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Consuming the Caribbean

From Arawaks to Zombies

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1 The binding mobilities of consumption

The Caribbean has been repeatedly imagined and narrated as a tropical paradise in which the land, plants, resources, bodies, and cultures of its inhabitants are open to be invaded, occupied, bought, moved, used, viewed, and consumed in various ways. It is represented as a perpetual Garden of Eden in which visitors can indulge all their desires and find a haven for relaxation, rejuvenation, and sensuous abandon. Nevertheless, some of the deepest ethical dilemmas associated with capitalist modernity occurred in relation to the transatlantic commerce in slaves and in products produced by people enslaved in the Caribbean, and these debates involved an anxious introspection about the limits of human desires and pleasures. With the abolitionist boycotts of slave-grown sugar and the emergence of forms of ethical consumption in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, movements for consumer responsibility and accountability began to acknowledge the power of consumption to drive the global economy – and to bring misery to people in distant locales. Today the ethics of consumption are again becoming a major issue for social movements and protest groups, who are refocusing attention on the conditions under which consumer goods are being produced in far-away places, including the Caribbean (Enloe 1989; Deere *et al.* 1990; Klein 2000).

This book aims to lever the study of Western consumer culture back onto the tracks of slavery and tropical colonialism that sped it towards modernity, and to show how these relations of consumption continue to inform the inequalities of the Atlantic world today. At what point do transatlantic consuming publics take responsibility for the effects of their consuming practices – including forms of cultural consumption – on distant others? And how exactly have the imaginative and material structures that span the Atlantic–Caribbean world enabled these unequal transformations of one person's sweat and blood into another's sugar, one person's provision ground into another's playground, to continue uninterrupted for five centuries? In order to answer these questions I first want to take seriously the 'investment' of European and North American consumer societies in cultures of slavery, both in financial terms and in more personal embodied relations. Many have said that slavery was a long time ago, dusty history that no longer matters today. In order to understand the deep and ongoing connection between the contemporary Western world and the slave past it is necessary first to recognise the ways in which the circum-Atlantic and Caribbean regions have been

linked together both in the past and in the present. Despite the significant shifts in patterns of world trade and regimes of consumption over the past five hundred years of transatlantic history, there are nevertheless significant continuities that remain unexplained, and often ignored.

The relation between Euro-American consumers and the Caribbean did not take place only through importing slave-produced commodities or benefiting from wealth made on the slave plantations. It is not only things or commodities that are consumed, but also entire natures, landscapes, cultures, visual representations, and even human bodies. That is to say, there are crucial forms of consumption 'at a distance' which also must be considered. During the period of colonial expansion there was an intensification of consumption within Europe and North America enabled by the wealth generated by the system of slavery. But there was also an attendant extension and proliferation of forms of consumption as Caribbean landscapes, flora and fauna, bodies and labour, images and cultural objects were all being consumed along with particular goods. It is not only 'goods' which circulated in the transatlantic world economy, but also people, texts, images, desires, and attachments.

To bring into focus the full range of consumption linkages between 'advanced' consumer societies and the post-slavery societies of the Caribbean, it is necessary to foreground the forms of mobility which connect here and there, then and now. The thematic content of this book is balanced between the history of literal practices of consumption and incorporation, and the use of figurative metaphors of cannibalism and zombification as forms of symbolic consumption. Playing on the interlocking meanings of 'Carib' and 'cannibal' ever since Columbus's confused arrival in the New World (see Hulme 1986; Barker *et al.* 1998) a typology of forms of material and symbolic consumption can be proposed. These include ingestion, invasion, incorporation, infection, appropriation, sacrifice, and exhibition, as well as various processes of possessing, destroying, using up, and wasting away. Thus I take consumption in the broadest sense, and use it as a way of understanding a broad set of relations that are at once economic, political, cultural, social, and emotional. By connecting each contemporary mode of consumption of the Caribbean with a long genealogy of progenitors, and by locating the points of friction and resistance in the flows of people, goods, and cultures, this account aims to trouble 'innocent' indulgence in the pleasures of thoughtless consumption.

The key gain from highlighting consuming practices as embodied material relations within mobile contexts is that it enables a position of individual and collective ethical responsibility to be framed as an intervention in the flows of capitalism. Consumers are responsible for a kind of agency, which should not be displaced to the level of the 'world system' as a whole as if individual choices and actions did not matter. To lay the groundwork for this exploration of transatlantic consumer culture, in this chapter I will explore the multiple meanings of consumption in relation to processes and practices of mobility and immobility. I begin with an exemplary case study of the early eighteenth-century scientist Sir Hans Sloane, whose life encapsulates many of the themes of this book. I explore the

ways in which Sloane transmuted his ties to Jamaica not only into the making of his personal fortune and reputation as a scientist, but also into a physical collection that became the origin of the British Museum and a key centre of botanical knowledge and medical research. My aim is to show how the movement of objects and capital, bodies and body parts, information and texts, cultures and knowledges jointly operate in one historical instance, and to suggest that this mobilisation of plants, knowledge, and capital from colonial Jamaica continues to have effects in the world today. In the second half of the chapter I will broaden this analysis of what I call 'the binding mobilities of consumption' to encompass the flows of things, people, and culture in and around the contemporary transatlantic world, showing how previous patterns of exploitation continue to inform unequal relations of consumption.

Mobile making of Western knowledge centres

If, following Roland Robertson, one agrees that globalization is a cultural process which involves 'the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole' (Robertson 1992: 4), then the Caribbean played a crucial part in this compression and intensification of global consciousness. The discovery of the Caribbean islands and the continental Americas produced the first physical confirmation that the world could be circumnavigated. The rapid incorporation of these 'Cannibal Isles' into an emergent Atlantic-wide, and soon global, system of trade massively expanded Europe's global reach and initiated the processes of 'time-space compression' (Harvey 1989) that still define (post)modernity. The new knowledge 'discovered' in these circumscribed island-worlds contributed to a dawning consciousness of the totality (and fragility) of nature in European science (Grove 1995), evident in the projects to collect, classify, and order everything. Through the prism of the life of one Englishman, Sir Hans Sloane (1660–1752), who was deeply involved in these discoveries, we can begin to trace in miniature some of the contours of the story to be told in this book. It goes well beyond the history of the 'triangular trade' in order to make visible other kinds of transatlantic flows – flows of natural substances, scientific knowledge, bio-power, real estate, and cultural capital – not only in the eighteenth century but having a lasting impact on our contemporary world.

Sloane was one of the foremost scientists and medical doctors of his day. He was doctor to the royal family, benefactor of the Chelsea Physic Garden, and one of the most prolific collectors of books, plants, and material objects of his age. He was elected a fellow of the Royal Society, foreign member of the Royal Academy of Sciences at Paris in 1708, President of the College of Physicians (1719–33), and President of the Royal Society (1727–40). His collections formed the core of a museum collection and library, which on his death became the foundation of the British Museum, at a cost to the public of twenty thousand pounds. His other claim to fame is that he introduced to Britain the first recipe for milk chocolate, which he had observed being used in Jamaica. Yet biographies of Sloane, histories of the Chelsea Physic Garden, and nostalgic reproductions of 'Sir Hans Sloane

Chocolate' sold at the garden today are largely silent on the 'creole' connections linking together the origins of his wealth, the foundation of his scientific reputation, and the material corpus of his collections. Sloane's relevance for this book is the central role played by his connections to Jamaica, and the extent to which the mobilisation of material things, information, and wealth from Jamaica underpinned his life's work. His story is representative of the general silencing of slavery and distancing of the Caribbean, which are the context for the powerful concentration of knowledge, financial capital, and cultural capital that we know as London.

In 1687, the 27-year-old Sloane became the personal physician to Christopher Monck, the Second Duke of Albemarle, and accompanied him to Jamaica, where he was taking up the post of Governor. Having trained in natural history at some of the foremost botanical gardens and medical schools in Europe, Sloane took the opportunity to begin a comprehensive collection on the natural history of Jamaica. His method was,

to search the several Places I could think afforded Natural Productions, and immediately described them in a Journal, measuring their several Parts by my Thumb, which, with a little allowance, I reckoned an Inch. . . . After I had gather'd and describ'd the Plants, I dried as fair Samples of them as I could, to bring over with me. When I met with Fruits that could not be dried or kept, I employ'd the Reverend Mr. Moore, one of the best designers I could meet with there, to take the Figures of them, as also of the Fishes, Birds, Insects, etc. in Crayons. . . . When I returned into England, I brought with me about 800 Plants, most whereof were New.¹

Sloane remained in Jamaica for fifteen months and in 1696 published a systemic index on Jamaican plants, known as the *Catalogus Plantarum*. On his return to England he not only made his collection available for inspection by other learned men, but also had the plants brought to gardens, such as Sir Arthur Rawdon's garden in Moyra, Ireland, to be grown 'to perfection'. As Bruno Latour has argued, 'The history of science is in large part the history of the mobilisation of anything that can be made to move and shipped back home[;] . . . expeditions, collections, probes, observatories and enquiries are only some of the many ways that allow a centre to act at a distance' (Latour 1987: 225, 227).

Building on the impetus of other naturalists/collectors of the seventeenth century, Sloane collected 'Nature' on his travels and brought it back to Britain to be displayed as a curiosity, studied as natural history, and planted for research into its potentially useful medicinal properties. Less often noted are the human body parts, which also found their way into Sloane's collection. As Michael Day notes, 'His propensity for collecting human material began early in his career and he brought back a number of specimens of this kind from his travels in the West Indies'. This included items catalogued as the 'foetus of a negro' and the 'skin of the hand of a black' (Day 1994: 69, 71).² The classification of plants has been closely tied to the classification of humans into supposed 'races', and Sloane's

work suggests an early interest in this field which would be more fully developed a century later. It is significant, though, that the West Indies offered an early field for collection of both plant and human 'materia' (as I shall discuss in Chapter 5, the Caribbean continues to be used in distinctive ways for medical research, human testing, and pharmaceutical product development).

By his scientific method of careful observation, collection, and exhaustive recording, Sloane furthered the incorporation of the New World into the material networks of European knowledge-production. His mobilisation of nature also involved what Latour refers to as the enhancement of the 'stability' and 'combinability' of the accumulated elements (Latour 1987: 227–8), through the practices of naming, ordering, cataloguing, and publishing. In 1707 he finally published his most famous work, *A Voyage to the Islands of Medera [sic], Barbados, Nieves, St. Christophers and Jamaica, with the Natural History of the herbs and trees, four-footed beasts, fishes, birds, insects, reptiles, etc. of the last of those islands*. In addition to a brief history and geography of the island of Jamaica, Volume One of this encyclopaedic work contains 156 drawings, mostly of plants, with some maps and depictions of farming methods; Volume Two, not published until 1725, covers trees, insects, sea creatures, birds, and other animals. His work was said to be 'productive of much benefit to science, by exciting an emulation, both in Britain and on the continent',³ and many of the plants were propagated at gardens throughout Europe with some coming to be 'used in Medicines every day'.⁴ Thus there was a close link between learning about the unknown natural products of Jamaica, collecting 'materia medica' there, and using these substances in the medical treatment of European bodies, who ingested the substances that were thereby brought to the knowledge of European medicine. In fact in collecting plants, Sloane and other European collectors depended on the local knowledge of both aboriginal peoples and African slaves who passed on information on the specific medical uses of exotic plants unknown to Europeans.

Sloane was not only engaged in 'pure science', however, but was also a pragmatic entrepreneur interested in making new and wondrous substances available to European populations. He first observed a mixture of processed cocoa, milk and sugar being fed to sickly children in Jamaica (Minter 2000: 13), most likely slaves. He saw that this had potential to be marketed in Britain, and he brought back the recipe. He is said to have 'made a considerable amount of money from the promotion of "Sir Hans Milk Chocolate", recommended by eminent physicians as a drink "For its lightness on the Stomach and its Great use in all Consumption Cases"' (MacGregor 1994: 15; Minter 2000: 13). Banking on his reputation as a fashionable society doctor, his milk chocolate was extremely successful and the recipe was eventually purchased by the Cadbury brothers in 1849, to become the chocolate that we all know and love today.⁵ Furthermore, 'on returning from Jamaica he is said to have invested "the greatest part of the Fortune he acquired there" in the bark [used in making quinine], so acquiring a valuable stock of medicine which he actively promoted by prescription (for a range of complaints beyond those hitherto treated in this way) and by writing about it in *Philosophical Transactions*'. Quinine is mainly used in the prevention and

treatment of malaria, and its preparation and use for this purpose was learned from indigenous civilisations in Peru.⁶ Sloane was instrumental in promoting its use in Protestant Northern Europe, where its efficacy had been doubted due to Jesuit control of its distribution. Quinine would go on to be crucial not only for enabling Europeans to survive settlement in the malarial tropics, but also aiding in the huge population movements of indentured labourers around the colonial world in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Hobhouse 1986).

Beyond Jamaica's use for natural history and medical research, it also provided other resources for the production of Sloane's fame and reputation:

[In London] on 11 May 1695 he married Elizabeth, daughter and co-heir of John Langley, a London alderman, and widow of Fulk Rose, formerly of Jamaica. The marriage was an advantageous one for Sloane, since his wife inherited not only her father's estate but also one third of the income from her former husband's properties in Jamaica. The newly-married couple set up house in what is now 3 Bloomsbury Place, then at the centre of a fashionable residential area. There Sloane established his immensely successful practice, his patients including many of the most prestigious figures of the day. (MacGregor 1994: 13)

Fulk Rose was one of the original British colonists of Jamaica, and owned 3,000 acres there on his death in 1694. Each of Sloane's biographers delicately states that these estates 'yielded' or 'brought an income' of four thousand pounds (MacGregor 1994: 37 fn. 42; Minter 2000: 13). They never mention that this income was directly produced through slave labour producing sugar on huge plantations with all of their attendant coercion, rape, and mortality of slaves. In 1709, Sloane sold his wife's several plantations in Jamaica, which facilitated his purchase in 1712 of the Chelsea manor, which included the freehold of the Chelsea Physic Garden, whose perpetual lease to the Society of Apothecaries he guaranteed.⁷

The Chelsea Physic Garden (founded in 1673), was already one of the best botanical collections in Europe, but Sloane immensely extended it and made arrangements for plant specimens to be delivered annually to the Royal Society for research purposes. It was under Sloane's patronage that the Garden grew to become one of the foremost in Europe. European '*hortus botanicus*' date back to those founded in the city-states of Northern Italy in the mid-sixteenth century (Pisa, 1543; Padua and Florence, 1545), which were derived from Middle Eastern models. They then spread to schools of medicine in Bologna, Leiden, Amsterdam, Montpellier, Oxford and Edinburgh, as well as being developed by the Dutch at Cape Town by the 1670s and the French in Mauritius in the 1760s (Grove 1995). Chelsea established a crucial seed exchange with the Leiden botanic garden as early as 1683, but its networks of exchange and study were extended during the Sloane years. Numerous eighteenth-century botanical illustrators such as Jacobus von Huysum and Elizabeth Blackwell (author of *The Curious Herbal*) based their drawings of tropical plants on the Chelsea Physic collection.

Sloane acquired further material from the tropical world for his collection from William Courten (1642–1702), Leonard Plukenet (1642–1706), James Petiver (c.1663–1718), Christopher Merrett (1614–95), and many other plant collectors. James Reed brought plants back from Barbados, and James Harlow contributed further specimens from the West Indies in 1692 (MacGregor 1994: 23–4). Sloane's 'herbarium' was crucial to the work of the great botanist Carolus Linnaeus, who visited the Chelsea Physic Garden in the 1730s and incorporated Sloane's catalogue of Jamaican plants into his work, which remains the basis of botanical classification today. As John Cannon observes,

It would be difficult to overstate the significance of the Sloane herbarium for the history of plant classification, as it represents by far the largest extant collection of plant specimens from the pre-Linnaean era. It is, indeed, almost certainly, the largest collection that was ever assembled during this early period. . . . Nearly all modern plant nomenclature (some lower plant groups excepted) stems from the publication in 1753 by Linnaeus of *Species Plantarum*. . . . There remain, however, a number of species which were known to him only from descriptions, with or without illustrations, in the published work of other authors: in these circumstances, modern practitioners can only regard the earlier description, accompanied perhaps by an illustration, as the 'type' of the Linnaean species. . . . It is in this context that the importance of the Sloane herbarium for modern systematists actually lies. . . . The Sloane botanical legacy is not merely a musty pile of old dried plants of purely antiquarian interest: it represents one of the ultimate reference sources for the nomenclature of plants, upon which modern electronic data banks for the transmission of information on resources of vital importance to man ultimately depend.

(Cannon 1994: 136)

Sloane's plant collection has thus taken on a kind of virtual existence in these data banks, which preserve the original 'types' on which the future of life itself 'ultimately' depends. It is an early example of what Franklin, Lury and Stacey refer to as the 'cultured up' production of nature (cf. Franklin *et al.* 2000). While not wishing to exaggerate the ongoing significance of Sloane's collection, it is safe to say that it was a major resource for the development of European botany, medicine, and pharmacology, which remains activated to this day in the Chelsea Physic Garden.

Sloane's work fits into an entire web of knowledge that stretched around the world through a mobilisation, stabilisation, and combination of people, animal and plant materials, and information. Knowledge of New World environments was systematised through encyclopaedic scientific texts that named and ordered the flora and fauna, along with botanical collections in which specimens were brought back and cultivated in hothouses in Europe. 'Natural products' of the Caribbean were crucial to the developing fields of natural history, botany, medicine, and horticulture. Sloane's account of the 'natural productions' of Jamaica

became a fundamental sourcebook for later medical botanical texts, which were the basis of European medical and apothecary training. In the 1810 and 1822 editions of the most important *Medical Botany* texts, for example, we find the following West Indian plants, some described with specific reference to Sloane's collection: *Guaiacum Officinale* (used in the treatment of syphilis); *Haematoxylon Campechianum* (logwood); *Quassia Simaruba* (bitter damson) and *Quassia Excelsa*; *Canella Alba* (wild cinnamon); *Myrtus Pimenta* (Allspice); *Cissampelos Pareira*; and *Geoffroya Inermis* (bastard cabbage tree).⁸ It was at Chelsea that the first heated glasshouses in England were built, and Sloane's protégé Philip Miller (head of Chelsea Physic Garden, 1722–71) contributed to 'the doubling of the number of species in cultivation in Britain between 1731 and 1768' (Minter 2000: 27), including pawpaws, melons, and pineapples.

The Chelsea Physic Garden continued to be used for botanical and medical research into the modern era, and has had world-wide influence according to its recent curator Sue Minter. Some of the achievements associated with work carried out at the Garden include the introduction of the West Indian cotton species (*Gossypium hirsutum*) into Georgia, a colony founded in 1732 with Sloane's 'zealous' promotion (Minter 2000: 37; Chalmers 1816: 68). This improved strain led to a take-off in the American cotton industry in the nineteenth century, which gave slavery a new lease of life in the US South, feeding the booming textile mills of Lancashire and driving the Indian textile industry out of business (Inikori 1992).⁹ Other practical developments and great achievements of the Garden include:

- the invention of 'Wardian Cases', small sealed greenhouses, which made possible the introduction of countless tropical plants to European gardens and the commercial transfer of plants from one tropical colony to another (Hobhouse 1986: 21), along with early experimentation in double glazing;
- the transplantation of tea plants from Shanghai to the Indian Himalayas in the late nineteenth century, which became the basis for the British Indian tea industry;
- the transportation of Brazilian rubber via Kew and Ceylon to Malaya, which remains central to the global rubber industry.

These global movements of plants and the development of technologies for their movement, propagation, and cultivation, as the Garden's promotional literature asserts, 'transformed the agricultural pattern of whole countries' (ibid.: 11–12). What effects such transformations had on the labouring populations who were themselves moved around to service these new industries remains invisible. It is the world-wide connections of the Garden to widely distributed locales, and the channelling of materials and knowledge made via its central nodal position, which enabled it to capitalise on the powers of mobilisation to become a 'global' centre of botanical and medical knowledge.

The Garden also claims great contributions to the field of medicine, including 'the identification of the plant which now cures nine out of ten children of their leukaemia' (Minter 2000: xii). Miller identified, cultivated, and distributed the

Madagascar periwinkle, a crucial source for alkaloids used in the treatment of cancer and one of the major species used in biochemical research today. More recently, major medical research bodies such as the Chester Beatty Research Institute and Glaxo Group Research have also used the Garden, according to Minter. Today, Glaxo Research and Development carry out random screening of plants in the Garden to try to identify new pharmacologically active compounds, though this is still complemented by ethnobotanic studies tracing 'the oral traditions of people who have used plants over the centuries'.¹⁰ Such pharmaceutical research (or what some have more challengingly termed 'biopiracy') depends on the movement of investigators, plants, knowledge, information, research technologies, and capital investments, yet becomes operational (patented and marketed) only once it has been tested on far less mobile human populations. Large-scale research populations have tended to be found amongst the immobile labour pool of Third World countries, whose bodies-fixed-in-place enable the benefits of medicine to be mobilised for the wealthy and mobile population of the North (see Chapter 5 below on medical research carried out in Haiti).

The outcome of these many mobilities and immobilities are etched onto the map of London. Sloane's property holdings in the Knightsbridge area, bequeathed via his daughter Elizabeth to her male heirs, leave their trace in his and his son-in-law's family names on the modern map of London. Sloane Square, Sloane Street, Hans Street, Hans Place, Hans Road, Hans Crescent (the home of Harrod's), and Cadogan Square, Cadogan Street, Cadogan Gardens – all the places frequented by today's 'Sloane Rangers'. When we unravel this map of a small corner of London its dense knot of financial, cultural, and symbolic capital unfolds into a series of larger maps tracing various journeys. Far away are the slaves who were involuntarily transported from Africa to Jamaica to grow the sugar and coffee that enriched Fulk Rose. Then the voyage of a Governor of Jamaica, accompanied by Sloane, and the shipment back to England of the boxes filled with the plants, animals, and body parts collected in Jamaica. Just as crucial are the trip of Rose's widow Elizabeth back to England where she considerably enlarged her husband's estate (perhaps she was accompanied by one of her domestic slaves from Jamaica?). Then came the visits of innumerable European men of letters to see the collection at Chelsea; and the dispersal of the Garden's seeds and plants to sites around the world. While the early Caribbean collections play much less of a role in the Garden today, Sloane's original herbarium sheets remain housed in the Natural History Museum in Knightsbridge.

The story of Sloane and the Chelsea Physic Garden is indicative of the extended circuits of human, floral, faunal, capital, visual, and informational movements that constituted (and constitute) the transatlantic world. His legacy is not simply about the forgotten historical origins of transatlantic cultures of consumption, but is also about wider aspects of the present world. From the sweet taste of milk chocolate to contemporary systems of plant classification, medical botany, and life-saving pharmaceutical research, Sloane's achievements can all be traced back to Jamaican origins, though this is seldom acknowledged. Part of my argument in this book is that the accumulation of contemporary 'Western'

scientific knowledge, cultural innovation, and capital continues to be made viable by far-reaching global circuits of knowledge-production premised on the consumption of the landscapes, plants, foods, bodies, and cultures of the Caribbean and other 'non-Western' places. As each of the following chapters will illustrate, these modes of consumption encompass not only flows of material things and human bodies, but also of symbolic representations, knowledge, and images. In the remainder of this chapter I will first briefly introduce some of the key relations of consumption that continue to construct the Caribbean as an 'outside' which perpetually serves as one of the constitutive grounds for Western modernity. I then conclude with a consideration of some of the ways in which mobility and immobility are co-constitutive, as certain kinds of mobility require binding others in place. Indeed the very claim to the high-velocity mobility of global modernity is only enabled by the lack of mobility on the not-quite-modern 'margins' of the West.

Binding mobilities of consumption

Western (or Northern) consumption of the Caribbean began with European 'discovery' of the New World, which was predicated on the search for a route to the spice trade of the Far East. Christopher Columbus, who will figure again in subsequent chapters, and other explorers came to the Caribbean prepared to take whatever they could: food, timber, slaves, gold, information, and 'virgin' land for new plantations. They also unleashed deadly new pathogens and feral animals, which together decimated the native populations. From this initial set of moves the history of the Atlantic world unfolds as a series of comings and goings constituted by a set of mobilities of people, objects, capital, and information. Since then, the interplay of changing possibilities for consumption and social struggles over mobility and immobility have shaped Northern Atlantic relations with (and re-inventions of) the Caribbean over roughly four phases:

- 1 Sixteenth to seventeenth centuries: period of 'discovery', piracy, and 'bachelor' plantation, in which European migrants took land, collected plants, and depicted a 'New World' of fruitful plenty, while Native inhabitants were dispossessed, enslaved, infected, and killed. Associated with 'mercantilism' as a specific early form of capitalism.
- 2 Eighteenth to mid-nineteenth centuries: exponential growth of the system of slavery in which Europeans consumed enslaved human bodies in the coerced production of both plantation commodities (for overseas consumption) and domestic and sexual services (for local consumption), while fighting wars of occupation. Associated with 'colonialism', as a specific form of capitalist articulation with the periphery.
- 3 Mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries: colonial/industrial system of 'free labour' and capitalist plantation commodity consumption in which workers began to migrate in search of wages and metropolitan dwellers began to travel in search of exotic pleasures, while the United States exer-

cised increasing military occupation in the region. Usually associated with the period of 'empire' and 'imperialism'.

- 4 Late twentieth century to today: 'postindustrial' and 'postcolonial' service consumption in which fragments of industrial processes ('off-shore' export zones) occur in the Caribbean alongside new forms of service work (including high-tech and financial services as well as tourism). Cultural commodification is linked to the explosion of tourism in the region, growth in the 'world music' industry, and new forms of informational capitalism. Period of 'post-fordism' within capitalism.

Rather than giving a chronological account of these different phases, however, the chapters of this book are organised thematically in order to show some of the continuities in the formation of consuming publics and modes of consumption right across all of these periods. As in the story of Sloane's life and achievements, we can follow the footprints of history from a sixteenth-century propagandist promoting the delights of the New World to a twentieth-century travel writer describing the delights of the latest tourist resort. From reading seventeenth-century descriptions of the first glorious taste of a pineapple, we can slide effortlessly up to contemporary debates about fair trade in tropical produce. And from the diseased and dying bodies of indigenous people and slaves we can follow a clear path to the impoverished bodies of workers in the new global economy. Before taking these journeys, I want to give an overview of some of the multiple and intersecting modes of consumption that will be the concern of this account.

The well-known outlines of the 'triangular trade', which linked Europe, Africa, the West Indies, and North America in overlapping circuits of import and export, suggest the most obvious meaning of 'consumption' in its economic sense. The flows traversing this world system of trade are sometimes reduced to simple lists of commodities: manufactured goods from Europe (glass beads, metal wares, guns and gunpowder, textiles, hats, shoes, etc.); slaves from Africa (as if people could be simply reduced to 'goods'); plantation produce and natural products from the West Indies (sugar, coffee, cocoa, ginger, indigo, tropical hardwoods, etc.) and North America (cotton, tobacco, salted cod fish, timber, hides, fur, etc.). As Barbara Solow describes this system of trade,

What moved in the Atlantic in these centuries [sixteenth to nineteenth] was predominantly slaves, the output of slaves, the input to slave societies, and the goods and services purchased with the earnings on slave products . . . [Slavery] affected not only the countries of the slaves' origins and destinations, but, equally, those countries that invested in, supplied, or consumed the products of the slave economies. . . . In a reciprocal relationship, European demand for colonial goods, matched by a supply of slave labor to produce those goods, encouraged European development in the colonial period.

(Solow 1991: 1–2)

The making of the modern world by this circuit of movement of people, goods, ships, and information is indisputable, and I shall discuss some of its direct impacts in Part I. But in what sense should this past set of relationships continue to be relevant today?

As much as the abolition of slavery was an important moment of transformation of these world-making relations between mobile colonists, enslaved people, and commodity trade, it did not end the continuing importance of economic relations that fixed Caribbean societies in a subordinate position to the European market. Even in a world without slavery the mobile capital of 'free trade' helped to hold in place and constrain the lives of 'freed labourers' long after their emancipation from slavery. The costly indemnification imposed on the revolutionary state of Haiti in 1825 for having had the nerve to appropriate the human 'property' of French slave owners allowed the great powers of the time to isolate the indebted 'black republic' and to blithely continue profiting from slavery (Sheller 1999, 2000). The twenty-million-pound compensation paid to British slave owners in 1838 legally preserved their property rights in people and dismissed any claims that the emancipated may have had for their own compensation for years of toil and suffering. And the failure of the United States to pay any compensation to slaves after the civil war in 1865 (the fabled forty acres and a mule that many felt was their due) continues to fuel debates over reparative justice today.

So material relations of consumption continue to be shaped by these contours of inequality. Yet it was not only the commerce in slaves and material goods produced by slaves that moved through this system. However much we understand the facts and figures of the triangular trade, they fail to convey fully the depth and quality of the relation between the North Atlantic world and the Caribbean. Commodities are the most obvious things circulating in any system of global trade, but I will also be considering other kinds of mobile objects ranging from ships and books to plants, drugs, and pictures. The key commodities whose circulation I will consider include not only the main Caribbean agricultural products (especially sugar, coffee, and tropical fruits), but also plant products such as wood and pharmaceuticals, medical products such as blood plasma and research populations, and cultural products such as music, literature, and theory. The mobilities of consumption are not only material, but also cultural and discursive.

As the story of Sloane suggests, informational mobility is a key form of consumption. Throughout this book I shall be reading 'texts' and 'images' which were reproduced by hand, mechanically, or later electronically, and thereby entered into circuits of exchange, display, and collection. An important early element in the emergence of consumer societies was the circulation of printed visual images. As Chandra Mukerji argues regarding the expanding market for pictorial prints in sixteenth-century Europe,

Prints helped in the geographic spread of consumerism by carrying designs for artifacts over broad areas, shaping international patterns of taste. Of course, trade was the underlying cause of this internationalism; it permitted the movements of artisans, artifacts, patrons, and raw materials that inte-

grated consumers from different regions into a pan-European culture. But prints had a special role in this cultural integration, in part because they were easy to transport and in part because they had become easy to read.

(Mukerji 1983: 66)

Illustrated books about the Caribbean joined this flow of prints around the elite consumer markets of Europe, which would later become the basis for a more popular print culture. Indeed, the representation of the wonders of the 'New World' was probably a major impetus to the expansion of the print trade.

The printing of geographical information such as maps was also tightly linked to the expansion of the Atlantic world system in the sixteenth century. It was only as Portugal and Spain lost their monopoly on transatlantic trade that geographical information began to be printed in larger quantities, *circa* 1550 according to Mukerji (1983: 85). It was this informational flow and the new material culture it supported, she argues, that in part facilitated the shift to a new world-economy centred on North Atlantic trade with the Caribbean. Indeed some of the most important geographical books to be published in this period were Peter Martyr's 1505 *Libretto* which described Columbus's voyages to the West Indies, and Vespucci's *Mundus Novus* from around the same time (*ibid.*: 101). If the West Indies first entered European elite cultural circles through maps and voyagers' accounts, it was soon thereafter incorporated into a material flow of natural substances and printed visual images, which I explore further in Chapter 2. By the seventeenth century printed representations of 'the text of nature' (such as Sloane's publications) tied together the scientific networks of Europe; printed texts presented 'a reality grounded in the material world and cultural materialism of the period, in the increased production of many artifacts, including books' (*ibid.*: 164). These enculturations of the new 'facts' of the fascinating islands of the Caribbean required a kind of re-scaling of the world, as European intellectuals sought to digest novel, curious, and disturbing information about the New World. In recontextualising that which was strange and unbelievable they were also performing and enabling new material relations between distant places and people. They were bringing the New World into being rather than simply 'discovering' it.

Such projects of representation extended in different ways from the discovery of the New World (Greenblatt 1991), through the height of British imperialism (Richards 1993), and into the US imperial projects of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Salvatore 1996, 1998). Building on Stephen Greenblatt's notion of colonialism and empire-building as a 'representational machine', Ricardo Salvatore argues that

the construction of 'South America' [and, we can add, the Caribbean] as a territory for the projection of US capital, expertise, dreams, and power required the channelling of massive energies into the production of images and texts. . . . [Following Greenblatt] a representational machine is a set of mechanisms, processes, and apparatuses that produce and circulate representations constitutive of cultural difference. . . . The region became visible and

apprehensible to North America only through concrete representational practices and devices (e.g. travel narratives, geographic handbooks, photograph albums, and ethnographic exhibits). These representational practices constituted the stuff of empire as much as the activities of North Americans in the economic, military, or diplomatic fields.

(Salvatore 1998: 71–3)

This culturally rich understanding of imperial encounters informs the approach taken in this book, wherein I will also focus on the production and circulation of textual and visual representations of the Caribbean as crucial parts of the colonising project. Although these representational practices and technologies have changed over time (see for example my discussion of changing visions of Caribbean nature in Chapter 2), they nevertheless remain subtly embedded in contemporary images and understandings of the Caribbean. As Salvatore suggests, empire is constituted ‘as a chain of nodes or points of textual/image production . . . as an extended flow of information, visual images, arguments, and meanings going from South to North; as a process of accumulation of symbolic capital through multiple technologies of seeing, narrating, and displaying’ (ibid.: 74). This flow and accumulation of symbolic capital continues to delimit the cultural production of ‘The Caribbean’ in the nodal points of metropolitan power today.

The literature of travel and exploration became a major segment in the circulation of information on and representations of the Caribbean. Thus, the archive of travel writing is a crucial source for this study. From the emergence of a modern reading public that consumed fictional tales and factual ‘knowledge’ about the Caribbean, there began a demand for ‘true’ accounts. This intersected with the production of ‘expert’ knowledge in the policy debates surrounding the abolition of slavery in the late eighteenth to early nineteenth century. The creation of transatlantic academic consuming publics vastly expanded in the discourse of the world anti-slavery movement in the nineteenth century, in which the Caribbean became an object of learned study, and an ‘area’ produced in the process of knowledge proliferation. The anti-slavery movement’s keen interest in ‘authentic’ accounts of slavery by former slaves resulted in a plethora of published slave narratives as well as actual lecture tours and self-displays by freed slaves, both male and female (Midgley 1992; Fisch 2000). These performances of authenticity bolstered a system of knowledge-production, which has been rediscovered as an object of academic study and theorisation, for example in Caribbean literary studies and the associated interest in slave narratives (Davis and Gates 1985; Gates 1987).

Thus it is crucial to attend to the ways in which Caribbean cultural forms travel and the ways in which academic ‘knowledge’ of the Caribbean is produced and circulates. From the early days of collecting plants, to the first-hand accounts from travellers, to more recent area studies, ‘experts’ have attempted to collect, classify, and explain ‘the Caribbean’. Insofar as Caribbean writers, artists, and intellectuals have fought to define their own societies and cultures, they have had to

struggle against this tide of textual precedents. These are themes I return to in Chapter 6, where I consider the consumption of Caribbean literature and theory in metropolitan academia, as well as the positioning of this book itself in the skeins of power-knowledge that enwrap the Caribbean. In the remainder of this chapter, however, I want to turn to the ways in which bodies move in and out of these material and cultural circuits of things in motion. How are some bodies immobilised by the very processes that produce the mobility of other bodies, commodities, and knowledges?

Bodily (im)mobilities

Greater attention to bodies and their (im)mobilities can help to show the intertwining of circuits of production and consumption with processes of gendering, racialisation, and domination. I will be especially concerned with the movement and stabilisation of bodies and the mobilisation of visual representations of bodies in the second part of this book. Entire global systems are configured by relations of risk and desire that depend on the proximate and distant relation between bodies in movement through both domesticated and exoticised regions. In travelling to the Caribbean with a pre-formed imaginative attachment to ‘natural paradise’, for example, Northern consumers are able to experience their proximity to Caribbean people as pleasurable even when it manifestly involves relations of subordination, degradation, or violation. And conversely, when Caribbean commodities are consumed in the North they are experienced as ‘getting closer to’ or ‘touching’ the essence of the Caribbean (hooks 1992; Cook and Crang 1996), even when they manifestly involve limitations on the mobility of the very people who have produced those commodities. Bodily (im)mobilities, therefore, are a crucial nexus of the systems of transatlantic exchange that depend on embodied relations of distance, proximity, and co-presence at different moments in the processes of production and consumption.

Modes of consumption can shift on three important dimensions in which embodied relations play a central part. First, the degree of commodification of the body itself (legality of slavery, indenture, prostitution and sex work, and varieties of personal service) determines who can and cannot move, or in what ways their movements may be controlled. Second, the means of global circulation of commodities, people, information, and images (technologies of transportation, information access, and time-space distanciation) impacts on the reach and intensity of certain kinds of access. And, finally, the proximity or ‘co-presence’ of consuming and consumed bodies at the site of consumption (depending on the triple circulation of producers, consumers, and commodities themselves) shapes the kinds of relations that may occur at different sites of agency. Some of the human mobilities that have shaped the Caribbean over the past five centuries include:

- migrations of various indigenous peoples (Arawak/Taino and Carib) into the Caribbean and their displacement by European warfare and disease;

- journeys of European explorers, planters, colonial settlers, governors, missionaries and travellers into and around the region;
- expulsion of Jews from Spain and Portugal in 1493, which brought some of them to the Caribbean in the earliest wave of European migrants;
- enslavement and forced transportation of people from many regions of Africa, with up to ten million captives making the Atlantic crossing in slave ships;
- migration of indentured contract labourers from India, China, and other imperial outposts to the Caribbean;
- movement of workers within and beyond the Caribbean in search of employment, and associated journeys of family reunification or return;
- trade diasporas of Levantine (especially Lebanese) and Chinese origin;
- incursions by North American travellers, tourists, soldiers, sailors, 'advisors' and expatriates, who often occupy, requisition, or purchase entire islands;
- flights of refugees, asylum applicants and so-called 'boat-people' seeking an escape from political terror, poverty, and the effects of underdevelopment.

From this list we can note first that human migrations are often defined as either 'voluntary' or coerced, though the actual choices of individuals may be far less clear-cut. The most extreme example of coerced mobility is the capture of humans, the process of enslavement, and the shipment of a 'human cargo' from one part of the world to another. The outcome of such enslavement generally rests on a denial of mobility at the site of slavery. Voluntary mobility, in contrast, is the choice of mobility available to the planter, the colonist, the missionary or the tourist. Yet we can also envision forms of semi-coerced or semi-voluntary mobility in relation to wives and children obligated to move with male household heads, as well as indentured labourers, refugees, asylum-seekers, exiles, and those caught up in some forms of international prostitution. The binding and transportation of people in chains as slaves, the limitations on mobility imposed by contracts of indenture, the locking up of 'runaways' and 'vagabonds', the requirements of permits and licences to engage in market trading, or the requirement of passports and visas in order to cross borders, are all different forms in which freedom of movement is blocked or limited. As I shall discuss in subsequent chapters, in each case it is the circumstance of the possibilities of travel (for some) which itself necessarily produces the techniques of limiting mobility (for others).

Second, human mobility can be understood as either permanent or temporary. The slave's passage (from Africa to the Americas in this case) was usually (though not always) permanent, while the planter's sojourn was often temporary, unless by choice the planter becomes a settler. The exile's migration to a new country is often permanent, while the tourist's visit is temporary. In between the permanent and the fleeting we might find temporary refugees, contracted agricultural workers, missionaries, asylum seekers, and those 'transnationals' who move back and forth between a 'home' country and a 'diaspora' community. Focusing on these diverse human mobilities can help to highlight the linkages between different parts of the world. Increasingly there are forms of 'transmigration' which blur

the boundary between point of origin and point of departure, such as the Haitian notion of the diaspora as the 'Tenth Department' of the country. Through the migration of Haitian, Jamaican, Cuban, Dominican, Puerto Rican, and other Caribbean people into 'global cities' like New York and London, or not-so-global cities like Miami and Toronto, many parts of the metropolitan North are now said to be not only multicultural, but 'Caribbeanized'. Caribbean migration processes have to some extent offered the paradigmatic case of transnationalism (Sutton and Chaney 1987; Basch *et al.* 1994), as I shall discuss in Chapter 5. Thus the Caribbean has been used to demonstrate the solubility of national boundaries in the era of 'globalization'.¹¹

While the movements of information, people, and material things are all crucial to this account, this is neither a history of ideas, nor a history of migration, nor a history of world trade *per se*. Rather, my key concern is with how flows of people, substances, and information are linked together in relations of coupling and decoupling, stickiness and fluidity, by which attachments and proximities are formed, and distancing or differentiation achieved. Although there has recently been an upsurge of interest in theories of mobility and 'nomadism', there has also been a more measured concern with the relations between mobility and dwelling, travel and attachment, fluidity and fixity.¹² As Kaplan (1996) argues, many theorists of mobility fail to distinguish between forms of elite and subaltern mobility, for example by appropriating the imagery of 'nomadism' to describe a universal postmodern subjectivity. In contrast, I insist that how and why different agents move (and how they then become located in a world system) is crucial. As Tim Cresswell puts it, 'The question of how mobilities get produced – both materially and in terms of "ideas" of mobility – means asking: Who moves? How do they move? How do particular forms of mobility become meaningful? What other movements are enabled or constrained in this process? Who benefits from this movement?' (Cresswell 2001: 25; and cf. Wrigley and Revill 2000).

Many analysts now recognise the ways in which mobility is embedded in systematically asymmetrical power relations involving a politics of lived forms of mobility and immobility in which these two terms are always already implicated in each other (Ahmed *et al.* forthcoming). In enacting all of the bodily mobilities described above, the social construction of the 'right' to mobility is crucial. As Robert Young argues in a critique of Deleuze and Guattari's notion of nomadism, paying attention to 'enforced dislocations of the peoples of the South' can help to remind us that 'colonialism operated through a forced symbiosis between territorialization as, quite literally, plantation, and the demands for labour which involved the commodification of bodies and their exchange through international trade' (Young 1995: 173). The current political debates and vehement reactions generated by the movement of asylum seekers and refugees in Europe and the United States attest to the emotionally charged situations of immobility and boundary-fixing generated by border controls, visas, and the internment of 'aliens'. Rather than a celebration of the postmodern 'nomad', then, theorists of mobility are asking who or what is able to travel a supposedly 'borderless world', and who or what is kept in place (Graham and Marvin 2001).

The key circuits of global mobility include not only the peopling of the Americas, but also the migration of Caribbean people in and around the region and beyond (Puri forthcoming). Understanding the full complexity of these flows requires attention to who or what stayed put, and to how certain mobilities have been constrained.¹³ One of my key arguments, following some of the work of Sara Ahmed, is that with the mobility of some, comes the production of the immobility of others; and furthermore that the very enabling of certain kinds of mobility requires certain kinds of barriers (Ahmed 2000, 2001). In the United States foreign policy is often driven by political arguments concerning the 'flood' of immigrants that will be released from the Caribbean if conditions there become unstable, while in Britain the Jamaican 'Yardie' has become a byword for violent gun crime. These discourses reflect efforts to reinforce boundaries of belonging and difference, and helped to justify policies such as the rounding up of Haitian refugees into the US military installation at Guantánamo Bay in Cuba. Such exclusions of categories of people from the otherwise easy flows of transnational tourism and elite nomadism are often linked to discourses of disease, whether the myth of Haitians as AIDS-carriers (Farmer 1992) or more subtle notions of cultural contagion and 'infectious rhythm' (Browning 1998).

In the tourism economy in particular there are highly structured inequalities of mobility and fixity. As Gavan Titley has argued,

Tourism depends on the circulation of a desired image of the Caribbean as untouched yet within reach; the [all-inclusive] resort, the ultimate fragmentation of the environment, allows for the untouched to be curated and fortified. . . . Any random contact, or open ensemble, admits the risk that consumer satisfaction may be confronted by uncertainty. . . . Once again, the situation is paradoxical in that it is only through the erection of barriers that the world can be offered as being without frontiers for those privileged enough to undertake the journey.

(Titley 2000: 82)

Thus the ability of the tourist to enjoy moving within and through the Caribbean requires limits to be placed on the mobility of 'local' people, who are barred access to resort areas except in so far as they perform service work. The apparent freedom of movement and boundless travel in a 'world without frontiers' is produced by the techniques of binding people, places, and meanings in place. The 'untouched' Caribbean of tourist fantasy must be held in place behind walls, gates, and service smiles in order to afford the tourist the experience of getting close to it. While some people are thus fixed in place, countries such as the UK willingly recruit highly trained doctors, nurses, and teachers from its former colonial territories in the West Indies, contributing to a drain of human resources from the Caribbean and a limited welcome afforded to certain kinds of migrants.

There is clearly an interrelation between the mobilities of people and objects, and the ways in which 'dwelling-in-travel' and 'travel-in-dwelling' are achieved. As Celia Lury highlights in her discussion of tourism and the objects of travel,

the boundedness of culture in objects is secured by particular modes of travelling and dwelling. . . . [It] is not simply objects-in-motion but also objects-that-stay-still that help make up tourism. It is further suggested that looking at the career or biography of objects, as they move or stay still, will add to what we can say about the lives of people that travel (and then go home), that is, tourists.

(Lury 1997: 76–7)

Thus we must look at travel and dwelling together, and at people-in-motion and people-who-stay-still, since it is all of these together which secure the boundaries of culture, the boundaries that enable tourism (or other forms of cultural 'contact') to occur. It is precisely such relations that I will be exploring in subsequent chapters.

Global fluidities of consumption and production

Having considered the mobilities of consumption and the (im)mobilities of people, in concluding this chapter I want to turn to one example of the immersion of a small Caribbean state into a global economy that is described as increasingly 'fluid' or 'liquid' (Urry 2000; Bauman 2000). The discourse of globalization has proven very attractive to Caribbean governments as they try to gain a foothold in the 'new information economy'. Business conferences in the region sport names like 'The Global New Economy: Opportunities for Caribbean Business Development' and 'Globalisation: Are We Ready?'¹⁴ Here I want to consider how Barbados in particular has positioned itself (and been positioned) in relation to the discourses and practices of globalization. In a promotion printed by the Barbados Ministry of International Trade and Business in 1998, an image of the globe is shown with an out-of-scale island of Barbados filling up the entire Atlantic. The effect of this re-scaling is the complete erasure of Africa from this globe, as Barbados appears to sit just south of the Mediterranean. The rest of the Caribbean is also placed out of the picture, to give Barbados centre-stage on the 'global icon' of the blue planet (cf. Franklin *et al.* 2000).

The visual displacement and forgetting of not only Africa, but also Barbados's generally poorer neighbours is matched by the erasure of the colonial past and the silencing of workers in the 'new global economy' – out of sight, out of mind. The text states that in the 'information-driven economy . . . the entire planet becomes a "level playing field" with tremendous opportunities for *all* countries, large or small.' Presumably influenced by David Harvey's notion of time-space compression (Harvey 1989), they assert optimistically that 'The world is getting smaller . . . But Barbados is growing'.¹⁵ Just as the story of Sloane and the Chelsea Physic Garden suggested an erasure of Caribbean connections, so too does Barbados's effort to reconstitute itself as a centre of the information economy depend on its ability to silence the colonial past and disavow its Caribbean connections. Like Sloane's Jamaica, Barbados is mobilised in relation to the 'centre' of the information economy, stabilised as a node in the global information

network, and recombined with the 'global' to afford greater power to that centre. Yet this comforting image for Euro-American investors sits awkwardly with the cut-throat economic reality of the effects of 'free trade' on most Caribbean economies. The Barbados government is engaging in what Klak and Myers describe as 'illusions of scientific grandeur' in its efforts to target and woo foreign 'investors associated with "high technology" industries: computers, electronics, information processing, and telecommunications' (Klak and Myers 1998: 98).

Barbados initially succeeded in this strategy in the early 1980s, becoming 'by far the largest per capita industrial exporter in the Caribbean, with electronics and garments contributing the most' (ibid.: 99–100). However, by 1983 its relatively higher wage rates led US-based corporations, such as INTEL, to pull out and seek cheaper labour in places like the Dominican Republic. Investors' guidebooks to the Caribbean develop promotional 'mediascapes' by which 'governments are selling their countries and people [just] as private-sector marketing departments . . . sell consumer commodities'. They compete with each other to promote 'profits in paradise' based on 'a blissful and laid-back tropical setting with easygoing workers who are willing to work for little' (ibid.: 95, 97). If wages do become too high, companies can simply pull out and move to greener pastures where extremely low wages, lack of worker protections, and tax holidays attract them to 'offshore' export-processing zones. These 'zones' become a kind of limbo in which 'flexible' workers do not really make anything, but simply move products along the 'global assembly line' (Barry *et al.* 1984; Klein 2000). In the Montego Bay Free Trade Zone in Jamaica, for example, the high-tech connectivity of the 'Digiport' (a 'back office enclave' serving metropolitan information processing industries) is enabled by dedicated high-speed satellite telecommunications, yet workers in the 1990s were paid US\$0.34 per hour (Skinner 1998; Graham and Marvin 2001: 356–7). It is the strict limitations on labour mobility, especially from the Caribbean to the United States or Europe, that keeps in place these low-wage workers to service foreign investors.

In contrast to the restrictions on labour mobility, the Caribbean has become a leader in the free-booting flight of capital across international borders. Money itself is a crucial liquid asset which has been subject to wrangling over the ease of its illegal movement into and out of weakly regulated banking sectors in the Caribbean. As Appadurai notes, there are 'increasingly complex relationships among money flows, political possibilities, and the availability of both un- and highly-skilled labor . . . even an elementary model of global political economy must take into account the deeply disjunctive relationships among human movement, technological flows, and financial transfers' (Appadurai 1996: 34–5). The movement of money is ironically one of the few sectors in which small Caribbean states have a comparative advantage. Several UK dependencies or former colonies are well-known tax havens whose unregulated banking greases the wheels of global financial velocity: Anguilla, Belize, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, the Turks and Caicos, and Grenada. The current crack-down on the funding of terrorist networks suggests that these banking zones that facilitate money laundering will soon be more tightly integrated into global

'financescapes'. 'Liquid modernity' (Bauman 2000) requires complex checks and barriers to enable or constrain particular kinds of flows. As in the days of piracy and 'freebooting', the Caribbean has come to be associated with interruptions of the 'normal' flows of capital, as well as with forms of smuggling and drug-running which subvert (yet support) the formal regulated economy.¹⁶

These mobilisations of island-images, capital investment, commodity production, and informational economies are closely linked to control over the movements of people. Trade liberalisation has been directly linked to rises in the cost of living, decline in local industries, especially food production, a fall in standards of health and welfare, and increased emigration from the Caribbean. Thus the economic policies that support the flow of cheap consumer goods into the North have brought with them an undertow of displaced people. As Deere *et al.* (1990) point out, the policies of the Caribbean Basin Initiative, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the US Agency for International Development in the 1980s,

reinforced traditional patterns of subordination in the relationship of Caribbean economies to metropolitan centers. Specifically, in the reliance on external markets, in the primacy of export production over production for local or regional markets, and in the preeminence given to the attraction of foreign capital, current development strategies advocated by Washington . . . reinforce highly open and vulnerable economies at the expense of the welfare of Caribbean populations.

(Deere *et al.* 1990: 7–8)

More recent changes in the relation between Europe and the Caribbean, driven by the rulings of the World Trade Organisation (which I will discuss in more detail in Chapter 3), have made Caribbean economies even more vulnerable and 'open'. The resulting 'economic migrants' and 'boat-people' are turned away at the US border, while increasing numbers of tourists and boat people of a more desirable kind (travelling by cruise ship and yacht) pour into Caribbean 'resorts' or buy their own 'piece of paradise'.

At the Port St. Charles 'exclusive residential community' in Barbados, for example, yachts can now pull up and moor directly outside their villas, in a gated community with its own customs and passport control facilities. It is promoted not only as 'a lucrative investment vehicle', but also as offering investors 'the less tangible but rewarding gains of pleasure and satisfaction' of 'spending vacations in their new home' and 'knowing that they own property in a beautiful country'.¹⁷ Growth in capital is tied to moving between one's home and a home away from home, and both depend on owning a little piece of 'paradise' in which the presence and proximity of the Bajan population is carefully managed.¹⁸ 'Exclusive' ownership is not only about owning a piece of land, but is also expressed through owning shares of time. So-called 'private residence resorts' like The Crane, in Barbados, allow 'the purchase of some of the luxury villas for only the amount of time required, while retaining the important attributes of ownership in perpetuity

backed by a deed to the property'. A one-bedroom, two-bath residence of 1,120 square feet goes for US\$8,750 per week, while a 1,784 square foot two-bedroom villa with private pool starts at US\$13,570 per week. Even more deluxe options are available from US\$21,710 per week.¹⁹ Investors are assured, however, that their assets will increase in value. This is in a country where the average wage rate for semi-skilled workers is approximately US\$2 per hour (which is relatively high among independent Caribbean countries) (Klak and Myers 1998: 99).

Despite these stark political and economic realities recent studies of Caribbean modernity and the region's insertion into the global economy nevertheless highlight the degree to which Caribbean societies have grasped the nettle of global capitalism and the 'information economy'. Rather than dwelling on the violence of the colonial past or postcolonial dependency, they highlight the Caribbean's vanguard role in the making of global modernity. Carla Freeman, for example, shows how women working in the informatics industry in Barbados are not simply exploited 'pink-collar' workers in the 'electronic sweatshop'. 'Within the broad sweep of capitalist globalization, and the expansion of the global assembly line into new realms of work,' she argues, 'local culture and notions of identity enact themselves in significant ways, reshaping the very contours of multinational industries and therefore, even in a small way, of global capitalism itself' (Freeman 2000: 63). Daniel Miller and Don Slater take this argument a step further in their ethnography of internet-use in Trinidad, which 'is not a case-study of localization or the appropriation of a global form by local cultural concerns. It is not about domesticating a technology. On the contrary, it is largely about how Trinidadians put themselves into this global arena and become part of the force that constitutes it' (Miller and Slater 2000: 7). The technologies of the global (and of modernity), in other words, are Caribbean as much as they are anything else, and it would be a mistake to see the small island-states of the Caribbean solely as victims of some outside force called 'globalization'.

Even if the people of the Caribbean are being held in place and relegated to the immobile labour pool of 'the South', Caribbean people, culture, and ideas continue to leach across the border and cannot be kept out.²⁰ International laws pertaining to enslavement, migration, trade liberalisation, monetary movements, and intellectual property rights have always impinged on relations of consumption, and continue to do so. At the very time that there is a growing anxiety over stopping illegal entry of human bodies at the borders of Western consumer societies, the borders of 'non-Western' countries are being forced to open to the legal entry of objects of free trade. Crucial political battles with global consequences have been waged over tariffs and free movement of commodities, such as sugar, rum, and bananas, as well as intellectual property such as music and ethnobotanical knowledge. The movements of goods and ideas are tightly connected with the movements of people and their attachments. Decisions made about economies of production, consumption, and trade have deep implications for economies of culture, emotion, and identity.

In briefly introducing the mobilities of consumption which link the Caribbean with 'the West' I have begun to demonstrate how such mobilities figure in the

accumulation of financial and cultural capital, and the making of spaces of modernity in 'the West' (always problematically imagined as separate from the Caribbean). By tracing the continuities in this process from the late seventeenth century until today my aim has been to show how contemporary cultures of mobile consumption are still embedded in earlier patterns of material, human, informational, and cultural movement between the North Atlantic and the Caribbean. In the next chapter I will tell this story again, in a different way, by returning to the first moments of European entrancement with the natural wonders of the Caribbean, and tracking this relation of consumption into the everyday form of tourist imagery and fantasy island that surrounds us today.