of social control" (ibid., 117: my italics),

that is, societies made on the formula and model of apartheid.

However, before 1960, having clearly shown that in contemporary Jamaica there were no perfect correspondences of such de jure legal and/or racial distinctions with differences of culture, I indicated the divergent alignments of culture and status in Caribbean Creole societies in a diagram (M. G. Smith, 1965a, 68–69) which is reproduced overleaf. That diagram sought to show how social or status divisions normally diverge from cultural sections in typical hierarchic pluralities.

None of the cultural or social sections in that diagram is bounded and established by law; but it nicely illustrates those differences of de jure and de facto corporate organisation noted above. In those terms, the overlapping cores in each of the three social and cultural sections in the diagram form the de facto corporations of these Creole plural societies, which consist essentially of these components and their articulations. In contemporary Jamaica, as shown in the diagram, these de facto corporations are the overlapping cores of ranked sets of social and cultural sections that in turn constitute the de facto cores of the white, brown and black sections, as indicated above. Had Kuper recognized that these culturally distinct corporate categories, which are the essen-
Diagram to illustrate one possible set of relations between structural categories in a plural society of three cultural and social sections.


Partial minimal components of a plural society, need only have a *de facto* status, as for example was the case in Guyana and Trinidad before universal suffrage and party politics, and that they are rarely, if ever, defined uniformly by distribution of a single variable, he might have recognised that there are various other kinds of plural society besides the "properly plural society" of his native South Africa, with its official structure of racial apartheid.  

Kuper's attempt to represent trichotomous and dichotomous models of Jamaican social structure as equally fallacious and subject to 'folk' error may be considered in the light of material quoted above from Madeline Kerr, Philip Curtin, Fernando Henriques and others whom he cites. He clearly rejects my outline (Smith 1965b, 162-175) of cultural and institutional differences in Jamaican society during the mid-fifties, and asserts that "to the outsider, the cultural uniformity of Jamaica is very striking" (Kuper, 1976, 58), though the differences I found in 1955 still persist. Evidently, to concede such institutional differences, like R. T. Smith (1967, 233-241, 1970, 59-63; 1971, 423-425) and Stuart Hall (1971, 135-138), Kuper requires that the "Afro-Jamaican" culture should exhibit African elements as survivals in a very pure form, despite the irrelevance of that criterion for this particular issue, and despite the prolonged and intensive forced acculturation of African immigrants under and after slavery (1977, 117-119).

This is simply another irrelevant and spurious diversion like that noted above. when, as the essential criterion of social phenomena, Kuper demanded 'conscious social facts', only to reject them as subjective and biased when presented by natives, scholars or other. Such extreme criteria and inconsistent practices are neither appropriate nor useful to students of cultural differentiation in contemporary Jamaica, who will readily find the alternative patterns of kinship, family, mating, property, inheritance, credit, savings, language, values and other social phenomena that have developed locally over the centuries, through the interactions of black and white populations and their original cultures, to be significant for those who live by them. Moreover, as pointed out for Jamaica in the fifties, these institutional differences correlate strikingly with disparities of wealth, income, colour, education and power among the population (M. G. Smith, 1965a, 162-175). Adam Kuper's assertion that "Jamaica's cultural uniformity is striking" (*idem.*, 1977, 128; 1976, 58) differs so grossly from the reports of Madeline Kerr (1952, 94-113), Henriques (1953, 1957), Norris (1962), myself (1965b, 162-175) and others that I can only doubt the relevance and adequacy of his field observations. Clearly Kuper chose to regard the conclusions of his predecessors as misleading and biased by their assumptions and methods, in order to develop his own 'analysis' of Jamaican society (Kuper, 1976, 42); but that neither required nor justifies such carte blanche denial of Jamaican ethnography, without any careful discussion or disproof of its data (*ibid.*, 50, 56, 58, 67f., etc.).

Discussion of race, stratification, economic class and pluralism in Trinidad is greatly facilitated by the structure of that society which, though created and dominated historically by Europeans, now consists mainly of two racial stocks, the Afro-Creole and the Indian, and their cultural traditions, each associated with distinctive folk religions, as, for example, the Rada, Shango and Shouting Baptist cults (Carr, 1953; Simpson, 1965; Herskovits & Herskovits, 1947) among black Creoles and, on the Indian side, folk Islam and Hinduism (A. and J. Niehoff, 1960; LaGuerre, 1974d; Klass, 1961). As regards general discussions of race, stratification and pluralism in Trinidad, we are also well served by Lloyd Braithwaite’s early monograph (idem., 1953) on the Creole status structure, by his subsequent contributions (1954, 1960, 1974a, 1974b), and by those of Melville and Frances Herskovits (1947), Eric Williams (1946, 1957, 1964), Vera Rubin (1962), Rubin and Zavalloni (1967), Dan Crowley (1957, 1960), Ivar Oxaal (1968), Selwyn Ryan (1972), C. L. R. James (1962), Gordon Lewis (1962), Lloyd Best (1970), David Nicholls (1971), John LaGuerre (1974a, 1974b, 1976), and several others who have written cogently on different aspects of Trinidad society, including V. S. Naipaul (1962), speaking plainly as a native Trinidadian of Hindu stock. Additionally, in February 1970 there was a brief Black Power uprising in Trinidad which threw a fleeting but penetrating spotlight on its multiracial structure and stratification (Best, 1973; Nicholls, 1971; LaGuerre, 1974c; Allum 1973), and provided an almost experimental test of the two prevailing models of Trinidad society derived from Lloyd Braithwaite’s early work on the one hand, and from Marxism, ‘Plantation Society’, and dependency theory on the other. For the last quarter century Trinidad has been governed by the People’s National Movement under the historian-politician Eric Williams, whose death in 1981 was followed by a general election in which the ruling party increased its majority, thereby demonstrating the country’s political stability, despite the
events of February 1970. With this introduction, we may now review briefly some of the main contributions to our understanding of the relations of race, culture, class, stratification and pluralism in contemporary Trinidad, beginning with the original contributions of Lloyd Braithwaite (1953, 1954, 1960).

Braithwaite's early study of social stratification in Trinidad (1953) applied the action theory and pattern variable scheme of Talcott Parsons to a colonial society in its penultimate phase. The basic arguments of that study were somewhat contradictory, namely, that although Trinidad accepted and upheld British rule and ascriptive British values, and although achievement values were becoming increasingly dominant among the Creole (Afro-Trinidadian) population, Trinidadians shared a common set of values. Reflecting on that study some years later, Braithwaite summarised its conclusions and limitations as follows:

"Trinidad society ... has been described in terms of social stratification as a society in which the dominant values have been those of racial origin and skin colour, and one in which the social ascendancy and high status of the white group was broadly accepted. It was further characterized as a colonial society in which the hierarchic grouping of social classes was reinforced through the subordinate nature of the colonial society in relation to the metropolitan power. However, it was pointed out further that sharp social cleavages were taking place in that ascriptive values of race were being replaced by those of achievement in the economic and political fields, and one in which the goals of an independent democratic society were replacing the old colonial relationship.

"While such an analysis is essential and later developments have emphasized the validity of this position, it was incomplete in that it ignored much of the cultural complexity of the island. It was confined to the Creole section (about 55 per cent of the society). There can be no doubt that acceptance of these values was widespread among the population in spite of the persistence of sub-cultural patterns. These values are, however, not so firmly implanted among the Indian section (about 35 per cent of the population), largely because of the tenacity of certain aspects of Hindu and Moslem culture" (Braithwaite, 1960, 821–822 fn.).

In 1960 Braithwaite argued further that while "Creole Trinidad could be accurately described as in some sense a plural society" (ibid. 821), its "main common value element has been the sharing of the value of ethnic superiority and inferiority. Other values, however, were shared only by the middle and the upper classes, and yet others by the whole society except the upper class, and so on. The fact that there was only one common value strongly held by the whole society, of a type inherently productive of tension, created a certain tendency to 'disintegration' within the social system, particularly when this main common value was challenged" (ibid. 822).

Not long afterwards Vera Rubin, summarising the results of her comparative studies of Creole and East Indian youths in Trinidad, pointed out that "The East Indian tends to think in terms of the community because it is an East Indian community, the Negro in terms of the nation because he conceives of it as a Negro nation" (Rubin 1962, 454, Rubin & Zavalloni, 1969, 163).

Rubin's findings are not inconsistent with Braithwaite's claim that all Trinidadians agreed on the significance of racial identity and difference, but her observations refer to the late fifties and early sixties, when the move towards decolonization, initially within the West Indian federation, but later independently, was clearly underway, so that Trinidad Indians could no longer assume continued British support or protection against Creoles.

Since 1960 Braithwaite's views on his native society have matured, perhaps as a result of his continued residence in the island, and his administrative responsibilities as Pro Vice-Chancellor of the University of the West Indies campus at St. Augustine in Trinidad, which was heavily involved in and affected by the local Black Power movement of 1969-70. In 1974, after a long silence, he published two short essays, one on race and colour in the Caribbean (Braithwaite, 1974a) which addresses these issues in other Commonwealth countries, but concentrates mainly on collective relations in Trinidad, and especially on relations between Indians and Creoles, i.e., Negroes and Coloured. As always, Braithwaite makes many acute observations, of which the following are
particularlly relevant for students of race and stratification in Caribbean societies.

“Race and colour are important because they have become central to the individual's self-conception, and the individual's self-conception is of course the governing principle by which he guides his life” (1974a, 4).

“The individual growing up in the West Indies, becomes conscious of himself, not so much as a West Indian, or as a Trinidadian, or as a Jamaican, but as a member of a racial group who is also a West Indian. He becomes conscious of himself as a European, conscious of himself as a Negro, conscious of himself as an Indian. Because of the diversity of racial origins, because of the diversity of cultural origins, there is need for people to have a racial identification” (ibid., 5).

“The social groups that the individual is involved in in the West Indies are also racial groups, and therefore any attempt to deal with the racial problem should not hide behind some doctrine of equality. We should face up to the fact that there is a high degree of consciousness and sensitivity about race in the West Indies, and should seek to achieve a form of integration which allows people to assert their racial identity as well as their nationality” (ibid., 5-6).

As regards the future of Trinidad and its neighbour, Guyana, which has a similar socio-racial structure, Braithwaite was wisely cautious.

“It is still a question open to doubt whether these countries can cope with this problem. The question really arises as to how far these countries have developed a sufficient common culture, a sufficient common understanding, a sufficient common tolerance, a sufficient body of institutions in which everybody has confidence, so that the political system can endure. To some extent, of course, this has been achieved, but as I say, the issue is still in doubt” (ibid., 8).

Though clearly hostile to racist thinking, and to “the use of racial terms which have no scientific or administrative validity” (ibid., 11), these later reflections of Braithwaite indicate a greater aware-ness of the central problems of a society like Trinidad than his first, rather optimistic review (idem., 1953).

In his Foreword to a set of essays on East Indians of Trinidad also published that year, Braithwaite was even more outspoken. Remarking that “there is no overall study which views Trinidad society adequately as a whole” (idem., 1974b, viii), he again stressed the significance of racial and cultural differences, and the problems they posed.

“Metropolitan empires have brought into existence everywhere the problem of races with varying cultural backgrounds. The existence of the classical problem of the ‘plural society’ is a worldwide phenomenon… By and large myths of multiracial harmony seem to obscure the real dimensions of the problem. Certainly this has tended to be the case in the Caribbean” (ibid., viii).

Pointing out that “Trinidad, indeed, appears as one of the classic areas of the plural society; perhaps, more correctly, of the plural society arising out of the plantation tradition” (ibid., viii), he went on to stress that

“We are left now with a multiracial, multicultural society that has achieved political independence. Hence, we must seek to solve our problems, without recourse to outside aid and irrelevant models. The need for close and detailed self-study is obvious” (ibid., viii).

However belated, this recognition of the plural nature and structure of his own society, coming from one of the two first and foremost opponents and critics of the thesis, is indeed a welcome admission of its relevance and fruitfulness as a framework for Caribbean social research.

By 1974 a wealth of data had accumulated demonstrating the segmental structure of Trinidadian society with its basic division between Creoles and Indians and its numerically minor, though strategic, elements of French, British, Portuguese, Chinese, Jewish, Syrian and Lebanese extraction and southern Caribbean immigrants.

Numerous studies clearly indicated the depth and nature of the gulf between East Indian and Creole segments of Trinidad, whose racial differences are further exaggerated by fundamental differences of socio-economic status, ecology, location and settlement, family patterns, religious affiliations and practice, values and social organisation. The Trinidad middle class of course contains Indian and Creole components; but from the beginning these have been discussed separately, the Creole middle class by C. L. R. James (idem, 1962, 130–139); Braithwaite, (1953), and the East Indians by LaGuerre, 1974c). In like fashion the disprivileged of both races, whether labelled working, lower class or proletariat, remain apart, spatially, socially, politically and culturally, as has been abundantly documented by several studies.  

An economic classification of the Trinidad people by reference either to their differing relations to the means of production or, following Stone, by their differing levels of income, material possessions and occupational class, is no less feasible than, for example, in Jamaica or Grenada. However, the utility of such classifications is further compromised in Trinidad by social disjunctions between its East Indian and Creole populations. Of far greater interest is the question of the relative solidarity and coherence of each of these racial segments, the Creole and Indian. Undoubtedly the cultural distinctiveness and exclusiveness of the East Indian segment has been increasingly eroded over the past few decades (Crowley, 1957, 1960; LaGuerre, 1974c; Schwartz, 1967; Clarke, 1967; Jha, 1974; Rubin & Zavallon, 1967; Nevadomsky, 1980, 1983). However, neither Ivar Oxaal (1968) nor Selwyn Ryan (1972) finds it necessary to devote much space to East Indian contributions and participation in their respective accounts of Trinidad's decolonization and the nationalist movement. Neither apparently, despite his proclaimed nonracial approach (Williams, 1957), did the late Prime Minister, Eric Williams, who devoted only one chapter of twenty pages in his history of Trinidad and Tobago to the contribution of the Indians (Williams, 1964, 102–121), a chapter that is neither as positive, perceptive, nor as concerned with the Indian experience in Trinidad as its title would lead us to expect. Since Williams wrote not only as a Creole historian, but as leader of a Creole political party and Prime Minister from 1959–1981, his obvious indifference to the Indians and their interests nicely illus-

involved were arrested during the first week of May (Shah, 1971), thus bringing to an end the so-called "February Revolution" (Best, 1970).

Reports on the Black Power movement in Trinidad all agree that it sought to achieve a radical change in the government, economy and direction of the country; and that to that end its leaders sought the support of the Indian community. However, its leaders, membership, and, with marginal exceptions, its slogans, language and tactics were all Afro-Creole and not East Indian; and it was the East Indians who suffered from its initial incidents of violence. Before and after March 4, the Indian community therefore remained aloof, and regarded the movement as a dispute between the Afro-Creoles which was not really their concern (Nicholls, 1971, 450-458; Deosaran 1981; LaGuerre, 1974a, 55f). The Trinidad Black Power movement of 1970 failed largely because its leadership alienated the Indian community instead of mobilising it; but they also alienated the Creole and Indian middle classes as well as the urban working class (Nicholls, 1971, 457), and failed to secure sufficient support among the rural proletariat to compensate therefor. It seems evident that in their rhetoric, organization, activities and numbers, the Black Power movement of 1970 basically expressed the resentments and frustrations of black intellectuals and black youth at the prevailing socio-economic and political situation in Trinidad which, nearly ten years after the Prime Minister had proclaimed "Massa day done" (Williams, 1961), seemed to continue with little significant change. Refusal of Indians to participate in this Black Power movement clearly paralleled their earlier indifference to the nationalist movement initiated by Cipriani (Ryan, 1972: Lewis, 1968, 197-225) and in the movement towards independence dominated by Eric Williams; but the horizontal split within the coloured Creole ranks that developed from February to May 1970 illustrated cleavages of a kind similar to those we found in its Jamaican precursor of 1968, and for similar reasons.

As Braithwaite pointed out (1974a), race generally takes priority over class in Trinidad and throughout the West Indies. Race and culture are modally closer in Caribbean societies than race and class, since among Creoles and Indians alike, the middle classes are numerical minorities and mutually estranged (James, 1962; LaGuerre, 1974c). Shared cultural assumptions, orientations and practice frequently override racial factors in these societies; but despite their differing origin, these effects are easily confounded with class alignments, given the elastic meanings of class among Marxists and non-Marxists alike. Yet even if classes are distinguished by strictly economic criteria rather than by subjective summations of status, prestige, economic and political position, as above, the results will be similar. Despite their occupational and cultural similarities, the Creole and the East Indian middle classes tend to keep apart, and interact mainly each with its own racial community, and rather with others such as whites or Chinese than with one another. Clearly Henriques' concept of 'colour-class' has little relevance, if any, to these patterns of Creole-Indian relations. At most its relevance is restricted to the Creole segment, as the Black Power escapade of 1970 reveals: but that protest was explicitly committed to the rejection and reversal of 'white values' (Nicholls, 1971, 451-453). Neither, given that both the Creole and Indian segments contained contraposed fractions of such strata, are Marxist 'clases' based on relations to the means of production, or Carl Stone's 'occupational classes', the units of effective mobilization and conflict in Trinidad society. In short, however we define or construct the objective stratification of Trinidad in economic terms, it seems clear that the two segments distinguished and contraposed by race and culture give greater priority to those factors than to other objective criteria of stratification.

Finally, while it is clear that race differences are gross hereditary physical features that distinguish human stocks, it is equally clear that the social significance of these biological differences depends primarily on their cultural definition and interpretation. In Trinidad, Indians have traditionally identified race and culture and practised ethnic endogamy. Creoles held Indians in disesteem on grounds of their cultural difference, and tended to attribute these differences to religion and race throughout the years of indenture and for some time afterwards (Braeton, 1974a, 1974b, 1979; Singh, 1974; LaGuerre, 1974c; Deosaran, 1981). Such racial stereotypes still figure prominently in the culture of each of these two contraposed segments, but they differ in their contents, intensity, distribution and implications within each segmental culture. Accordingly, both the Creole and East Indian ideas of race, and their racial and cultural stereotypes of one another, are basically cultural phenomena, and illustrate the central mediating role of cultural categories and stereotypes in structuring the relations of racial and ethnic collectivities in such plural societies as Trinidad.
Guyana, formerly British Guiana, the only Commonwealth Caribbean territory in which blacks and coloureds together form a numerical minority, has been studied by several anthropologists and other social scientists between 1947 and 1977. These include R. T. Smith, a British social anthropologist from Cambridge; his Sinhalese colleague, Chandra Jayawardena, who was trained at the London School of Economics; Elliott Skinner, a Trinidadian trained in New York; Leo Despres, Lee Drummmond and Marilyn Silverman, American anthropologists; Joseph Landis, an American social psychologist; Ralph Premdas, an American political sociologist; R. S. Milne, a Canadian political scientist; Eddie Greene, Paul Singh and H. A. Lutchman, Guyanese political scientists, Carlene O’Laughlin and Peter Newman, British economists; and others. In addition, the country’s first two Prime Ministers, Cheddi Jagan (1966, 1974) and Forbes Burnham (1970) have written extensively about its politics; so have Roy Glasgow (1970) and H. J. M. Hubbard (1969), both Guyanese, the British journalist Peter Simms (1966) and the young Guyanese political scientist P. C. Hintzen (1980). Though incomplete, this list includes several leading actors on the Guyanese political stage during the sixties and seventies, and other leading students of Guyanese society and its development.

Like the two senior Guyanese politicians, Guyanese social scientists present opposing interpretations of Guyanese society and culture. On one side are those who, following Raymond Smith, assert the fundamental unity and integrative characteristics of Guyanese society both under and since British rule. Writers of this persuasion include Elliott Skinner (1960, 1971); Chandra Jayawardena (1964, 1966, 1968, 1980) and Lee Drummmond (1980, 1981), though not without some disagreement among themselves. On the other side are those scholars who view Guyana as a plural society based on two large culturally and racially distinct blocs, the Afro-Guyanese (black and coloured) or Creole, and the East Indian. Of these writers Leo A. Despres (1964, 1967, 1968, 1969, 1975a, 1975b) has provided the finest documentation to support his views.
Others who share and apply plural frameworks for the analysis of Guyanese political developments include the Guyanese political scientists, Paul Singh (1972), Edward Greene (1974), and R. A. Glasgow (1970), as well as R. S. Milne (1977) and R. Premdas (1972), although the latter’s orientation is only implicit. While aware of these two opposed perspectives, Joseph Landis and Marilyn Silverman have adopted independent viewpoints and presented data of equal value and relevance for evaluation of the competing alternatives. Of writers who deny that Guyana is a plural society or exhibits pluralism, Raymond Smith (1960, 1962, 1963, 1967, 1970, 1971, 1976), has presented the most acute and sustained criticism and exposition of alternatives, supported by Chandra Jayawardena. I shall therefore first summarize R. T. Smith’s views and models of Guyanese social structure and then outline Despres’ alternative, before moving towards an evaluation of these models and the data and arguments deployed to support them.

Two aspects or levels of the positions adopted by R. T. Smith and Jayawardena are best discussed separately. At the more general level, they both reject conceptions of plural society, together with its criteria of identification and their implications. At a more specific level, they try to show how Guyanese society differs in structure, process and substance from expectations based on the plural society model. It is this latter empirical thesis that concerns us here.

Given the complexity of their positions, and the issues involved, it is best to present Raymond Smith’s view of Guyana in his own words.

“The two largest groups are the East Indians and the Negroes, or Africans as they are sometimes called. The Indians are more easily distinguishable as an ethnic group than the Negroes because of their relatively recent absorption into the society. There has been so much intermixture of Negroes with other races that the ethnic boundaries are often difficult to define, and such African culture as survives is very marginal to the everyday life of Guyanese Negroes. This is less true of the Indians, though the degree of assimilation and attenuation of an Indian way of life is remarkable...

“After 1838... a social system emerged in which the Negro, White and Coloured groups were bound together through their common participation in the social, economic, and political life of the country and through a sharing of certain values and cultural forms, notably the evaluation of ‘English’ culture as superior to ‘African’ superstition and the common belief in Christianity” (R. T. Smith, 1962, 105).

It is argued by Smith and Jayawardena that this ‘Creole’ complex, from which the immigrant Indians were largely excluded by their segregation as indentured labour on the sugar plantations, has been increasingly accepted by the East Indian population over the past fifty years, as illustrated by their recent pressure for proportionate shares of the employment, occupational and educational and economic opportunities controlled by the government, by the dissolution of caste and virtual disappearance of Hindi along with other pristine elements of Indian culture, and by their participation in the industrial and political processes of contemporary Guyana (R. T. Smith, 1967, 1970, 1971, 1976; Jayawardena, 1980). Both scholars freely admit that Guyanese Indians and ‘Africans’ retain adapted residues of their ancestral cultures (R. T. Smith, 1967, 235–239, 251; Jayawardena, 1966, 1978, 416f; 1980, 440–441; Smith & Jayawardena, 1958, 1959, 1967). As Raymond Smith says,

“There are marked differences in the style of life of Indians and Africans, particularly at the lower class level and in some areas of custom and belief. Clearly each group has some sense of identity symbolised in the particularity of custom.” (1971, 423)

With such minimal admission of the obvious, all recent students of Guyana agree, namely, Drummond (1980), Despres (1967), Silverman (1977), and Singh (1971), as well as Jayawardena (1980).

Smith and Jayawardena are also aware and acutely concerned about the increase of racial polarization and conflict in Guyana since 1961 (R. T. Smith, 1971, 1976; Jayawardena, 1980, 446). However, their assumptions and orientations seem rather to frustrate than to promote understanding of the Guyanese situation and its development. For example, having carefully described the marriage and family customs of Guyanese Indians (R. T. Smith, C. Jayawardena, 1958, 1959; Jayawardena, 1960) which are similar to those of Trinidad East Indians (Roberts & Braithwaite, 1962), they...
initially dismissed the notable ways in which these East Indian institutions differ from their Afro-Guyanese counterparts as superficial (R. T. Smith, 1962, 131), and have not subsequently pursued their true significance as indicators in their discussions of Guyanese Society (R. T. Smith 1962, 131; 1963, 42–3; 1978, 354–6; M. G. Smith, 1966, xii–xiii. Despres, 1967, 74–86).

However, in Raymond Smith’s view, the Guyanese ‘Negro family’ is modally matrifocal while the Indian family is not. Nonetheless, as regards those conditions of economic and social status which he regarded as determinants of Negro matrifocality, Guyanese Indians were clearly so much worse off than Guyanese Negroes that Raymond Smith invoked variables of ethnicity, cultural autonomy and segregation to account for this difference of family forms (idem, 1959b, 58–9; 1964, 42–3), even though the Negro communities he had studied earlier (idem., 1956, 1957) enjoyed similar conditions of isolation and ethnic homogeneity. I can only interpret this prolonged dismissal of his own data and their implications as either reflecting unsupported value judgments, or some rigorous and hidden requirements of his theoretical scheme (R. T. Smith, 1978). In like fashion, although familiar with the severe economic, occupational and ecological differences between the Afro-Guyanese and Indian populations, in which differences of location correspond closely with differences of race, ecology and social history, Raymond Smith argues strenuously that both Creole and Indian blocs participate equally in an inclusive occupational order that reflects the basic class structure and common cultural orientations of Creole Guyanese society (R. T. Smith, 1962, 1967, 1970, 1971, 1976, 203–205).

Similarly, despite the evidence that links Burnham and his Creole supporters with American and British intervention in the events that toppled Jagan and his East Indian government following a series of strikes, race riots and popular violence; and despite the sudden, unheralded and basic switch in electoral practice from the traditional ‘first past the post’ to proportional representation that brought Burnham to power in 1964, and the virtual exclusion of East Indians from government since then, according to R. T. Smith (1971, 425), Guyanese Indians and Negroes share a common political culture. Despite his recognition of the ideological and other political differences between Jagan’s Marxism and Burnham’s ambiguous ‘co-operative socialism’, on which Jagan poured great contempt (Jagan, 1974), and despite Burnham’s extraordinary electoral innovations of 1968 (R. T. Smith, 1971, 418–419; 1976, 212–220) which virtually guaranteed PNC victories by adding to the Guyanese electoral list 43,000 overseas names, while simultaneously authorising resident voters to cast as many as five proxy votes (Greene, 1974, 26–31). Raymond Smith assures us that “there is one political culture shared by all groups” (idem., 1971, 425). Like a good sophist, to uphold this proposition he then proceeds to try to argue away contrary evidence, such as Jagan’s withdrawal of Guyana from the West Indian Federation which Burnham supported, or Jagan’s promotion of agricultural schemes for rural Indians to the exclusion of Afro-Guyanese, and Burnham’s racially slanted electoral tactics, development programmes and constitutional changes from 1964 onwards (ibid., 425–7; 1976, 218–222; Despres, 1975a, 130; Hintzen, 1980).

As regards race and the prolonged political conflict between Afro- and Indo-Guyanese, led respectively by Burnham and Jagan, while Jayawardena consistently avoids the racial label and prefers to speak of ‘ethnicity’ as the difference between the two blocs, R. T. Smith correctly identifies the conflict in racial terms (R. T. Smith, 1971, 1976) as Jagan and his associates among others have done.1 R. T. Smith (1970) and Jayawardena (1980) have both argued that neither race nor ethnicity are decisive ‘causes’ of the violent and progressive polarization. For Raymond Smith,

> “Competition for posts and promotion in the bureaucracy and rising levels of aspiration among the lower classes exist here as elsewhere; race merely provides another channel into which conflict can flow. It is not in itself the cause of the conflict” (1970, 70, his italics).

For Jayawardena,

> “In a polyethnic society, ethnic conflicts incorporate some class antagonisms. . . . and class conflicts can be fed into ethnic animosities (idem., 1980, 444).

> “I have explored three main factors in the production of ethnicity: class, social status and power. Political processes arising from these fields of action transform ethnic identity

into that self-conscious phenomenon one may term 'ethnicity'” (Ibid., 448)².

What Jayawardena never discusses is why in Guyana the collective interests of class, status and power should generate or be associated with 'ethnic identity' in the first place, since on his argument 'ethnicity' evidently presupposes the former in order to exist. While Raymond Smith recognizes race as a condition of objective differences (R. T. Smith, 1976, 205–209) and says, “In the Caribbean race must be stressed since it was characteristic of Creole society to deny the value of any racial identity except ‘whiteness’” (idem., 1967, 254) - a curious piece of reasoning – he also needs to explain how and why racial interests have come to channel and subordinate the rival commonalities of class and party in Guyana, having failed to do so as yet in several efforts (R. T. Smith, 1971, 422–427; 1967, 253–255; 1976, 211–216). Could it be that, in his own phrase, “The failure to bring race into the open is partly because the problems of racial and cultural pluralism have not yet been faced”? (idem., 1967, 255).

². For criticism of Jayawardena’s argument which is based on R. T. Smith’s 1970 paper, see Drummond, 1981, 693–696. For a careful documentation and analysis of competition for social and economic resources by Afro- and Indo-Guyanese, see Despres’ monograph (1967) which documents and analyses the relations of cultural pluralism to nationalist politics during the early years, the period of Jagan’s ascendancy and Anglo-American intervention. On the basis of his observations and analysis of institutional patterns among Creoles and East Indians, Despres found that they differed significantly in

Unlike Jayawardena and R. T. Smith, each of whom first studied one or other of the two dominant stocks in colonial Guyana on the eve of its independence, Leo Despres studied them both in order to determine by first-hand experience of both communities and their cultures the degrees and precise areas in which they shared common ecological situations and common cultural practices, or differed. Despres’ findings are most fully set out in his monograph (1967) which documents and analyses the relations of cultural pluralism to nationalist politics during the early years, the period of Jagan’s ascendancy and Anglo-American intervention. On the basis of his observations and analysis of institutional patterns among Creoles and East Indians, Despres found that they differed significantly in

family and kinship organisation, ecological situations and economic activities, religion, social, recreational and associational activities, while sharing certain national institutions such as local government and education. Moreover, since Indo- and Afro-Guyanese tend to live apart, each local group normally had its own communal territory, separate school, community, village council and administration, market arrangements and places of worship.

Despres shows that following World War II various organisations served to link African and Indian communities together against the colonial power and its order. With the introduction of universal suffrage in 1953, the People’s Progressive Party (PPP), a working-class party which enjoyed the support of urban and rural labourers of both races swept to power at the polls under the joint leadership of an East Indian, Cheddi Jagan, and a Creole, Forbes Burnham. The British swiftly withdrew the new constitution, suspended the government, imprisoned and restricted several leaders of the PPP, and apparently made overtures, direct and otherwise, to Burnham and his close supporters, who quit the Party in 1955 and campaigned against the Jagan-led rump of the PPP in the election of 1957, after political liberties had been restored. Then and in 1961, Burnham’s Party, which drew heavily on the votes of Afro-Guyanese, black and coloured, suffered severe defeats at the polls while Jagan’s team governed the country. In the 1961 election, with 42.6 per cent of the votes cast for the PPP as against 41 per cent for Burnham’s People’s National Congress (PNC) and 16.3 per cent for the United Force (UF), a Portuguese-led ‘middle class’ coalition. Jagan’s PPP won a disproportionate 57 per cent of the seats, leaving 31 per cent for Burnham’s PNC and 12 per cent for the United Force. In 1964, following prolonged and extensive strikes and racial violence throughout Guyana, the Colonial Office abruptly imposed proportional representation in place of the familiar British plurality system on the eve of that year’s general elections. In consequence, Jagan’s government was replaced by a coalition of Burnham’s PNC and the United Force under Burnham’s leadership (E. Greene, 1974, 17–26; Singh 1972; Premdas, 1972, 275–283; Despres, 1967, 192–201, 251–267; R. T. Smith, 1971, 1976, 211–222).

Despres and others, including R. T. Smith, agree that as political rivalry developed between Jagan, Burnham and their respective supporters, Afro-Guyanese lined up solidly behind Burnham and Indo-Guyanese behind Jagan. It is also known that when in office from 1957 to 1964, the latter used such opportunities as his government enjoyed to cultivate Indian support by policies favourable to
them,3 much as Burnham has since done with Afro-Guyanese (Hintzen, 1980). Despres reports these and other developments up to 1964, three years after his field study, indicating their bases and implications. Under such progressive politicisation by the ruling party and government, the previously separate and unco-ordinated local communities of Negroes and Indians were incorporated under rival political parties as 'maximal cultural sections' or corporate groups contraposed in a nation-wide segmental competition that polarised two population blocs of differing race, numbers, culture, social status, economic interests, ecological position and social organisation (Despres, 1967, 169-176). Despres goes on to specify some structural aspects and implications of the resulting social pluralism in the Guyanese context of those years (ibid., 268-292), thus answering some questions which R. T. Smith and Jayawardena had raised but failed to pursue and resolve. In the process Despres also identifies the circumstances and conditions that transformed those common interests of class, power and status that united Afro- and Indo-Guyanese workers in 1953 into the polarisation of 1961-64 and after, and have since kept these blocs contraposed in political struggle.

To account for this transformation Despres points out that, while under colonialism the spatial and ecological segregation of Afro- and Indo-Guyanese had reduced opportunities for mutual friction and tension, with universal suffrage and expectations of early independence, once the joint PPP leadership had split, under its political leaders each population consolidated its distinctive base, cultural, territorial, political and other interests, and acted accordingly (Despres, 1967, 1969, 1975b). In short, the preconditions for the conversion of collective interests into 'ethnicity', to use Jayawardena's terms, or into 'racial conflict', to quote R. T. Smith, had always existed as pervasive and heavily stressed differences of race, culture, ecology and social organization. In such a situation, there is thus nothing problematic or mysterious in the final pre-emption of Guyana's political party organization and programmes by racial rather than class criteria and interests, any more than in Malaysia (Milne, 1977).


Studies by Ralph Premdas (1972) and Joseph Landis (1973, 1974) supply considerable data in support of Despres' account and analysis as against those of R. T. Smith and Jayawardena. In an illuminating paper, Premdas (1972) shows how successive electoral contests between the political parties led by Burnham and Jagan from 1957 to 1968 intensified and extended the rivalries, personal fears and collective antagonisms of Afro- and Indo-Guyanese. Based on a survey of racial attitudes conducted in 1967, Landis (1973) also shows that Indo-Guyanese of all religions – Moslem, Hindu, Catholic and Protestant – shared a common sense of their superiority to 'Africans', who for their part manifested defensive attitudes of anxiety at the prospects of Indian domination in Guyana.

Reporting the responses of those in his sample who either refrained from voting in any one of three general elections held between 1957 and 1964, or who voted once or more for any party other than that associated with their race, Landis tried to evaluate and test alternative 'explanations' of these behaviours that he had speculatively constructed to his own taste, and labelled Marxist and pluralist. Perhaps predictably, he found both 'theories' wanting in different respects, and preferred what he called an 'explanation' phrased in terms of 'inter-group relations' (Landis, 1974, 265). The nature of these 'inter-group relations' he nowhere defines, but in a footnote (ibid., 267, fn2) apparently identifies them with 'cleavages', whether intrinsic or superimposed.

Citing Despres' argument that "whether violence will occur in a culturally plural society depends on the organizational strategies adopted by the political leaders", Landis argues that

"To the extent that Despres uses the theory of cultural pluralism to explain the polarization and the violence, however, the polarization and the violence are attributed to cultural differences and socio-economic differences resulting from the cultural differences" (ibid., 266, fn 1).

However, since conceptions and criteria of race as well as social organisation are elements of culture, clearly, a variety of coincident cleavages separated Afro- and Indo-Guyanese well in advance of the public contest for power between Jagan and Burnham after 1955.
Thus in this particular case there is no significant substantive difference between the segmental plural structure documented by Despres and the specific framework of 'inter-group relations' that Landis prefers.

Using the criterion cited above for classification of voters as non-racial, Landis found that only 24.5 per cent of the Indo-Guyanese and 18.6 per cent of the Afro-Guyanese qualified as 'non-racial voters', thus demonstrating the extraordinary level of racial polarisation that developed after 1957, when for various reasons less than 56 per cent of the electorate voted, as against 89.4 per cent in 1961 and 96.9 per cent in 1964 (Frends, 1972, 278–282; Greene, 1974, 19). Evidently most of the 'non-racial' voters whose attitudes Landis analyses had abstained from the polls in 1957, but took part in subsequent elections, and then presumably supported the party that incorporated their race. Without apparently recognizing it, Landis provides more incidental support for Despres' plural analysis than for his own ill-defined scheme of 'inter-group relations'.

Despite her rejection of the plural model offered by Despres, and her evident preference for a set of "class alignments' that cut across national and local levels" and have "implications... for conflict and competition" (Silverman, 1979, 468), Marilyn Silverman's field report on the Indo-Guyanese rice farming village she studied in 1969–70 likewise illustrates the soundness of Despres' field data and analysis. Using her field data, Silverman attempts to document class formation, political brokerage, patronage and clientele within and between the Indian community and ruling parties from 1953 to 1970. During these years the locally dominant group of Hindus who had supported Jagan's party and policies were replaced by a smaller but wealthier group of Muslims affiliated to the PNC. Almost incidentally Silverman reveals the extent to which the PPP pursued the local vote by distributing resources such as the reserve of nearby Crown lands to the villagers through its agents. Following the PNC victory in 1964 the previously privileged position of this community disappeared under PNC pressure and manipulation (ibid., 478–480).

Another study from an independent perspective by the Guyanese political scientist, Harold Lutchman, reviews fully the country's social and political development during this century and illustrates the serious uncertainties about its future that reflect the racial polarisation and underlying differences in political culture, social organisation and economic interest of its two major population blocs (Lutchman, 1974, 241–267).

Given these studies, we may now look briefly at the sequence of models that underlies Raymond Smith's view of contemporary Guyana (R. T. Smith, 1967, 233–250; 1970, 54–55). Though first presented formally as a sequence in 1967, they are implicit in his earlier account (idem, 1962). Briefly, for R. T. Smith Guyana's social history illustrates a succession of societal structures which he identifies chronologically as plantation society, Creole society, and modern society (R. T. Smith 1967, 233–250). However, in 1971 he still regarded Guyana as 'colonial' despite several decades of 'modernity' and formal independence (R. T. Smith, 1971, 425).

In Guyana the first phase of plantation society coincided with African slavery which ended in 1838 and was followed after a short interval by massive importations of indentured labour from India to replace those blacks who withdrew from the sugar plantations. For Indian immigrants, the 'plantation society' became their life situation throughout and after their indentures, except for those who, having completed their indentures and chosen to remain in Guyana, were able to move to other locations. Meanwhile, for the non-Indian population, the 'Creole society', which had been ushered in by 1838, imitated 'things English', upheld their 'moral and cultural superiority' (R. T. Smith 1967, 234), and in this way provided a 'set of common values or an ideology for the whole society' (ibid., 235). Thus while the ex-slaves, their 'free' coloured cousins, and white rulers gradually established a new 'Creole society' and culture after blacks had fled the plantations and accepted Christianity, the incoming indentured Indians were being socialised to the plantation society under conditions which, citing Irving Gottman, Smith neatly compares with parallel socialisations in other total institutions such as an asylum or prison (ibid., 229–231). So, whatever may have been the cultural community of black, white and brown Creoles in Guyana at this time, the immigrant Indians had little if any part in that society, thus illustrating the familiar model of a segmental plural society (van Lier, 1950, 1970). Nonetheless R. T. Smith argues that throughout these decades the peoples of Guyana formed an inclusive Creole society and shared many cultural forms and values.

It is Raymond Smith's argument that with the end of Indian indenture in 1917 and the introduction of trade unionism in 1919 by Hubert Critchlow (R. T. Smith, 1967, 244; Singh, 1972, 4–9) a new type of society began to emerge in Guyana, a 'modern' society.
which in his words is itself “not just a complex of modern institutions. It is a mode of integration of the whole society” (Geertz, 1963, 21, quoted by R. T. Smith, 1967, 245). Despite a rather hesitant slow start, according to Smith, the processes of ‘creolisation’ and occupational differentiation were dominant trends, and implicitly encompassed everyone in a common social stratification, of which “the occupational system . . . (is) the primary structure” (R. T. Smith 1970, 46). Following World War II, pressures on the Guyanese people to modernize and ‘integrate’ intensified abruptly with the introduction of adult suffrage, the first general election on that basis, the formation of a biracial mass party of the working class opposed to capitalism and colonialism, the restoration of Crown Colony government following suspension of the new constitution, the PPP split in 1955, and the political struggle that followed thereafter.

While there is some truth in Raymond Smith’s emphasis on ‘modernisation’ and ‘integration’ as closely linked issues and processes that Guyana has had to cope with, especially since 1945, his optimism about the progress, state and likely outcome of this national effort is rather surprising, given the bloodshed, arson and strikes of 1962–64, and the obvious deterioration of relations across the racial frontiers since then. Raymond Smith’s optimism stems largely from his failure to recognize how large a number and proportion of Guyana’s Indians were still excluded from the ‘Creole society’ from 1946 to 1960 and later, being then settled either on plantations or in racially homogeneous rural villages and land settlement schemes (Despres, 1967, 60; Jayawardena, 1963). Yet even if the whites and Afro-Guyanese of all colours had belonged in 1946 to a common Creole society, as that society did not include most of the Indo-Guyanese, at a minimum the country as a whole was then a plural society of two major segments, Creole and East Indian.

Hence, when those segments combined under pressure of political circumstances to demand simultaneous ‘modernisation’ and independence, the alliance was more likely to explode than to fuse or ‘integrate’, as optimists and its well-wishers hoped, since, in addition to differences of race, colour, ecology, social organisation, historical experience, religion and the like, the two segments were anchored in very different cultures and kinds of social structure, and accordingly differed profoundly in their economic needs and interests, even though their members seemed superficially to belong to such common inclusive classes as the ‘peasantry’ or ‘proletariat’. In other words, the unity forged by Jagan and Burnham in 1953 was more superficial and illusory than it seemed; and so were the prospects of Indian assimilation. Guyanese integration and modernization in the high-pressure chambers of the decolonisation politics of post-world war Britain and the USA. Given the similarities of social history, racial and cultural composition that group Guyana with Trinidad and Suriname and apart from the less complex, Creole societies such as Grenada, Jamaica or St. Kitts; and given the consensus of scholars such as van Lier (1950, 1970), Dew (1977) and Braithwaite (1974b) that these latter are plural societies, it would indeed be most surprising if Guyana with its similar social composition and cultural history, and its recent grim record of Afro-Indian political strife, is a society of some other kind.
General Models

Besides R. T. Smith (1967, 1970), David Lowenthal (1967, 1972) and myself (M. G. Smith, 1965a, 1966a, 1974; 1974), Harmannus Hoetink (1967, 1974, 1975), Stuart Hall (1977) and Eric Williams (1946, 1957) have tried to formulate general models of Caribbean society dealing with race, culture, class stratification and aspects of pluralism. Like Adam Kuper (1976, 1977), Henriques also offered implicitly a general model of biracial Caribbean societies in his accounts of Jamaica (1951, 1953, 1957) which he apparently felt to be appropriate for them all (Henriques & Manyoni, 1977). However, we have already discussed that model and found it wanting.

In a thoughtful essay, like George Simpson before him (1962a, 1962b), John Rex has tried to formulate a structural model of ‘colonial societies’ which might hold for Caribbean and Latin American societies together (idem., 1977). More broadly, in his general thesis of the plantation society, George Beckford (1972) tried to capture the essential foundations of Caribbean and similar New World societies, though of course his plantation model also applies to many societies in other times and places. Of all these various statements, those by Hoetink, Eric Williams, Tannenbaum and myself concentrate explicitly on the racial factor in Creole social structure and should therefore be discussed together. Stuart Hall’s essay applies Althusserian concepts to the relation of pluralism, race and class in Caribbean society “then and now”. John Rex offers a basically Weberian model of these ‘colonial societies’, but one that attempts to incorporate Marx’s conception of economic classes; and Beckford’s plantation model presents a basically economic view of Caribbean society and history, since it seeks to derive their structure and dynamics from economic organisation and interests.

In 1967 R. T. Smith saw West Indian societies as evolving through a sequence of basic types which correspond to the models of plantation, Creole and modern societies. In 1970 he reviewed the stratification of these and other Caribbean societies on modified Weberian lines and stressed their dimensions of status, power and economic organisation, discussing the latter under the headings of
'occupational structure', and the 'processes of allocation' by which personnel were recruited to particular slots in the 'division of labour' (R. T. Smith, 1970). Having already discussed some Marxist and Black Power interpretations of West Indian societies as well as Carl Stone's 'occupational' model, we now have to review these and other explicit general models of Caribbean society. At once the most detailed and extensive discussion of race, stratification and pluralism in Caribbean society is that presented by David Lowenthal, initially in essay form (Lowenthal, 1960, 1967) and later in his monograph (1972).

There are of course many relevant and important discussions of these variables and their relations at more general levels.1 While relevant to this study, I shall not attempt to deal here with these more general discussions for two reasons. Firstly, this essay is addressed to certain key issues in the sociology and anthropology of contemporary Caribbean societies. Secondly, as these more general statements refer to other societies, times and regions, they are best discussed together in another place. However, any clarifications of the relations of stratification, race and pluralism that are valid for Caribbean societies should contribute to the wider task of developing a better understanding of these conditions and their inter-relations in other societies. So, while setting aside for another day the review of these broader theoretical schemes, let us follow Stuart Hall's example and begin our review of the general discussions of Caribbean society by summarising David Lowenthal's descriptive classification and typology (idem., 1972, 76–87).

In Hall's words, Lowenthal distinguishes

1. Homogeneous societies without distinctions of colour or class; e.g., Carriacou,2 Barbuda, Caicos.

2. Societies differentiated by colour, class; e.g., Saba, Anguilla, Desirade.

3. Societies stratified by class/colour; this includes most of the territories, all those of any size, e.g., Jamaica, Trinidad, Barbados, St. Vincent, Grenada, St. Kitts, Martinique, etc.

4. Societies lacking white Creole elites, e.g., Grenada, St. Lucia, Dominica.

5. Stratified societies containing additional ethnic groupings of some size, e.g., Trinidad, Guyana, Suriname, Honduras” (Hall, 1977, 150–151).

Continuing, Hall summarises other characteristics that differentiate these five varieties of Caribbean society:

“The islands in Groups 1 and 2 are very small in size with virtually homogeneous class and ethnic composition. Those in Group 4 vary from those in Group 3 by not having a white Creole elite; they are, however, like Group 3, stratified by class/colour... Those in Group 5 are distinct in that they contain substantial and distinct ethnic segments different from those, but in addition to those, found elsewhere in the dominant class/colour systems. Trinidad and Guyana, which contain large East Indian groups, are also fully stratified on class/colour lines” (ibid., 151).

As noted earlier (M. G. Smith, 1974, 274–280), the Caribbean societal spectrum consists firstly of biracial societies of moderate or minuscule size; secondly, there are segmentally organized multiracial societies that have biracial Creole groupings as their historical foundations, and thirdly, there are racially homogeneous units of minuscule size. Since emancipation, the minuscule units, whether monoracial or biracial, have lost and lack the stratification structure that ordered Creole populations or other segments of Caribbean societies. Moreover, even though these more complex units have Creole components as their foundations, those Creole structures are not co-extensive with the segmental multiracial societies that combine two or more populations of differing race and equivalent size, such as Creoles and East Indians, or Mestizos, Mayas and Black Caribs as in Belize (M. G. Smith, 1974, 297; Hall, 1977, 151; Lowenthal, 1960, 1972).

Lowenthal summarises his rich material on stratification and pluralism in the West Indies as follows:
West Indian classes are separated not merely by differences of colour, status, power and wealth; they also exhibit diverse cultural patterns and social frameworks. The legal, religious, educational and family institutions of the elite connect only tangentially with most West Indian lives. The rural peasantry and urban proletariat are aware of elite mores and are encouraged to emulate them, but working class life style is mainly guided by institutions unlike those of the elite in structure, style, leadership, purpose and ideology. The folk institutions give rise to new cultural distinctions, which social disjunctions intensify. All these differences are reflected in, and help to validate, class stereotypes. The tensions aroused by these divergent institutions lie at the heart of social pluralism" (Lowenthal, 1972, 100-101).

He then fills in this outline for the black/white Creole components of stratified Caribbean societies of moderate size, including the French islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe, before dealing in extenso with the cultural institutions and social positions of East Indians in Trinidad, Guyana, Suriname, the French territories and elsewhere, as well as with smaller minorities of Bush Negroes, Amerindians, Javanese, Portuguese, Chinese and Jews scattered variously around the region. Generalising for all, he says

"The shape and structure of West Indian societies depend on three basic elements: class hierarchy, social pluralism and cultural pluralism. The rigidity of stratification varies from place to place, but the social pyramid is almost everywhere identical: a small upper class controls access to power and rewards; successively larger middle and lower classes have less and less status, wealth and self-esteem" (ibid., 91).

However,

"the range and rigidity of West Indian stratification do not stem from class distinctions alone, but also from racial and ethnic differences. Racial and ethnic categories overlap in reality and are locally confused with one another, but different social and cultural consequences tend to flow from each" (ibid., 91-92).

Of race, class and colour he says

"Race and colour have always supplied critical distinctions among creoles. Segregated by law or by custom since the 17th century, white and non-white have played distinct social roles. Codified differences forced each class to institutionalise separate modes of organization and ways of living" (ibid., 92-93).

"Race and colour are not the sole determinants of status in the West Indies. But class distinctions are mainly seen, and grievances expressed in racial terms. Colour in the sense of physical appearance carries extraordinary weight" (ibid., 93).

And

"Race and colour are shorthand designations of class, but they often overwhelm all other connotations; colour, visibility may transcend other elements of class" (ibid., 134).

Nonetheless, almost as if he anticipated Adam Kuper's observations on Jamaica (Kuper, 1976, 1977), Lowenthal points out that

"Compared with South Africa or the United States, the one ideologically and the other institutionally racialist, the West Indies are in most ways open . . . The black West Indian increasingly inherits his own society" (ibid., 138);

and, while

"Status striving prevails throughout West Indian society . . . (and) status obsesses many West Indians, colour groupings are blurred and fragmented rather than dichotomised, and the attrition of white and light elites facilitates black mobility. The numerical weakness of the elite forces cognizance of pressures from below, and the entire class hierarchy is knit together by intermixing, acculturation and assimilation" (ibid., 138-9).

In short, Lowenthal's summary captures and illuminates the typical structure and variant modalities of West Indian society by integrating an extremely rich set of observations within an analytic framework that combines stratification by status, wealth and power with race
differences, ethnicity, and with those institutional and cultural differences that illustrate their overarching pluralism. His kaleidoscope also shows how these components articulate in Caribbean societies.

As regards Caribbean race relations, four competing analyses or 'explanations' have been presented by Frank Tannenbaum, Eric Williams, Harmannus Hoetink and myself in that order. Contrasting the relative severities of Catholic and Protestant slave systems in the New World, Tannenbaum attributed these differences of religious orientation and tradition between the ruling populations as effects of the determinant influences of the differing social-economic determinist (idem, 1944, 210–212). To this Eric Williams, an economic determinist (idem, 1957, 61). replied that

"Historically there have been three determinants of the race-relations patterns of the Caribbean area. The first of these has been economic... The distinction in race and colour was only the superficial visible symbol of a distinction which in reality was based on the ownership of property...

The second determinant of this race-relations pattern was political, following inevitably from the economic factor. The State existed in Caribbean society to maintain the property relationship. The state became the organ of the plantocracy and the enemy of the people, a tradition which has not completely disappeared...

The third determinant of the race-relations pattern in the historical sense was the theory of race then prevalent" (Williams, 1957, 54–55).

In reply, Tannenbaum criticised this argument primarily for its exclusive focus on the Caribbean basin, and, within that region, on the slave period of race relations, and for its indifference to any conditions and developments that might qualify or question Williams' assumption "of economic determinism as the infallible tool of social investigations and interpretations" (Tannenbaum, 1957, 61).

Beginning with these issues and the inconclusive debate of 1957 between Williams and Tannenbaum, H. Hoetink (1967) sought to explain the differences between Catholic and Protestant New World slave systems in terms of phenotypical differences between Iberians and Northwestern Europeans, which Hoetink claimed both ruling populations "idealised as their distinctive 'somatic norm images' (SNI); but which, being of differing hue, differed in their 'somatic distances' from the modal Negro phenotype. According to Hoetink, the possibility that Negroes or hybrids might be socially assimilated was excluded by the distinctive SNI of the rulers in those New World societies dominated by Northwest Europeans, be they French, who were mainly Catholic, or Dutch, British or Danes, who were mainly Protestant. In contrast, Hoetink argues that the swarthy complexions of Iberians made it more difficult for them to distinguish and exclude from their ranks Negro-White hybrids of moderate pigment, with the result that the general social position of Negroes in those Iberian New World societies both under and since slavery has been superior in such respects as social mobility after Emancipation, relative humaneness of slave institutions, less extreme and widespread racist doctrines, etc., than in those New World countries established and/or dominated by Northwest Europeans, who were typically more florid and Protestant.

On Hoetink's argument the only means by which Negroes can achieve or have achieved social mobility in these multiracial New World systems is through private association as intimates and equals with the dominant whites. Given the dominant status of whites in these units under and since slavery, such 'biological-cum-social mingling' (Hoetink, 1967, 48) presupposes white acceptance of Negroes or hybrids as social equals; but on his thesis, that is very difficult if not impossible for Northwest Europeans, given the unbridgeable gulf between their somatic norm image and the Negro phenotype (ibid., 48–9). Thus, by treating 'sexual-cum-social acceptance' as the sole or principal criterion that differentiates the 'Iberian and Northwest European Caribbean variants' of race relations (ibid., 47). Hoetink derives differing rates and forms of social acceptance for Negroes in the two sets of European New World colonies as effects of the determinant influences of the differing somatic norm images (SNI) which, on his argument, regulate interpersonal and impersonal relations equally between dominant and subordinate racial stocks in the Caribbean and elsewhere (Hoetink, 1967, 1974, 1975).

Having reviewed Hoetink's data and argument and found them wanting (M. G. Smith, 1968), together with the theses of Williams (1944, 1946, 1957) and Tannenbaum (1947), I then ex-
amined the historical record and contemporary patterns of race relations in the Caribbean, concentrating primarily on black-white relations in order to consider the competing explanations of Tannenbaum and Eric Williams in the hope of deepening my understanding of the complex. That review of data and theory on Caribbean race relations seemed to show that

"Race relations and alignments are normally mediated by political action and express differential distributions of collective power" (M. G. Smith, 1974, 331).

However, though that essay addressed broadly the general structures of racial stratification in the Caribbean, being primarily concerned to identify the key conditions or variables that generated, sustained or modified such racial stratifications, it did not consider in detail the respective roles of economic factors, race or pluralism in Caribbean stratification systems as such.

3

Some would argue, as for example did Eric Williams (1944, 1946), that the plantation basis of most Caribbean societies from the sixteenth century onwards accounts for their racial orders and compositions. Thus Hoetink begins his study of Caribbean race relations with the following proposition:

"Negroes, slavery, plantations: these three have characterised and determined the unique historical and social pattern of the Caribbean" (Hoetink, 1967, 1).

Following that statement, Hoetink delimited the field of his researches by invoking Charles Wagley's conception of 'plantation America' as a 'culture sphere' which geo-historically extends from Brazil northwards into the Deep South of the USA, Lloyd Best (1968), George Beckford (1972), Eric Williams (1944), Eric Wolf (1971), and many others have adopted broadly similar views of Caribbean societies as constituted and dominated by plantation systems. It is now normal for these theses to rest on the 'basic common features' of 'plantation America' as first outlined by Charles Wagley (idem, 1957). In Wagley's list

"Some of the basic common features in this culture sphere are: monocrop cultivation under the plantation system, rigid class lines, multiracial societies, weak community cohesion, small peasant proprietors involved in subsistence and cash crop production, and a matrifocal type family form" (ibid., 9)

Developing Wagley's model of the plantation system and society, Best and Beckford, like Eric Williams before them, have asserted the determination of social structures and processes by economic forces and circumstance. However, a brief consideration of Wagley's key criteria leads to the opposite conclusion. Of the seven 'basic common features' of 'plantation society' in Wagley's list, only two are specifically economic. namely, the commitment to monocrop cultivation on plantations, and to some combinations of subsistence and cash crop production by peasants. However, of these, the second is not true of slave plantations which lack peasants and peasant production of subsistence and cash crops. All the rest - the 'plantation system', peasant strata, rigid class lines, multiracial composition, weak community cohesion and matrifocal family forms - are social rather than economic phenomena. Thus unless it can be clearly demonstrated that necessities of productive organisation on plantations generated all these particular social structures, we should be cautious in assuming or asserting their economic character or determination.

Moreover, the seven 'basic common features' of New World plantation systems listed by Wagley and others are not all of equal structural weight. Ordered in their relationships of logical and historical priority, it will be found that these elements constitute a logical series such that, without invoking a rigid determinism, we can state surely that certain structures presuppose others as conditions for their emergence, development and continuity. Thus of Wagley's 'basic common features', logically and historically the first and foremost is a multiracial aggregate under European domination. This developed in mainland America by Iberian occupation and conquest of local populations who were then subordinated to various systems of exploitation. In the islands, before and after their original Amerindian inhabitants were exterminated, Africans were brought to replace them. Thus from their beginnings the colonial societies of European creation were multiracial in composition. They consisted initially of whites and Amerindians and then developed, with or without increasing numbers of Africans imported as slaves, under white domination. It is obvious then, first, that the precondition of
these New World plantation societies was the political and military domination of European colonists: and, second, that the capacity of these societies to exploit the resources of their populations and territories presupposed continuing white control. The extent and measure of white dominance thus corresponded with the freedom whites enjoyed to abuse and exploit other racial stocks in the colonies without redress. However, the motives for such exploitation were by no means simply economic. They include political, racial, religious, personal and other status considerations which normally had and have greater significance for the actors engaged in them than they do for those scholars who preconceive social processes and structures as immediate or ultimate effects of economic or other 'causes' or motivations.

While in the New World the original 'plantation system' presupposed multiracial populations, and consisted in the exploitation of black slave labour by a white ruling class committed to the primitive accumulation of capital, the precondition of such surplus appropriation was a regime of labour exploitation which itself depended on sufficiently gross disparities of race and power between the exploiters and the exploited to establish, 'legitimate' and sustain the slave 'mode of production', an arrangement which itself is always primarily a socio-political rather than a specifically economic structure. That being so, the rigid 'class' lines that distinguish planters from labour, whether free or slave, are clearly entailed by the political, demographic and racial structures of these societies. Under slavery, the plantation system in this region consisted of a particular kind of political order in which relatively small numbers of one race, the whites, monopolised power and used it to recruit, dominate and exploit much larger numbers of people from one or more other races in relatively large units of agricultural production that differed among themselves in certain features of organization as well as in their ownership structures, patterns, scale and the like. Each such unit, whether hacienda or plantation, constituted a rigidly stratified distinct community under the autocratic and arbitrary control of its white owners or their representatives. All such units were inevitably riddled with antagonisms between exploited labourers, their overseers, and the owners or executives who directed their activities. Thus, whether on the plantations or after their withdrawal, the subordinated populations all lacked strong community organization, having been initially denied the opportunity and institutional requisites for its development.

In much the same way, because the owners of these plantations appropriated for themselves all the best land, and sometimes most of the marginal lands as well, when they emerged as a stratum after the abolition of slavery or its New World Hispanic substitutes, *encomienda*, *repartimiento*, peonage, etc., peasants were driven by necessity to produce for subsistence and for small scale exchange of cash crops on the pitifully small plots of second and third class land available to them. Their acute lack of resources promoted individualism and the forms of competition characteristic of peasant communities, thereby further weakening their collective cohesion and capacities to challenge the political structure that subordinated them and perpetuated their exploitation.

As Padilla remarked (idem., 1957, 1960), in Caribbean and other New World societies peasants presuppose plantations, logically, historically and structurally; and both equally presuppose contexts and conditions of socio-cultural pluralism that are inseparable from racial pluralism in Caribbean societies, created by the political and military domination by one race over others. Accordingly the plantation society or plantation system presupposes pluralism rather than the other way around (Thompson, 1957), as economic determinists and others seem to believe (Wagley, 1957; Williams, 1957; Beckford. 1972; Brathwaite, 1974, viii). The plural society prerequisite for a plantation system itself always presupposes and involves the ruthless political domination by one race over another or others, which is restricted territorially only by geographical barriers, or by agreement, and internally only by the will, culture and power of the ruling group. In brief, plantation societies assume and demonstrate that

"race relations and alignments are normally mediated by political action and express differential distributions of collective power" (M. G. Smith, 1974, 331).

Accordingly, as may be expected, nowhere do we find plantation systems independent of pluralism. On the other hand, we have abundant examples of pluralism of differing structures and modes that are independent of plantation systems, of European rule, and of capitalism, although these three structures are commonly regarded as essential preconditions of plural societies (M. G. Smith, 1969c).
Of those who have tried to generalise about stratification or class and pluralism in the Caribbean, until 1976 Raymond Smith probably gave least weight to differences of race and culture (R. T. Smith, 1963, 1967, 1971, 1976), while before Hoctink, Fernando Henriques gave most to colour and race in his colour/class view of Caribbean societies. To address the question of integration in these societies, in 1967, as we have seen, R. T. Smith sketched their evolution from plantation through Creole to modern society. Notably, he did not then attempt to specify the preconditions of plantation society as we have just done; nor did he attempt to do that for Creole society. As regards ‘modern’ society, he was content to describe it as a ‘mode of integration’ (R. T. Smith, 1967, 245). Thus, insofar as contemporary Caribbean societies can be labelled ‘modern’, then ipso facto they are integrated to some degree and are steadily increasing their integration (ibid., 245–258). With this perspective, in his successive publications on Guyana R. T. Smith gives more weight and attention to movements and forces that promote integration and assimilation than to the evidence of social division and cultural pluralism (idem., 1962, 98–143, 198–206; 1966; 1967; 1971; 1976).

Leo Despres’ analysis of Guyana leads him to the opposite conclusion (Despres. 1964, 1967, 268–292; 1968, 1969, 1975a, 1975b); and Paul Singh, a Guyanese political scientist, finds Raymond Smith’s statement that Guyanese Indians and Guyanese Creoles share a ‘common culture’ (R. T. Smith, 1962, 136) “a startling thesis” (Singh, 1972, 20). For Raymond Smith the “royal road to political independence” which Jagan refused to take consisted in observing and implementing the “unwritten code of behaviour expected of colonial politicians” by the British government and political parties. This required in essence “a partnership with British officials and foreign businessmen” (Smith,1962, 173; Singh 1972, 10). Consistent with this viewpoint, R. T. Smith takes for granted the British domination of Guyana and other former British West Indies without considering critically the political, economic, juridical, ideological, moral and other dimensions of the colonial order, including its racial and other preconditions and implications. Such orientations virtually ensure his misunderstanding of local realities from the start, since they approach these colonies from the imperial point of view, and tacitly exclude the imperial power and ruling race from critical scrutiny as active agents responsible for local developments under and as a consequence of their rule.

Such an approach obliges R. T. Smith to take British policies and official statements at face value, and thus either to assume that West Indians positively accepted the colonial order (R. T. Smith, 1962, 98 113, 199–206; 1967, 1970), or to treat their response as indifferent. R. T. Smith adopts the first position, but these perspectives produce some quite perplexing observations. For example, in his view, for plantation slaves, and presumably after slavery for other plantation workers.

“the most important distinctions for the plantation as a system and ultimately for the workers themselves were between creole-bom and foreign-bom, and between those engaged in field labour and those engaged in more prestigious work such as being a house servant or a skilled craftsman” (R. T. Smith, 1967, 232).

Thus, by taking white domination for granted as unquestionable, and with that the vast differences of status between white managements and non-white workers, R. T. Smith not only excludes these basic conditions of plantation life from his analysis and discussion, but presumes that the workers did the same.

In like fashion Raymond Smith asserts that in Guyana after emancipation

“Integration of the slaves into ‘one moral community . . . ’ took place outside the social, cultural and organisational framework of the plantation” (ibid., 233)

and so established the Creole social order. This assimilation he attributes mainly to Christianity, although when freedom came the slaves withdrew from the plantations as soon as possible into communal or proprietary villages (Farley, 1953, 1954; R. T. Smith, 1962, 38 41: 187 188); and seem to have honoured Christianity in the breach rather than in practice, since they “retained more of an underground African culture than Jamaica” (R. T. Smith, 1967, 235) including “magical belief and practice”, and “the creation of a common form for ritual events” (ibid., 239), thus illustrating the superficiality of their conversion to Christianity. Since, following Durkheim, Raymond Smith assumes that every society is a ‘moral community’, then despite Bogle’s revolt in Jamaica in 1865 (M. G. Smith, 1965a, 152 154; Curtin, 1955, 178–203), and despite the brutal official response and rapid revocation of constitutions in
Jamaica and several other colonies by the British government, we are asked to regard all these countries as 'moral communities' united, by common values (idem., 1967, 1970).

These abrogations of their constitutions placed most territories under direct Crown Colony rule in which for more than a generation local people had no representative voice, and thereafter at best a very limited and selective participation based on a restricted property franchise that catered to whites and the more prosperous brown people. Though Raymond Smith asserts that the plantation socialized its slave labour force to accept their situation within the colonial order (R. T. Smith, 1962, 28–29; 1967, 232), he gives scant attention to the organisation and use of force to prevent and suppress slave revolts in the Guianas (idem., 1962, 8–36), and in Jamaica where, despite similar socialisation patterns and repressive structures, besides numerous conspiracies and aborted attempts, there were at least thirteen slave revolts (Patterson, 1967, 165–183; Craton, 1982, 335–339), excluding two Maroon Wars, the first of which lasted for more than a lifetime. Together these incidents hardly illustrate the 'moral community' that, R. T. Smith proclaims, "integrated around a conception of the moral and cultural superiority of things English" (R. T. Smith, 1967, 234). Later, he says that when the British abolished white representative government in these colonies.

"the Colonial Office justified its interference on the grounds that it was protecting the interests of the otherwise unrepresented classes. Therefore the idea of the representation of the interests of every group was built into the very structure of Creole society" (ibid., 244).

Raymond Smith indeed argues strongly, here as elsewhere (idem., 1955), for the benevolent societal orientations, policies and effects of Crown Colony government, despite its historic association with the local white planter classes and merchants, and with metropolitan capitalists and their interests on the one hand, and with the frustrated demands of non-white elements in these Caribbean societies for political representation on the other. However, despite its alleged beneficial intent and effects and presumed general acceptance by everyone (R. T. Smith, 1955), as Lord Olivier (1930) unlike MacMillan (1938) also believed, the Crown Colony system provoked repeated requests for representative government and terminated in simultaneous unplanned upheavals and protests by the unrepresented black populations of Barbados, Guyana, Trinidad and Jamaica in 1937–38, as MacMillan had warned shortly before. In omitting the British role and local resistance from his Olympian interpretation of Caribbean history and society, R. T. Smith committed himself to a bland misrepresentation of local realities. To claim as representative, even in intent, such an autocratic and unrepresentative regime as Crown Colony government, which formally excluded the entire local population from participation, while the governors informally associated more and more closely with leading local elements of their own race and culture, is especially disingenuous (R. T. Smith, 1955, 253–7).

Consistent with these presumptions and orientations, for R. T. Smith "African nationalism, Pan-Africanism and so on have always been considered normal bases for both left-wing and other political movements" (idem., 1967, 254–255). However, while true of Black Power doctrines (Rodney, 1969, Abeng, 1969), I can find no evidence to support this assertion in the writings of Richard Hart, Cheddi Jagan, Trevor Munroe and other Caribbean Marxists who, true to their doctrine, deprecate ethnicity and race, and rather seek to dissolve these realities in class and class struggles (Hart, 1953, 1980; Jagan, 1966, 1974; Munroe, 1972, 1979). While it is also true that in the contemporary West Indies "Occupational stratification is no longer correlated with ethnic stratification in the way that it was forty years ago" (R. T. Smith, 1967, 256), nonetheless, in these Creole societies such correspondences still prevail to a degree recognized and resented by the public (ibid., 1955), in Guyana by the Indians, as R. T. Smith has shown (idem., 1976), and in biracial societies by the black majority which is grossly under represented in lucrative occupations and executive spheres (Rodney, 1969). Such considerations figured prominently in Black Power movements of Jamaica and Trinidad during the late sixties and early seventies, and also in the political movements led by Michael Manley in Jamaica and by Maurice Bishop in Grenada in the following years.

Having earlier discussed the evolution of social stratification, cultural pluralism and integration in West Indian society in 1967 as it changed from 'plantation' to 'Creole' and 'modern' society (idem., 1967), R. T. Smith (1970) later reviewed Caribbean social stratifications, using Max Weber's criteria of class, status and power. In that discussion he distinguished the 'occupational order' and the 'processes of allocation or recruitment of personnel to occupational roles'. It is precisely this 'allocative' structure which most directly expresses the historic and prevailing racial bias of Caribbean society against blacks, Indians and other dark-skinned persons; but while
acknowledging this pattern Smith minimises it. For example, discussing Jamaica under Crown Colony rule, he says

“Preference was given to whites and to their kin, the coloured – partly because of prejudice, and partly because these groups generally had prior access to education. By the 1870s Jamaica’s coloured population was well represented in the white-collar occupations, and the formally open policy of the imperial government gave a semblance of democratic participation to the whole scene” (idem., 1970, 55).

Thus, despite Governor Eyre’s bloodbath of 1865, the hangings without trial of several hundred black people, the official arson and destruction of hundreds of peasant homes, and the prompt abolition of the constitution and imposition of Crown Colony government, having earlier claimed representative status for that regime, R. T. Smith claims to find evidence of “a semblance of democratic participation” in the Creole occupational structure.

Evidently most Jamaicans thought otherwise, and were deeply shocked and cowed by this ruthless and indiscriminate use of force. Such periodic outbursts and repressions have punctuated the history of Jamaica and other Caribbean colonies. In Jamaica, between Sam Sharpe’s revolt in 1831 and Bogle’s in 1865 more than a generation had passed. Between Bogle’s revolt and the strikes and disturbances of 1937-1938 nearly three generations were to pass, as had happened in Guyana between the Berbice slave revolt of 1763, which evoked an equally brutal response, and that of Demarara in 1823 (R. T. Smith, 1962, 18, 36). Though he recognizes that force was an important “element in the stabilisation of post-Emancipation society” (R. T. Smith, 1967, 235), Raymond Smith and others of like persuasion claim that by their compliance the subordinate majority of blacks and Indian immigrants indicated that the social order was based on normative consensus, the subordinate races accepting and upholding “the moral and cultural superiority of things English” (idem., 234, 1962, 28–9, 41, 57, 141), and thus their acceptance of whatever the British government decreed or instituted for their administration.

One obvious difficulty with this thesis is the contrary evidence of disruptive protests in the late thirties by the voteless black majorities in Barbados, Guyana, Trinidad and Jamaica, and again in 1953, the overwhelming endorsement by Creoles and Indians in Guyana of the PPP led by Jagan and Burnham, a party that was expressly committed to the removal of British political and economic control from the country as soon as possible. In Jamaica Norman Manley and in Trinidad Eric Williams had earlier advocated similar policies. It is difficult to understand how these colonial masses, so remote from one another and isolated by their illiteracy and poverty, could simultaneously demand, by strikes and other forms of protest, the removal of a colonial power and system whose benevolent rule, according to R. T. Smith, they held in such high regard. Somehow Raymond Smith seems unable to conceive, much less to understand, the number, importance and variety of flagrant contradictions between his basic thesis of colonial consensus and the historical experience of these societies, between the view from above of the whites, metropolitan and Creole, and that from below of the black, brown and East Indian people who had no voice in the regulation of their common affairs, political, economic or cultural, and no hope or experience of justice and fair play except on the cricket field during tours.

R. T. Smith’s discussion of the power and status dimensions of Caribbean stratification plays down the racial and political factors and directs attention to other conditions. The power distributions and competitions he considers are those within local societies, between such units as the two Jamaican or Guyanese parties, rather than those between whites and non-whites, or those between the colonial societies and their imperial powers such as Britain, France or the USA. As regards the role of race in internal political conflicts, he says weakly, “While race has provided one set of channels in recent years – it is just as likely that class-based movements will develop” (idem., 1970, 71).

The critical questions are surely: under what conditions in biracial and in multiracial Caribbean societies of differing size and composition does political conflict develop on bases of race or culture rather than class; on bases of class and race rather than culture; on bases of class and culture rather than race; or on the basis of class, independent of race and culture?

Nowhere does R. T. Smith review and evaluate systematically the relevant data on institutional practices within these Caribbean populations, nor does he analyse those structures and processes of allocation that he correctly regards as critical for their social structures. Rather he seems content to assume that the occupational order of the status structure, its ancillary allocative processes, and the distribution of power, either include or render irrelevant all differences of institutional culture, history, race and social organization within these colonial populations. Presumably if one assumes
in advance on theoretical grounds that social orders are always based on normative consensus and merely elaborate the requisites and implications of their occupational systems at the cultural, political and economic levels, and that otherwise the contents of these extensions lack independent significance, then all other institutional commonalities or differences and their distributions can safely be ignored on the ground that they must be sociologically trivial. In much the same way the crude but locally compelling differences of race may be denied any independent significance of their own and may be treated rather as secondary aspects or implications of economic class at one level, of social status and prestige at another, or of power distributions at the third. For these and other reasons I find Raymond Smith’s account of Caribbean societies and their stratification, despite its evident sincerity and scholarship, defective and severely misleading. In muted terms, recent upheavals and unconstitutional developments in these societies indicate the increasing pressure of their internal contradictions.

Writing under the influence of Louis Althusser, Stuart Hall claims that stratification in contemporary Commonwealth Caribbean societies

“is not usefully considered as an ethnic or race-based or even race-colour based social system, but a social class stratification system in which the race-colour elements in the stratification matrix constitute the visible index of a more complex structure. Of course, where class, status, race and colour so strongly coincide, the stratification system is ‘over-determined’; its public signification is more explicit than in societies (e.g., European class societies) where no ‘ethnic’ index exists; it is a more rigid system since any member of the society rising in status has to negotiate more than one system of status symbolism. The calculus of social mobility is far more complex ... It is the double or triple articulation of the systems of status symbolisation which makes Caribbean society one of the most complex social systems on earth. But this complexity — and, especially, the role of the race-colour or ‘ethnic’ signifier within this complex — should not permit us to reinterpret this as a system of cultural pluralism” (Hall, 1977, 171: 2).

To reach this happy conclusion, Hall begins by discussing the inadequacy of plural models and concepts for biracial Creole societies, primarily citing my early statement of 1960. He lists three defects of the plural model. First.

“The patterns of race/colour stratification, cultural stratification and class-occupational stratification overlap. This is the absolutely distinctive feature of Caribbean society. Its stratification systems and their relations with the main social groups are massively over-determined. It is this over-determined complexity which constitutes the specificity of the problem requiring analysis ...”

Precisely why or how these multiple aspects of the social structure exclude its plurality is never made clear. Second,

“the ‘plural society’ model blurs the distinction between parallel or horizontal, and vertical or hierarchical segmentation” (Hall, 1977, 154).

As the ancestral institutions of subordinate sections of hierarchic pluralities, such as brown and blacks in Jamaica or Grenada, are normally less pure and distinctive than in those of some other coordinate blocs in segmental pluralities, such as East Indians in Suriname or Trinidad, or Maya in Belize, and so display fewer ancestral forms in their pristine state, Hall argues that hierarchic pluralities are not as truly ‘plural’ as the segmental type (ibid., 154 155. 161). To illustrate: following Raymond Smith’s example (idem., 1967, 235-9, 251; 1970, 60), Hall claims that East Indians in Trinidad and Guyana practise ‘an inherited cultural form’ of Hindu marriage, although Smith and Jayawardena (1958), like Roberts and Braithwaite (1962), indicate otherwise, whereas Afro-Guyanese and other black Creoles clearly lack such ancestral family traditions. Accordingly Hall claims that Afro-Caribbean culture is less clearly ‘plural than the Hindu (Hall, 1977, 155–156), and that plural society models fail to take account of this, which is not the case, as Leo Despres has shown (idem., 1967, 274–278).

Third, while recognizing “the widely differing degree of social and cultural pluralism which characterises Caribbean societies of the modal type” (ibid., 151 159), Hall criticises the plural society model for failing to concentrate on “the structure of legitimation”
and to this end invokes the concept of ‘hegemonic domination’ from Gramsci (ibid., 158–159). Identifying the strata in ‘slave plantation society’ as ‘caste-like groups’ and characterising that society as a ‘caste system’ (ibid., 160), he says an “absolute identification between race, colour and ‘caste-status’ is . . . true of the structure of legitimation” (ibid., 161): but of course there was no such ‘absolute identification’ (M. G. Smith, 1965b, 92–115). On the other hand, if the ‘structure of legitimation’ is taken to mean that non-whites of differing race and pigment accepted the superiority of whites on grounds of race, and thus on that basis legitimated the social order and their racially assigned places in it, including slave status, then this was also clearly not the case, as the long list of slave revolts and attempted revolts in Jamaica and other Caribbean societies demonstrates (Leyburn, 1941, 21–31; Patterson, 1967, 260–283; Herskovits, 1941, 87–99; Craton, 1982, 335–339).

According to Hall, with emancipation ‘slave society’ gave way to ‘colonial society’ which has more recently become ‘decolonizing society’ (ibid., 162). At the same time the original ‘caste society’ evolved into the contemporary ‘class society’ via the process of creolisation (ibid., 163–173). The echoes of R. T. Smith’s sequence of plantation, creole and modern society are too obvious for comment. Hall then cites Braithwaite’s models of the Creole segment of Trinidad society in the early fifties to illustrate this progressive transformation. Despite widespread black support for Marcus Garvey, Ras Tafari and Black Power, and despite the hostility and rivalry of Creoles and Indians. Hall argues that the racial order of Caribbean societies “testifies to the profound stability of a system of stratification where race, colour, status, occupation and wealth overlap and are ideologically mutually reinforcing” (ibid., 167).

Like R. T. Smith (1967, 245–250), Hall regards the phase of ‘colonial society’ as that in which “the classic institutions of class society are formed and emerge in the political domain: trade unions, political parties, full parliamentary system, civil service and government administrative apparatus” (ibid., 168). This leads into the present decolonisation phase in which “a dominant ‘national’ stratification exists and . . . race and class strongly and powerfully overlap” (ibid., 170), as presumably they have always done only in Creole biracial societies, whatever the criteria of class. Hall concludes that by these historical processes, Caribbean societies have changed from caste to class societies in which “race, colour and status form a basic stratification matrix” (ibid., 170).

“The race-colour element combines with the usual elements of non-ethnic stratification systems (education, wealth, occupation, income, lifestyle, values) to compose the stratification matrix.

We would argue that this is not, usefully, considered as an ethnic or race-based or even race-colour based social system, but a social class stratification system in which the race-colour elements . . . constitute the visible index of a more complex structure” (ibid., 171),

which is thereby ‘over-determined’ (ibid., 171).

Unfortunately Hall nowhere attempts to elucidate or define “over-determination” or this ‘over-determined’ structure, to isolate its distinct components and preconditions, or to analyse precisely their historic and structural interrelations. Indeed, as he rarely defines his key terms and employs them rhetorically, we cannot always be sure just what he means. Notably, while social classes are said to emerge from the preceding caste structure of slave societies without further data or clarification, and while the contemporary stratification is identified with classes as broadly defined in terms of economic and such economically relevant conditions as education. Hall says little about the power structure that regulated these units beyond the obvious fact that as colonies, all these societies were politically and economically subordinate to metropolitan states, and that though now formally independent, they still remain economically subordinate. Somewhat he treats the racial divisions of segmental, hierarchic and mixed or complex Caribbean pluralities as virtually the same. In brief, having asserted the evolution of Caribbean ‘caste societies’ into ‘colony’ or ‘class’ societies, Hall apparently finds the differentiated classes, strata and fractions in these ‘decolonising’ societies ‘over-determined’ by their racial and cultural features (ibid., 173–183).

However, his thesis totters on its head for various reasons: first, because of the untenable equation of slave and caste society on which it rests; second, because it rests partly on the erroneous evaluation of sectional differences of culture as strong or weak on grounds of their assumed ‘ethnological’ purity of origin; and third, because it treats race as a subordinate and secondary element in the contemporary ‘over-determined’ class structure — without ever defining ‘class’, despite the alleged very recent evolution of that class structure from the preceding racially based ‘caste system’, and without any attempt to explain how such transformation occurred, or
what it involved, as regards racial and cultural relations, status criteria, social mobility and social strata. Finally, having translated race as a medium symbolic of class, Hall reduces the "basic stratification matrix" that subsumes class to "race, colour and status" (Hall, 1977, 170), thereby inverting the relation of race and class he has just asserted. I find all this and much more rather puzzling, and so, ignoring other flaws in his 'analysis', on these grounds I conclude that Hall was mainly concerned to assert the formal relevance of Althusserian concepts of analysis and classes to the study of biracial Creole societies of moderate size, with somewhat hasty extrapolations to include the East Indian segments of such complex units as Guyana, Suriname and Trinidad, where, as we have seen, the socio-economic structure is split sharply into two closed racial and cultural segments (Hoetink, 1974; Despres, 1975a, 1975b; van Lier, 1958; LaGuerre (ed.) 1974d). Accordingly our preceding criticisms of similar schemes from other perspectives apply equally to Hall's thesis.

This brings us to the carefully researched and considered model of 'colonial stratification' developed for these societies by John Rex on the basis of Latin American and Caribbean data. To delineate his model of 'colonial society', Rex distinguishes categories of people who occupy

"the following main positions within the total division of labour:"
(a) Communnally organized groups of native peasants
(b) Individual peasants
(c) Servile agricultural workers established on latifundia
(d) A mixed group of part time or migrant workers, ranging from free workers to debt slaves or peons
(e) Plantation slaves
(f) Indentured plantation workers
(g) Large landowners owning latifundia
(h) Plantation owners
(i) Plantation managers
(j) Parish traders
(k) Commercial and political intermediaries
(l) Marginal free workers
(m) Settlers, including local capitalists, workers and farmers from the metropolis, together in some cases with mestizo or mulatto allies
(n) Missionaries
(o) Administrators

Some of these groups are opposed to one another as classes in the Marxian sense. All of them, however, form relatively closed groups with their own distinctive cultural traits and social organization, though there are some cases in which ethnic ties unite groups performing different functions. The overall effect is of too much overlap and interpenetration to justify us in calling it a caste system, but too much closure of avenues of mobility for us to call it a system of social stratification... It is also much too complex, involving different overlapping modes of production, for it to be described as a situation of class struggle in the Marxian sense. Some of these aspects need to be kept in mind when we speak of a colonial system of social stratification" (Rex, 1977, 30).

It is easy to detect the political and racial bases and structures of 'plantation society' during and after slavery beneath the array of 'occupational' categories in Rex's 'colonial society'. The peasants, whether communally organized or not, the servile labourers settled on latifundia, the part-time and/or migrant workers, whether free or debt slaves, peons or other, the plantation slaves and indentured plantation workers, i.e., categories (a) to (f) on Rex's list, all differed in race, origin, culture, political status, ancestral language and social institutions from the owners of plantations or latifundia, from plantation managers, missionaries, administrators, settlers drawn from the ruling race and ethnic group, and from local capitalists. They differed also in these respects from the commercial and political brokers and parish traders, who are commonly drawn from other ethnic and/or racial minorities such as the Lebanese, Syrians, East Indians, Chinese, etc. The marginal free workers, their mestizo or mulatto allies and the dependents of settlers and local capitalists are normally hybrids, descended originally from unions of males belonging to the dominant race and females of the subordinate stock. In short, a brief analysis of this list of fifteen strata leads us back to the politically grounded racial orders on which all plantation societies are based, and so to their prerequisite and historic pluralism, their major sections being institutionally differentiated as regards family and kinship, socialisation, education, religion, political institutions, technology, ecology and economy, recreation, and language. No wonder Rex says that the 'relatively closed groups'
in his list have “their own distinctive cultural traits and social organizations” (ibid., 30). The integration of political and racial differences with institutional differences of culture to constitute the plural societies of these ‘colonial’ units as hierarchic orders of culturally distinct social sections and segments is evident.

This is not the place in which to expound or defend concepts and models of pluralism and/or the plural society. My present concern is rather, by reviewing some recent studies, to indicate the relative significance and modal relations of culture and cultural differences, race, and class or other modes of stratification as socially defined and decisive conditions of structure in Commonwealth Caribbean societies.

As regards economic categories, it is self-evident that any differentiated society with a market economy, whether ‘self-regulating’ or centrally directed, will contain a number of economically differentiated strata that correspond in different degrees to Marxist or Webersian conceptions of class. The characteristics and articulations of such categories are always important for the social order, as well as for the economy. It is equally clear that over and beyond such economic categories we may expect to find other categories within a society differentiated, firstly, by considerations of status, prestige or honour and life-style on the one hand, and by position within the prevailing distributions of social influence and power on the other. If any one stratum has firm control of a society’s power structure, it is formally free, if its members wish, to try to control and organize corresponding economic resources and privileges for itself, and thence to seek the highest rank of the status structure. That, briefly, was the objective situation of the ‘planter class’ in the British Caribbean colonies during slavery. During the fifty years that followed emancipation, that ruling class struggled to maintain its control in different ways in different colonies. In Barbados, with a larger proportion of local whites, with no mountainous areas open for refugee settlement, and an almost complete appropriation of arable land in estates, the white planter class was able to perpetuate its subjugation of blacks after emancipation simply by legislating and enforcing the Masters and Servants Act in 1840, which obliged all ex-slaves and their issue who chose to stay in the island to remain where they were in 1838, and so made them as perpetual tenants.

and located labourers, virtual serfs at the disposal of those estate managements (Lowenthal, 1957; MacMillan, 1938, 90; Greenfield, 1966, 56–63). In 1834 the Antigua plantocracy, well aware of their collective ownership or control of most of that island, dispensed with apprenticeship altogether as an unnecessary interlude (D. Hall, 1971, 17–24), and so confronted their unprepared slaves with the stark fact of dependence on their former owners for the chance to continue living and working in the island at all. As in Barbados, no Antigua the planters had little further trouble from their ex-slaves. By contrast, in Jamaica, Grenada, Guyana and Trinidad alike, many ex-slaves rapidly quit the plantations that had imprisoned and tormented them to establish villages where they could live and cultivate subsistence crops without interference from white management or their allies. To replace this lost labour, the planters in these countries used government revenues to import Chinese, Portuguese and Indians under onerous indentures.

Without further details it seems obvious that all these societies and developments presupposed and involved aggregates of differing race and status, some of whom struggled to develop, maintain or elaborate the structures they found most rewarding, while others strove to frustrate, subvert, evade or replace these structures by various means, including withdrawal to free villages after emancipation, or to other countries by emigration, including Africa as Garvey urged, by spiritual withdrawal and repudiation as in the Ras Tafari religion or, failing that, by revolt, as in the protests of Nanny, Sam Sharpe, Paul Bogle, and others in Jamaica. These alternatives and examples all show that we have to deal with the political articulation of racial aggregates in an inherently unequal society whose leading elements are a racial minority concerned above all to dominate and exploit the others for such rewards of status and profit as they desired and esteemed. It is also the case that such dominant groups often try to justify their dominion over the stocks they subordinate by claims of biological and cultural superiority, and so devise or elaborate racist ideologies as legitimating constructs. However, there is little evidence to indicate that the subordinate racial groups in these regimes accepted such ideologies, and much to show that they did not (Cronon, 1982). Though it is clear that similar racist orientations prevailed among the British long before they commanded and exploited black slaves in the West Indies, no precedents or prototypes for the racist thesis of Edward Long (1774) are known to me.

What then are the principal relations of race, cultural differences or pluralism, and class or stratification in the Commonwealth Caribbean? Now, and in former times, how do these conditions differ from and articulate with one another? What does it really mean, if anything, to describe these societal structures as “overdetermined”? More simply, how do alignments by culture and race relate to the economic order with its economically differentiated classes? Briefly, as indicated above when discussing plantation society, their superior political, military, social and technological resources enabled Europeans of differing nationality first to conquer and occupy the Caribbean and adjacent mainland territories, and then to institutionalise structures for the extermination and replacement or the subordination and exploitation of indigenous populations, and for the importation of others under conditions of slavery. For centuries slavery, and thereafter indenture, were the principal conditions of workers recruited overseas. While political and military dominance thus established these multiracial aggregates as rigidly hierarchic plural societies that varied in structure as a function of differing location, extent, social composition, metropolitan control, and other relevant conditions. Clearly under slavery the white planter class exercised its domination with considerable skill and effect throughout the British Caribbean. Thereafter planters struggled with differing success to retain such dominance. Where uncertain of the future, they withdrew en bloc, as from Grenada, Dominica and St. Lucia, and left the colonial societies without a white planter class. Such developments illustrate some local variations in the general struggle of racially exclusive dominant sections to maintain and extend their resources and power over others, while the latter used the limited opportunities that came their way to escape the direct daily experience of such racial domination by establishing their own relatively autonomous self-regulating communities. It seems evident then that the fundamental ‘status groups’ in these Creole societies, colonial and modern, were distinguished by political power, race, colour and institutional culture. It is equally clear that in biracial and multiracial societies alike these racial stocks differed in ecological and economic status as well as population size, history and social organization. It is evident too that these societies have always been based on such gross inequalities of power that compliance was normal and normally assumed within them, and that their social orders rested neither on normative consensus nor on strictly economic considerations and conditions.

As then, so now, racially distinguished population categories are still the largest and most basic divisions of Caribbean societies. Where two races historically combined to create a common society, as in the ‘modal’ Creole units, with their black/white combinations,
a hierarchic order that seems to reflect or coincide with major differences of economic status and interest generally prevails. However, such classification and ranking is more directly based on racial power and on cultural and political differentiae than on economics per se, since although Indians, coloured, whites and blacks may differ widely among themselves in occupation, employment status, income levels and other economic characteristics, they all remain immutably set within their racial categories as these have been and are today aligned in social life. In consequence, whatever the economic differences or similarities among them, personal status, relations and conduct are always significantly qualified by race; and likewise, whatever the racial identity or difference among them, personal status and conduct are always heavily qualified - some might even say determined - by cultural practice.

Granted that economic conditions are important differentiae in bounding aggregates and structuring social action, it is evident that economic values are by no means most important on all occasions for members of a plural society, some of whom as the elite and privileged prefer to maintain their status and style of life even at the expense of such capital assets as plantation or hacienda (M. G. Smith, 1965b, 110-115), while others adjust differently to the new scheme of things. The simple fact is that any Creole society can be classified analytically either with the aid of Marx's or Weber's criteria, or with those of Carl Stone, Lloyd Warner or R. T. Smith, to yield some set of 'classes', whether these are differentially aligned to the means of production, as with Marx, to the market and other Weberian scales as with R. T. Smith, or to income, affluence and consumption opportunities. Of itself, this demonstrates the equal indifference of these Marxist, Weberian or other sets of economic criteria to social orders based on racial, ethnic and cultural differences, to which people generally attach far greater significance than to their occupational roles or economic status.

I conclude that with due acknowledgement of the variable significance of population numbers in multiracial Caribbean societies of differing scale and complexity, the decisive structural determinant has been and remains the distribution of power among and within institutionally distinct groups and categories having modally different racial cores, numbers, histories, cultures, wealth and prospects. Initially, and in these societies even today, racial differences are widely assumed to connote or imply parallel differences of culture and social practice (R. T. Smith, 1976, 206-7, A. Kuper, 1977, 57-8). The Creole 'stratification' just discussed is a nice illustration of the latter, and a topic of some interest to others for its practical implications as well as its academic significance. However, such stratification presupposes a structure of racial domination that depends on a particular distribution of political and other power among aggregates of different racial stocks, numbers and cultural endowments. As precondition and consequence, not only does the inclusive aggregate display the institutional differences that characterize sections or segments of a plural society: but given its divergent value systems and cultural orientations, its dominant group normally develops a defensive ideology to justify and further its political controls on the general ground that other stocks will disrupt and destroy the economic bases and property of the social order if given the chance. Such assumptions are the standard responses of any Caribbean elite to the various crises that beset their respective societies. In a nutshell, they indicate the political priorities and cultural perceptions of racial difference of the ruling group on the one hand, and their relations to the strictly economic dimensions of class and stratification on the other.

It seems evident that while all Caribbean societies except the isolated minuscule ones exhibit an implicit class structure that differs in its complexity with their levels of development, these class structures are subsumed within those wider racial and cultural divisions that together constitute the corporate macro-structure of these societies. In these ways, variables of economic class and social stratification are subordinated to those more inclusive, fundamental and intricately intertwined differences of race and culture, history and political power which have together constituted, shaped and maintained these units, while generating their differing developments as functions of differing racial compositions and ecological situations, internal and external political relations, and distributions of power. As Marie Haug remarked on the basis of her quantitative study of the 115 independent polities that existed in 1963 (Haug, 1967),

"Pluralism is not simply another form of social stratification which can be subsumed under that variable, but constitutes a special condition of diversity which varies widely in degree across societies. As such, it must be considered as a factor in the development of any universally applicable system theory" (Idem, 304).

To Haug's conclusion I would merely add that pluralism must also be considered as a critical factor in the formulation of any pro-
gramme of practical action that seeks to develop, modernise or transform these Creole societies and other, even more complex, Caribbean units such as Guyana, Suriname or Trinidad. Failure to grasp adequately and accurately the critical elements that structure these societies and generate the forces that govern their motion entails corresponding failure to grasp the conditions essential for their development and change. In consequence, despite the best possible intentions, programmes intended to alter and improve their social orders and economic capacities are certain to suffer from the fundamental misunderstandings on which they are based. Thus appropriate administrative and economic action to ameliorate or transform Caribbean societies presupposes detailed and accurate models of their structures, which in turn assumes an adequate grasp of the relationships between their central elements. That in turn assumes sound theoretical understanding of the nature and relations of culture, economic and other modes of stratification, race, colour and history in these societies.

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### CARIBBEAN CULTURAL IDENTITY

The case of Jamaica

An Essay in Cultural Dynamics

Rex M Nettleford

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M. G. Smith, Jamaican by birth, is an anthropologist, university teacher and poet. He has written extensively on Cultural Pluralism. His book *The Plural Society in the British West Indies* is a seminal work in the field. He is also the author of *The Dark Puritan* and *A Framework of Caribbean Studies*, both published by the Department of Extra-Mural Studies of the University of the West Indies. He is at present Professor in the Department of Anthropology at Yale University in the United States of America.

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