

**THE
DISCOVERIE
OF GUIANA**

Sir Walter Raleigh
THE DISCOVERIE OF GUIANA
with an Introduction by Jonathan Morley

First published in 1595

This edition © The Caribbean Press 2010
Series Preface © Bharrat Jagdeo 2010
Introduction © Jonathan Morley 2008

Cover design by Cristiano Coppola

All rights reserved

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted
in any form without permission

Published by The Caribbean Press for the Government of
Guyana

This publication was made possible by the financial support
of the Peepal Tree Press (Leeds), the Lord Gavron Trust and
the Government of Guyana

ISBN 978-1-907493-08-9



The Caribbean Press



THE GUYANA CLASSICS LIBRARY

**Series Preface by the President of Guyana,
H.E. Bharrat Jagdeo**

General Editor:

David Dabydeen

Consulting Editor:

Ian McDonald

Director of Research:

Letizia Gramaglia

SERIES PREFACE

Modern Guyana came into being, in the Western imagination, through the travelogue of Sir Walter Raleigh, *The Discoverie of Guiana* (1595). Raleigh was as beguiled by Guiana's landscape ("I never saw a more beautiful country...") as he was by the prospect of plunder ("every stone we stooped to take up promised either gold or silver by his complexion"). Raleigh's contemporaries, too, were doubly inspired, writing, as Thoreau says, of Guiana's "majestic forests", but also of its earth, "resplendent with gold." By the eighteenth century, when the trade in Africans was in full swing, writers cared less for Guiana's beauty than for its mineral wealth. Sugar was the poet's muse, hence the epic work by James Grainger *The Sugar Cane* (1764), a poem which deals with subjects such as how best to manure the sugar cane plant, the most effective diet for the African slaves, worming techniques, etc. As John Singleton confessed (in his *General Description of the West Indies*, 1776), there was no contradiction between the manufacture of odes and that of sugar: "...a fine exuberant plant, which clothes the fields with the richest verdure. There is, I believe, scarcely any cultivation which yields so lucrative a return per acre as under favourable circumstances, than that of the sugar cane. So bountiful a gift of Providence seems not only calculated to call forth the activity and enterprise of the agriculturalist and merchant, but to awaken also feelings of a higher and more refined enthusiasm." The refinement of art and that of sugar were one and the same process.

The nineteenth century saw the introduction of Indian indentureship, but as the sugar industry expanded, literary works contracted. Edward Jenkins' novel *Lutchmee and Dilloo* (1877) was the only substantial fiction on Guiana, and whilst it was broadly sympathetic to the plight of Indian labourers, it was certain of Britain's imperial destiny, and rights over mineral

resources. It was not until the period leading up to Guiana's Independence from Britain (1966) and the subsequent years, that our own writers of Amerindian, African, Asian and European ancestry (A.J. Seymour, Wilson Harris, Jan Carew, Edgar Mittelholzer, Martin Carter, Rajkumari Singh et al.) attempted to purify literature of its commercial taint, restoring to readers a vision of the complexity of the Guyanese character and the beauty of the Guyanese landscape.

The Guyana Classics Library will republish out-of-print poetry, novels and travelogues so as to remind us of our literary heritage, and it will also remind us of our reputation for scholarship in the fields of history, anthropology, sociology and politics, through the reprinting of seminal works in these subjects. The Series builds upon previous Guyanese endeavours, like the institution of CARIFESTA and the Guyana Prize. I am delighted that my government has originated the project and has pledged that every library in the land will be furnished with titles from the Series, so that all Guyanese can appreciate our monumental achievement in moving from Exploitation to Expression. If the Series becomes the foundation and inspiration for future literary and scholarly works, then my government will have moved towards fulfilling one of its primary tasks, which is the educational development of our people.

President Bharrat Jagdeo

THE DISCOVERIE OF GUIANA

WALTER RALEGH

Introduction by
Jonathan Morley



The Caribbean Press

The Guyana Classics Library

CONTENTS

<i>Introduction: "The inticement of this golden baite"</i>	xiii
Frontispiece	25
The Epistle	26
To The Reader	31
THE DISCOVERIE OF GUIANA	
I. The Capture of Trinidad	37
II. The Spanish Intelligence	43
III. Berreo in Amapaia and Emeria	54
IV. Up the Orenoque	63
V. The King of Aromaia	81
VI. The Return Downriver	96
VII. Conclusion	102
<i>Note on the Text</i>	110
<i>Bibliography</i>	111

“The inticement of this golden baite”: Raleigh and Guiana

Sir Walter Raleigh, soldier, sea-captain, courtier and poet, was not alone in his dreams of El Dorado, for the idea of the Americas gripped the Elizabethan imaginary. At the zenith of his colonial endeavours (the planting of the Roanoke colony in Virginia in the mid-1580s) Raleigh gathered around him an extraordinary constellation of the leading intellectuals of his day (the so-called ‘School of Atheism’): the mathematician Thomas Hariot, who worked with Raleigh’s Native American translators to create an alphabet and dictionary of the Algonkian language; the playwright Christopher Marlowe, who was stabbed in the eye in a Deptford tavern brawl while under investigation for his role in the affairs at Durham House, Raleigh’s centre of operations; the chronicler Richard Hakluyt, who propagandised for Raleigh on the productivity and profitability of the early American colonies. Sir Philip Sidney and Sir Fulke Greville (accomplished poets both) rode to Plymouth to take up places on Francis Drake’s relief mission to Roanoke in 1585, and were only recalled at the last moment by Queen Elizabeth to fight in Holland (where Sidney was killed); Sidney had petitioned Elizabeth to give Raleigh the patent to plant Virginia in 1584, having already purchased three million acres of land from Raleigh’s half-brother, Sir Humfrey Gilbert. John Donne, who sailed with Raleigh and Essex to attack Cadiz in 1596, sought a secretaryship with the Virginia Company in 1609.

At its most elevated, this mode of thought – the intellectual as explorer – was apotheosised in Shakespeare’s late play *The Tempest* (1611), in which the Virginia Company’s ‘Bermuda Pamphlets’ are refined into the delicate details of the island landscape from which Ariel and Caliban have been usurped by Prospero. It echoes through much other literature of the period: George Chapman’s “*Guiana*, whose rich feet are mines of golde, / Whose forehead knockes against the roofo of Starres”,¹ for example; Donne’s “That unripe side of earth, that heavy clime / That gives us man up now, as Adam was / Before he ate”;² and

¹ ‘De Guiana, Carmen Epicum’, prefixed to Lawrence Keymis’ *Relation of the Second Voyage to Guiana* in 1596.

² ‘To the Countess of Huntingdon’, around 1603.

somewhat later, Andrew Marvell's "He hangs in shades the orange bright / Like golden lamps in a green night".³ These literary sources are the tip of an iceberg whose submerged mass was the popular imagination of the period – and the public fascination with Guiana in particular was due to the lure of its largely imaginary gold. As the American philosopher Henry David Thoreau would later put it:

The few travellers who had penetrated into the country of Guiana, whither Raleigh was bound, brought back accounts of noble streams flowing through majestic forests, and a depth and luxuriance of soil which made England seem a barren waste in comparison. Its mineral wealth was reported to be as inexhaustible as the cupidity of its discoverers was unbounded. The very surface of the ground was said to be resplendent with gold, and the men went covered with gold-dust, as Hottentots with grease.⁴

"Reported" is the key word here, and this introduction will focus on some of the problems of reportage that exist in Raleigh's text.

Given the weirdly literary mindset of the Elizabethan period, we need to be aware, when reading the 1595 *Discoverie of Guiana*, of its own literary strategies; it is not just the functional military document which the opening Epistle professes it to be, but a fiction, the aim being to persuade the English people to go forth and colonise this new land – and the abundant gold, Raleigh almost mocks, will not be easy to obtain. Contemporary ideas of the relationship between the true, the discovered and the imaginary are at play. Sidney's influential tract *An Apologie for Poesie* (which prescribes "the sweete delights of Poetrie" as an effective method, among other uses, for softening and sharpening the "hard dull wits" of illiterate American Indians) represents the poet as one whose reports are preferable to the banalities of the real world:

Onely the Poet, disdainning to be tied to any such subjection, lifted up with the vigor of his owne invention, dooth growe in effect into another nature, in making things either better than Nature bringeth forth, or, quite anewe, formes such as never were in Nature, as the *Heroes, Demigods, Cyclops, Chimeras, Furies*, and such like... not inclosed within the narrow warrant of her gifts, but freely ranging onely within the Zodiack of

³ 'Bermudas', around 1650.

⁴ 'Sir Walter Raleigh'.

his owne wit. // Nature never set forth the earth in so rich tapestry, as divers Poets have done, neither with so pleasant rivers, fruitful trees, sweet smelling flowers, nor whatsoever els may make the too much loved earth more lovely. Her world is brasen, the Poets only deliver a golden.⁵

The fruits of the creative impulse, though inventions, are argued to be more desirable than the merely factual – an ideology of writing whose flexibility with regard to ‘truth’ and ‘fiction’ could be advantageous in an age of imperial expansion, when the edges of the known world were literally being redrawn with every voyage.

It may seem far-fetched to apply such theories to the *Realpolitik*-fuelled engine of colonial exploration, but, as William West has noted with regard to Raleigh’s *Discoverie*, in the emerging capitalist economy of the period, the gold standard was becoming more intangible than previously, with bills of exchange increasingly standing in for the prior economic fact of gold as the material basis for valuation; Raleigh’s document acts, similarly and audaciously, as a credit note, replacing yet also signifying the very existence of Guiana’s precious metals by turning them into metaphors of themselves.⁶ Even Elizabeth played along with this trope. Anecdotally the flamboyant Raleigh, who had taken up the habit of pipe-smoking from the Virginians in order to promote tobacco, his new cash-crop, at court, offered to weigh his smoke for the queen (Hariot had proposed “uppowac” as a wonder-drug that could dry out rheums caused by the English climate and purge the melancholy humours⁷). By subtracting the weight of a pile of ash from that of an unsmoked pipe of tobacco, Raleigh won the response from Elizabeth that, though she had seen many men turn gold into smoke, he was the first she knew to turn smoke into gold: the insubstantiality of his colonial projects was thereby vindicated.⁸

Sidney goes on to make a further point about the potential of his contrived realities, which are to be accessed through literary form:

Neither let this be jestingly conceived, because the works of the one be essensiall, the other, in imitation or fiction: for any understanding knoweth that the skill of the Artificer standeth

⁵ Sidney, *Apologie*, p.5, p.8.

⁶ ‘Gold on Credit’.

⁷ Milton, *Big Chief Elizabeth*, pp.182-3.

⁸ *Ibid*, pp.185-7.

in that *Idea* or fore-conceite of the work, and not in the work it selfe. And that the Poet hath that *Idea*, is manifest, by delivering them forth in such excellencie as hee hath them. Which delivering forth also, is not wholie imaginative, as we are wont to say by them that build Castles in the ayre: but so farre substantially it worketh, not onely to make a *Cyrus*, which had been but a particuler excellencie as Nature might have done, but to bestow a *Cyrus* upon the world, to make many *Cyrus*'s, if they will learne alright why and how that Maker made him.⁹

The aim is not just fanciful, but moral, in that the reader should follow and learn from the creative rationale: in Sidney's model, Raleigh becomes the emblematic Renaissance man, since he was busily engaged in alchemising the imaginary into the real and valuable. Although it could not be openly talked about for reasons of diplomacy, the most plentiful gold during Elizabeth's reign was to be had by attacking Spanish treasure ships – the "journeys of picorie" to which Raleigh alludes at the start of his narrative, which enticed gentlemen adventurers to join his captains' numerous transatlantic voyages of exploration. Reality is thereby encoded in that glittering symbol of the golden city, which in the visionary writings of the Spanish *doradistas*, had appeared always as a day's march away, in a territory recently evacuated by Indian informers, just around the next bend of the river: not so much a phenomenon as an idea flaming, Charles Nicholl points out, "in people's minds... a vividly specified desire... a projection... this mingling of the psychological and the geographical"¹⁰: the fifth province, the pot of gold hidden at the rainbow's foot. The Elizabethan poet-courtier in Raleigh negotiates this subtle line between the brasen and the golden throughout the *Discoverie*. If we follow the curious insinuations of the word "gold" through the text, often appearing as if to signal a change of scene, like a beacon flashed to maintain the reader's attention, we find Raleigh to be every inch the poet: flaunting and displaying its gleam, he speaks directly to men's hearts of the finding of gold, utilising the strategies of classical myth (Midas, the Argonauts) and chivalric poetry (Spenser's dark briarful forest, into which the knight-errant must go blindly on behalf of some bizarrely named queen¹¹). For West,

⁹ *Apologie for Poesie*, p.9, referring to Cyrus the Great of Persia, whose exploits had been popularised by contemporary translators.

¹⁰ *The Creature in the Map*, pp.11-15.

¹¹ For the close relationship between the two poets, see HM's biographical

“the gap between language and the thing it describes is for Raleigh a space in which to play and to draw out hopes and desires into narratives... the space that lets him write”.¹² In the inflated register of Elizabethan courtly poetry – which could name an entire continent after the ‘Virgin Queen’ – the contested nature of Guiana’s riches (inscribed in the very language: “*El madre del oro*, as the Spaniards term them, which is the mother of gold, or as it is said by others the scum of gold,” or so Raleigh identifies the gleaming rocks of the Guianese landscape) was precisely its political usefulness.

The embers throw their shadow beyond regime-change, in the writings surrounding Raleigh’s tragic second voyage to Guiana in 1617. Within months of James I ascending the throne in 1603, Raleigh was put on trial, charged in the most overwrought terminology with treason, sedition and plotting a “Romish” takeover: “This horrible and detestible Traytor, this maine Traytor, this instigator and seducer to treasons, he that hath a Spanish heart, you are an odious man, see with what a whorish forehead he defends his faults: this is he that would take away the King and his Cubbs, O abominable Traytor,” and so forth.¹³ The charges would not stick, and instead of the agreed punishment, a fate so horrible that it makes contemporary accounts of the atrocities of ‘Canniballs’ pale into insignificance,¹⁴ Raleigh was imprisoned for thirteen years in the Tower of London before James sent him on another transatlantic

introduction to the Cassell edition of the *Discoverie*, p.9: “In 1589 he [Raleigh] was in Ireland making the first plantation of potatoes about his house at Youghal, and in friendly intercourse with Spenser, whom he brought to court in 1590, to present to Elizabeth the first three books of his *Faerie Queene*, which were then published in London.”

¹² ‘Gold on Credit’.

¹³ *The Arraignment and Conviction of Sir Walter Rawleigh*, pp.5-6. The bureaucratic Sir Robert Cecil, latterly, like his father Lord Burleigh, Elizabeth’s secretary of state, who connived with the other members of the Privy Council to deny Raleigh a fair hearing, was his erstwhile friend and a dedicatee of the present narrative.

¹⁴ “Sir Walter Rawleigh, you are to be conveyed to the place from whence you came, and from thence to the place of execution, and there to be hanged until you are halfe dead, and your members to be cut off, your bowels to be taken out, and cast into the fire before your face (you being yet alive) your head to be cut off, your quarters to be divided into foure parts, to be bestowed in foure severall places, and so (said my Lord Chiefe Justice) Lord have mercie on your soule.” – *The Arraignment and Conviction*, p.25. For the arguments that cannibalism was a cultural construct (as opposed to the practice of anthropophagy) made by Europe in her own image, see Barker, Hulme and Iversen, *Cannibalism and the Colonial World*.

mission. Again, no gold was found; instead, while Raleigh lay ill, anchored near Trinidad (pestilence having wiped out half his crew, including such useful characters as the surgeon, the sailmaker and the gold refiner¹⁵), an expedition inland broke James's express command not to jeopardise the entente with Spain and mounted an attack on the Spanish garrison at San Thomé. Raleigh's 23-year old son, Wat, was killed, shot through the throat; his lieutenant of many years, and the leader and diarist of the second Guiana voyage in 1596, Lawrence Keymis, committed suicide after bringing the news back to Raleigh's ship. A tract published by James, presumably to quash popular outrage at Raleigh's fate, suggests awareness of Elizabethan sophistry:

Hee fell upon an Enterprise of a golden Mine in Guiana. This proposition of his was presented and recommended to his Majestie... as a matter not in the Aire, or speculative, but reall, and of certainty, for that Sir Walter Raleigh had seene of the Oare of the Mine with his eyes, and tried the richnesse of it... In execution therefore of these his designs, Sir Walter Raleigh carrying the reputation of an active, wittie, and valiant Gentleman, and especially of a great Commander at sea, by the inticement of this golden baite of the mine, and the estimation of his owne name, drew unto him many brave Captaines, and other Knights and Gentlemen of great blood and worth, to hazard and adventure their lives, and the whole, or a great part of their estates and fortunes in this his Voyage: whole ruines and decayes following, remaine as sad and grievous reliques and monuments of his unfortunate journey, and unfaithfull proceedings.¹⁶

Even James, or his speechwriter, cannot resist the quip that "this Mine was not onely imaginary, but moveable."¹⁷ It is a cruel jibe, of the perennial type that the literal-minded make against

¹⁵ Raleigh's journal records his affliction: "I took a violent cold which cast me into a burning fever, than which never man endured any more violent nor never man suffered a more furious heat and an unquenchable drought. For the first twenty days I never received any sustenance, but now and then a stewed prune, but drank every hour day and night, and sweat so strongly as I changed my shirts thrice every day and thrice every night" (*Journal of the Second Voyage*, p.179).

¹⁶ *A Declaration of the demeanor and carriage of Sir Walter Raleigh*, p.3, p.27.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p.35. See also West's comment that "Raleigh tries to keep his works on Guiana within a purely discursive sphere, but he is tied to a referent, gold, that insistently comes back, or rather fails to come back, and so undermines his promises."

creative thinkers, and for his imaginative presumption, Raleigh was beheaded, on 29th October 1618, aged 66. He chose to face west, towards the Americas, explaining “So the heart be right, it is not matter which way the head lieth.”¹⁸ His dream of Guiana had come alive and consumed him.

Postcolonial criticism of travel narratives, following the lead of scholars such as Michel Foucault, Edward Said, Mary Pratt and Peter Hulme, views the alien ‘other’ as an ideological construct of the dominant metropolitan gaze. Eldred Jones writes, discussing “the mixture of fact and fiction which contributed to the African image in sixteenth-century England”, that there were “two sources of Englishmen’s knowledge of Africa in the sixteenth century – the tales of the ancients as popularised by translations, and the contemporary accounts of sailors who had themselves seen Africa.”¹⁹ One could add that Raleigh’s new world was scarcely better served, since even the contemporary accounts needed translating from the Spanish. The more extreme forms of exoticism which occur during the *Discoverie* – Amazons, cannibals, men with no heads and their eyes growing from their chests, the Inca rituals where powdered gold is blown through pipes onto the Indians’ lubricated bodies – are invariably drawn from secondary sources: they draw credit on Spanish, or occasionally Indian travellers’, accounts. Such licence with the truth was typical of travel writing in the period. Richard Eden’s *The Decades of the New World*, for example,²⁰ appended two African voyages (Thomas Windham’s to Guinea in 1553 and John Lok’s to Mina the following year) to the tale of Spanish conquests in “the west ocean”; Eden then included his own elaborations, the more fanciful parts drawn directly from Pliny’s Latin and from the medieval forgery of Prester John. As Jones puts it:

The description of this part of Africa, the first in the English language, is quite reasonable for the period. Lacking similar knowledge for the interior parts of Africa, however, Eden falls back on less authentic sources... The facility with which he lapses into older beliefs in the face of first-hand evidence shows the tenacity of the old fictions, even in the mind of a geographical writer.²¹

¹⁸ Milton, *Big Chief Elizabeth*, p.391.

¹⁹ *Othello’s Countrymen*, p.1

²⁰ His 1555 translation of Peter Martyr’s *De Orbo Novo Decades*.

²¹ *Othello’s Countrymen*, pp.9-11.

The same could equally be said of Raleigh and Guiana. Thus Nicholl uses the conceit of a creature living in Raleigh's map; a creature which, though it does not look very much like the Orinoco River (for one major irony, in this mode, is that Raleigh scarcely enters present-day Guyana at all, except for its eastern highlands, remaining throughout the *Discoverie* in what is now Venezuela), could be interpreted as a wriggling, many-legged animal (signifying the exotic, with hints of water-borne diseases), a root vegetable (for planting), a vagina (first penetration of the virgin rainforests), and doubtless other such imagery – the point being the slippery nature of the discourse, and not the contents of the map at all. When recent Guianese writers depict their country as being “shaped like a puppy lying on its left side, with the profile of a limp ear, and paws drawn to his body... Scamp, Benji's treasure and companion, long missing, presumed drowned or stolen by a passing vagrant for its value, having the most unusual emerald-green eyes... no other place names, just a smoothly crayoned spread of Scamp-eyed green, signifying jungle,”²² or as “an eel and a frog-fish who lived together in a dark hole near the river-mouth”²³, they are being true to Raleigh's poetics. Guianese literature came into existence through Raleigh, “his ardor and faith... hardly cooled by actual observation,” as Thoreau has it, “[...] most fatally deceived... by the strength and candor no less than the weakness of his nature, for, generally speaking, such things are not to be disbelieved as task our imaginations to conceive of, but such rather as are too easily embraced by the understanding.”²⁴

For Nicholl, Raleigh's attitudes towards Amerindians are symptomatic of a rhetoric of exploitation; there are lacunae in the narrative, often at the moments where violence would normally be expected, such as the interrogation of Governor Berreo (figured here as a jovial dinner-date) and various moments of first contact with Indian tribes: “The harsher, more military aspects of Raleigh's *entrada* are suppressed in favour of this more idealized exploration: one based on admiration and understanding, respect and restraint.”²⁵ At times the eye blinks,

²² Dabydeen, *Our Lady of Demerara*.

²³ Samaroo, ‘Orinooko and Amazon’; see also Dabydeen, ‘Samaroo's *Tempus Est*’ for details of that writer's Surrealist re-creation of *The Tempest*, written in protest against Guianese deforestation in the 1920s.

²⁴ Op. cit.

²⁵ *The Creature in the Map*, p.181. It should also be noted that in the 1617 voyage,

and we glimpse it to be blue – the courtship rituals of the Amazons, for example, are Englishified into Valentine’s Day revels (p.53 of this edition). Having said this, the information Raleigh gives about the range and alliances of different tribal groups in the *Discoverie* is surprisingly detailed, and his code of conduct towards the Amerindians,

I protest before the Majestie of the living God, that I neither know nor believe, that any of our company, one or other, did offer insult to any of their women... I suffered not any man to take from any of the nations so much as a pina or a potato root without giving them contentment, nor any man so much as to offer to touch any of their wives and daughters... I caused my Indian interpreter at every place when we departed, to know of the loss or wrong done, and if aught were stolen or taken by violence, either the same was restored, and the party punished in their sight, or else was paid for to their uttermost demand,

is modelled in deliberate contrast to Spanish practices in the West Indies, as exposed in Bartolomé de Las Casas’ *Brevísima Relación de la Destrucción de las Indias*.²⁶ Although Nicholl disputes the sincerity (“Thus the chaste knight Sir Walter spreads the cult of the Virgin Queen among the ‘borderers’ of Guiana”²⁷), it is also possible that adherence to an entente cordiale with Guiana’s tribes may indeed have been a tactical necessity in order to outwit the Spanish in the region. Readers may make their own minds up, but we must also mention Alden Vaughan’s fascinating research into the twenty-odd American natives (around six from Roanoke and the Chesapeake and at least twelve from Guiana and Trinidad) “who crossed the Atlantic between 1584 and 1618 under the direct or indirect aegis of Sir Walter Raleigh.”²⁸ With regard to the Guianese, Vaughan

once the first garbled news has arrived of the San Thomé fiasco, Raleigh’s journal records his use of strong-arm tactics such as transporting Indians “fastened and well-bound” and threatening them with hanging (‘Journal of the Second Voyage’, pp.191-2).

²⁶ 1542, translated as *The Spanische Colonie*, 1583 (see Milton, pp.50-52). Ironically Las Casas, Bishop of Chiapas, a Dominican priest who in this and other works proposed ‘liberating’ the Indians from slavery, advocated a corresponding increase in the African slave trade, to compensate for the loss of colonial labour.

²⁷ *The Creature in the Map*, p.165.

²⁸ ‘Sir Walter Raleigh’s Indian Interpreters’, p.341. The figure does not include the second wave of migrants, Princess Pocahontas being the most famous, which began when the Virginia Company founded Jamestown in 1607, but only those who travelled with Raleigh and his captains.

reads the “swap” of Topiawari’s son, Cayowaroco, with Francis Sparrow and Hugh Goodwin (p.94 of this edition) as an intercultural project, and points out that at least five other Indians travelled to England with Raleigh following the *Discoverie*: one, John Provost of Trinidad, who returned to Guiana with Keymis in 1596, went on to cross the Atlantic four times, since he had lived with John Gilbert (Raleigh’s nephew) for “many yeeres” before greeting Robert Harcourt’s 1609 Orinoco expedition;²⁹ another, Anthony Canabre, lived in England for the entire fourteen-year period.³⁰ Cayowaroco also returned to Guiana in 1596, following news of his father’s death, probably alongside his countrymen “Henry our Indian interpreter” and the brothers William and Leonard Ragapo on Leonard Berry’s ship (also funded by Raleigh)³¹. Keymis records that Provost persuaded more of his compatriots to travel to London in 1596; Charles Leigh, attempting to settle the first colony up the Orinoco in 1604-5, sent a further five Indians back to London (though some may have been returnees). One of these, returning with Harcourt, went under the name “Martyn”³² – likely the same “Martynes the Arwacan” who had acted as Raleigh’s pilot in the present narrative.

Raleigh, writes Vaughan, therefore “influenced, by his example and advice, their training and subsequent involvement in English colonization. With essential aid from his ships’ captains and especially from Hariot, Raleigh was primarily responsible for a generation of eastward migration and its considerable contribution to the transatlantic world.”³³ The consequences for theories of acculturation and hybridity have been little discussed, but Raleigh created a significant Guianese presence in London, complementing that of the more high-profile Indians from North America such as Manteo and Pocahontas; the later planting of colonies was made possible by these educated, transatlantic voyagers, Trinculo’s comment that the English public would rather lay out ten doits to see a dead Indian than give one to a lame beggar being slightly wide of the mark.³⁴ The process had been inspired by Hariot, who back in

²⁹ Ibid, p.363.

³⁰ Ibid, p.367.

³¹ Ibid, p.364.

³² Ibid, p.367.

³³ Ibid, p.344.

³⁴ In *The Tempest*, II.iii.

the days of settling Virginia had invented a new alphabet for the purpose of learning the local languages; in *A briefe and true report of the new found land of Virginia* he discussed in detail the social structures and religious beliefs of the tribes around Roanoke Island:

These their opinions I have set downe the more at large that it may appeare unto you that there is good hope they may be brought through discreet dealing and governement to the imbracing of the trueth, and consequently to honour, obey, feare and love us.

The different pull of those verbs – “honour, obey, feare and love” – indisputably sets out the paradoxes in Raleigh’s idiosyncratic brand of colonisation; yet it is also worth noting that “love” and “honour” seem to have outweighed the negatives. One Guianese Indian, Harry the Cazique of Caliana, lived for two years with Raleigh in the Tower;³⁵ another, Christopher Guayacunda, rescued during the sack of San Thomé, was among the crowd watching at his execution;³⁶ and as Keymis and Young Walter prepared to storm San Thomé in 1617, Raleigh lay in his ship being nursed back to health on cassava bread, roasted mullet and armadillo by Indians who remembered him from England nearly twenty years earlier: a surprising human detail to the story which suggests that, in Guiana at least, Raleigh erred less towards the ancestral murderer and more towards the poet.

JONATHAN MORLEY
Coventry, March 2008

³⁵ Raleigh, ‘Journal of the Second Voyage’, pp.180-1.

³⁶ Vaughan, p.368.

