

ABSTRACT

Squaring De Rock: A Socio-Cultural Examination of Fraternal Organisations in Barbados

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A study of the cultural phenomenon, fraternal organisations (Lodges), can narrate the many histories of Barbados: social, women's, gender, cultural and maritime. This dissertation unearths this cultural practice, its relation to power and how the development of this socio-cultural activity can relate to the shifting social forces of class, colour, status, gender, and race. The primary focus is on the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries but some references are made to the twentieth and twenty-first century context and to the case of other Anglophone Caribbean territories.

In this socio-cultural examination of fraternal organisations, it is noted that fraternal groups such as Freemasonry from England, Ireland and Scotland, functioned as an arm of the colonialist enterprise. Transplanted in the former colonies of the British Empire, some Lodges adapted to the societal norms and became spaces, which contributed to the creation of the Other. The struggles of the Other, that is, marginalised men and women, to belong and be accorded equal rights in Lodges over time are discussed.

In providing a socio-cultural analysis of these organisations, quantitative and qualitative research strategies have been employed in offering an understanding of the fluidity of identities that were created, embraced, and contested within the realm of fraternal organisations in Barbados.

Key words: fraternal organisations, Freemasonry, space, place, the Other.