CALIBAN'S VICTORIAN CHILDREN: RACIAL NEGOTIATIONS FROM EMANCIPATION TO JUBILEE

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the various discursive expressions of black agency that formed the stereotypical representations of African descendants found in Victorian racial discourse. It is, therefore, an analysis of the discursive practices of peoples of African descent and not of the actual stereotypes frequently associated with Victorian racial discourse. I believe that a close reading and analysis of the discursive practices of peoples of African descent subject to British influence will offer a more focused and contextualized narrative of the fantasies that plagued the British imagination well into the twentieth century. This study also suggests that we start looking at Victorian racial discourse as an active dialogue and conversation with the Other, rather than a description of the psychology of power.

DEDICATION

For Adrienne, always

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It is difficult to fully express the gratitude I feel toward the scholars who served as committee members. I will give it a try. I am very grateful for all of the encouragement and support I have received from my dissertation chair and advisor, Dr. Peter Logan. His insistence on focused contextualization (a process I have yet to master) directed me from the moment of conceptualization to the final act of composition. His guidance has been invaluable and greatly appreciated. I am also thankful for my committee members at Temple University: Professors Joyce Joyce, Sally Mitchell and Lewis Gordon. It was the questions they asked, and the diverse insights these amazing scholars expressed, during the early stages that actually supplied the building blocks for this dissertation. My outside reader, Dr. Ben Talton, was always able to direct me toward the most unexpected sources. I have benefitted greatly from our brief in transit conversations. I must also acknowledge my most heart-felt appreciation to Sharon Logan and Belinda Wilson. Without the help of these two gladiators of the graduate department, my years at Temple University would not have been pleasant and very little would have been submitted on time. Finally, my warmest appreciation is extended to my wife, Adrienne Paxton. During every step of this long and grueling process, she gave me the strength to carry on.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

ABSTRACT iii

DEDICATION iv

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS v

TABLE OF CONTENTS vi

INTRODUCTION vii

1 CARLYLE'S QUASHEE, DICKENS'S (IG)NOBLE SAVAGE, AND THE BIRTH OF CALIBAN'S VICTORIAN CHILDREN 1

2 AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NEGOTIATIONS IN THE *WONDERFUL ADVENTURES OF MRS. SEACOLE IN MANY LANDS* 43

3 ROBERT CAMPBELL AND THE DISCURSIVE ECOLOGY OF AFRICAN SPACE 94

4 EDWARD W. BLYDEN'S PROVIDENCE AND THE EMPIRE OF THE MELANIN IMAGINATION 130

5 BY WAY OF CONCLUSION, J.J. THOMAS AND THE FROUDACITY OF THE MYTH OF HAITI 173

BIBLIOGRAPHY 208

INTRODUCTION

CALIBAN'S VCITORIAN CHILDREN: RACIAL NEGOTIATIONS FROM EMANCIPATION TO JUBILEE

The idea for this project grew out of a slight dissatisfaction with much of the literary scholarship done on the racialized representations of peoples of African descent. In much of this scholarship, critics have not only overlooked the discursive influence of the counter-voice, those who argued against established policy and popular representations, but there is hardly any mention of an Africanist reaction to the racial discourse of the nineteenth-century. Many critics of Victorian literary production merely treat the African as an object on whom fixed and atavistic images and tendencies were projected onto. Although great and useful work has come out of the research and interpretations of the Victorian gaze vis-à-vis the African, the danger I perceive in these approaches is that they may suggest that all of Victorian England spoke with one voice in regards to the destiny and condition of contemporary blacks. Furthermore, the present state of this branch of Victorian scholarship suggests that black writing and black lives had no effect on the transformations of racial representations. Regardless of some of the brilliant insights Victorian scholarship has revealed to us, it still seems to reiterate the erroneous suspicion that there were no Africans or West Indians present to intellectually, artistically and politically challenge contemporary notions of blackness and articulate their desire to represent themselves.

In regards to subjects categorized as members of the African race, most of the recent Victorian literary scholarship has been limited and thematic. That is, the concerns of the critics have consistently revolved around gothic imagery, race displaced to

highlight feminist cultural desires, slavery and the literary responses to slavery, the influences of the natural sciences on racial representations in literature, and the ideological imperatives of imperialism and Empire. For example, in *Rules of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914*, Patrick Brantlinger chronicles and analyzes the ways Victorian anthropology, travel writing and popular fiction formed racialized thinking. He even mentions the Morant Bay Rebellion (1865) and the contemporary responses to conflict in the West Indies but, even in this great work of Victorian scholarship, the critical rationale for the rebellion and how it may have influenced black discursive practices goes ignored. Nor are the conflicts alluded to in the West Indies or India fully analyzed in terms of acts of agency and self-representation. H.L. Malchow's *Gothic Images of Race in Nineteenth-Century Britain* takes a loosely psychoanalytic approach that non-Europeans were projections of British anxieties and used as rationalizations for and instruments of its economic and political power. He goes on to show how the language of the gothic appropriated imagined characteristics of the Other to construct evil and fictionalized monsters. How these gothic constructions affected the Other remains elusive. Susan Myer, in *Imperialism at home: Race and Victorian Woman's Fiction*, employs race as a metaphor for the condition of the Victorian woman. Therefore, her study is more about the lived existence of the Victorian woman, thus suggesting that race and the lives of non-Westerners were perceived, by the women writers in her study, as nothing more than literary devices. Although Jennifer Devere Brody, in her *Impossible Purities: Blackness, Femininity, and Victorian Culture*, brilliantly unpacks the stigma of contamination projected onto the Creole and mulatto woman, the details of Mary Seacole's discursive strategy never really takes the stage. Two

other recent studies seem to merely synthesize the seminal work done by the four major scholars mentioned in this paragraph. For instance, in *Deciphering Race: White Anxiety, Racial Conflict, and the Turn to Fiction in Mid-Victorian Prose*, Laura Callanan argues that racial encounters caused Victorian writers to turn to the aesthetics in attempts to make sense of themselves and the racial Other. And in *White Skins/Black Masks: Representations and Colonialism*, Gail Ching-Liang Low, clearly playing on the title of Franz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* as well as Fanon's assertion that the black man's soul is the white man's artifact, addresses the power of imperial myth-making in the works of Haggard and Kipling. The object of her study is the psychic investment of colonial fantasy. Although these studies, and many others, give some illuminating insights into the psychology of racial dominance, our representations of this discourse is clearly limited and incomplete. What is lacking, or dismissed, is the voice of the subject of this discourse. This voice, I argue, was very active in the debates about race.Moreover, black writing and black people, especially in the second half of the nineteenth-century, influenced the representations of peoples of African descent.

The aim of this essay is not merely to place the nineteenth-century African and West Indian writers and intellectuals in the racial debates of the times. More specifically, it is to position the sundry Africanist responses as forms of literary and cultural criticism that individually, collectively and strategically engaged the sources that informed the racialized representations found in the Victorian novel and challenged the issues coded in Victorian literary products. Standing in the wings, and frequently taking center stage, of my analysis of the black presence in Victorian racial discourse is the image of the Caliban. I will be arguing that at the end of the 1840s and the beginning of the 1850s the

image of the Noble Savage was supplanted by a more sinister African figure, and that this figure shares all of the qualities invented for *it* in William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Although Victorians, black and white, do not mention Caliban in colonial and racial debates (the one exception seems to be Daniel Wilson's *Caliban: The Missing Link* (1873)), the attributes of Caliban were the raw materials of political and scientific discussion. These allusions to Caliban in my study are influenced by my reading of Paget Henry's *Caliban's Reason: Introducing Afro-Caribbean Philosophy*. In *Caliban's Reason,* Henry argues that the writings of nineteenth-century Afro-British subjects should be seen as "attempts at destroying Euro-Caribbean hegemony through the delegitmating of their colonial projects" (3). These colonial projects were the constraints imposed by colonial rule as well as temporal ramifications of racialized representation. Therefore, the literary product of the black Victorian writer consciously sought to undermine traditional conceptions of the African which produced what Henry calls "discursive deviations" (3). These discursive deviations functioned not only as criticisms of British power, but they are also always representations of the self that consciously positioned to challenge racial stereotypes and British textual reality and authority. Moreover, these writers disrupt contemporary understandings of the Other by presenting to the individual consciousness of individual readers capabilities denied and masked in Shakespeare's creation: reason, intellect, compassion, humanity, and agency.

In *Logics of History: Social Theory and Social Transformation*, William Sewell reminds us to always be mindful of the fact that documents are produced by agents. He emphasized the importance of recognizing the human subject as an agent, rather than an inert stock character as we usually do in our critical treatment of the Other. Agents

recognize that they are human beings and, however destitute and oppressed, conceive of themselves as "*empowered* by access to resources of one kind or another" (133). According to Sewell, "[t]o be an agent means to be capable of exerting some degree of control over the social relations in which one is enmeshed, which in turn implies the ability to transform those social relations to some degree"(143). This suggests that "agency arises from the actor's knowledge of schemas, which means the ability to apply them to new contexts" (143). Forms of agency not only vary and are culturally and historically determined, but an act of agency is always a social and conscious act. In this study I will explore and analyze the discursive practices of various black nineteenth century cultural actors and communities to Victorian racial discourse. The various individual and collective discursive strategies are also addressed.

CHAPTER ONE

CARLYLE'S QUASHEE, DICKENS'S (IG)NOBLE SAVAGE, AND THE BIRTH OF CALIBN'S VICTORIAN CHILDREN

INTRODUCING CALIBAN'S VICTORIAN CHILDREN

Between 1849 and 1853, Thomas Carlyle and Charles Dickens set into motion discursive strategies that contributed to the eventual destruction of one legendary racial trope and replaced it with another. These discursive maneuvers were in response to their individual and culturally biased misreadings of the language of agency manifested in the movements and behavior patterns in the British West Indies of England's ex-slave population. Although they were responding to different racial relations, they both were able to make problematic the social acceptance of what was loosely regarded as a prototypical Noble Savage for a more diabolical and grotesque racialized figuration that resembled characteristics attributed to Shakespeare's Caliban. Relying on their literary and cultural credentials as capital, Carlyle and Dickens created for the Victorian reader a template of the African that survived the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. It is this dangerous and "diabolical" African figuration that occupied the British imagination after the abolition of slavery in the British West Indies in 1834. The characteristics Carlyle and Dickens painted onto this African figure functioned as the lens through which the racial Other was to remain contained. That is, the racial paradigm both writers participated in creating made it imperative for the British to limit the agency of the African, and to have African agency directed to fulfill England's material and ideological desires. Furthermore, their representations of black agency were rendered as modes of behavior and thought that could only do harm to the Victorian community. Although other commentators participated in the construction of this new (or rehashed) racial trope, the productions of Carlyle and Dickens revealed the broader cultural ramifications implicit in

Victorian racialist thinking.

The discursive representations of Carlyle, Dickens, and many other observers of the West Indian scene were, in fact, responses to a language peculiar to the newly evolved black British subjects after emancipation. This particular language manifested by the ex-slave took the form of a critique of British character as well as a very loudly heard non-verbal statement of black desire. Since all racial discourse is about relationships, the non-verbal critique behaviorally articulated through the former British slave not only actively opposed the expectations made clear through Victorian racial discourse, but they also gave voice to what they themselves expected and anticipated about future relationships with the Anglo-West Indian community. The behavior patterns and trends that concerned the Victorian observer at mid-century were, in fact, acts of agency that challenged traditional relationships of power between whites and blacks initiated during the contact zone. These acts of agency, I argue, can be interpreted and should be interpreted as a nonverbal language which represents a critique of the dominant race. The importance of recognizing post-emancipation black agency as language is central, because at this point in black British discourse action was the only and the most noticeable equivalent to a discursive strategy they had at their disposal. The vast majority of ex-slaves were unable to write. Moreover, it was the manifestation of agency that the likes of Carlyle and Dickens translated into the language of innate inferiority and essential difference. These acts of black agency, wherever they appeared, challenged and questioned the racial hierarchy accepted by many Victorians and problematized what the British imagined as the appropriate parameters of interracial interaction.

This anxiety-inspiring figure of African descent replaced what was loosely bantered about early in the nineteenth century as derivative of the Noble Savage. A high point in the Victorians' discussion of the Noble Savage may have surfaced in 1852-53

with the British reception of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin.* We will, however, later discuss the significance of Stowe's *Uncle Tom* through our analysis of Dickens's place in mid-nineteenth century racial discourse. The disposition and characteristics of the Noble Savage as a racial paradigm are important to our understanding of the trajectory of the transformations that occurred during this period. The idea of the Noble Savage adopted by the Victorians is derivative of Rousseau's man in a state of nature paradigm. Though Rousseau himself never uses the term Noble Savage, his contribution of the primitive and savage is foundational. According to Hoxie Neale Fairchild, who seems to employ an eighteenth century and early nineteenth century definition derived from Rousseau's man in a state of nature, "a Noble Savage is any free and wild being who draws directly from nature virtues which raises doubts as to the value of civilization"(2). The Noble Savage, however, is problematic because it was aEuropean cultural invention designed to humanize and provide a discursive vehicle in which the non-European native was able to enter the fold of humanity. Still, the nature of its creation placed it in important ways spiritually above its creator. For here was a creation free of the corruption contemporary man had acquired as a result of his advancement up the ladder of progress. By the mid-nineteenth century, many Victorians saw that this pedestal was unacceptable because it made the dynamics and conditions of domination problematic. Placement onto this imaginative pedestal had the potential of modifying what may have been perceived as the inhumane treatment of natives and calling into question the enslavement of Africans. It also meant that the racial other, the African and Indian, were capable of progress similar to that of Europeans. Such positions destabilized the assumption that racial superiority was essential. Since the discovery of the New World, it was generally argued that native populations had virtuous and noble qualities that ought to be nurtured. It was believed that Christianity was to be introduced for the

benefit of non-European populations and for humanity at large. The protection, nurturing and development of the Noble Savage were, then, an evangelical's dream and the putative motive behind England's civilizing mission. In *The Myth of the Noble Savage*, Ter Ellingson identifies three primary and broad characteristics that constituted a Noble Savage: (1) it posited an essentialist vision of the "savage" as being "noble by nature" (2) this nobility, in general, was ascribed to the entire "nation" or "race." And finally,(3) the "Noble Savage" was imagined as being more innocent and morally superior to the European (46). This means that many proponents of the Noble Savage trope argued that native peoples could be elevated to the level of Western civilization, if placed under the guardianship of Western instructors. Capability and capacity for progress, therefore, placed the non-European within the fold of humanity as well as made his welfare a matter of Christian responsibility. But because of the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804) which established the first black republic, the outlawing of the Atlantic Slave trade in 1807, the abolition of slavery in British territories in 1834, and the end of apprenticeship in 1837, the character of the African as Noble Savage came under aggressive scrutiny and, by mid-century, discredited and replaced by a racial trope whose humanity and capacity for the imperatives of progress were questioned. These historical moments in the Caribbean served to loosen European control over a once servant race, threaten racial dynamics originally established during the contact zone, and imposed restrictions on the once superior group while it contributed to the autonomy and sense of personhood to the once socially dead. In other words, the historical anxieties accompanying loss of authority contributed to the reification of a racial type to position as the cause of concern.

I call the figure that Carlyle and Dickens bring into being the "Victorian Caliban," and he is based on the character created by William Shakespeare in *The Tempest*. As suggested above, at the end of the 1840s and by the middle of the 1850s the Noble

Savage paradigm was supplanted by this much more threatening and less problematic African stereotype. This particular racial figuration possessed all the monstrous qualities invented for him by Shakespeare. In the original play, Caliban is all but grateful for what his master and self-appointed benefactor Prospero has bestowed. As Caliban says in the first act of *The Tempest*, "You taught me language; and my profit on't/ Is, I know how to curse. The red plague rid you/ For learning me your language!" (1.2.365-67). Obedience and servitude are elements of the language Caliban was taught and it was this language he cursed. It is the same language Carlyle and Dickens thought desirable to have imprinted onto the African's obstinate personality and limited intellect. In the play, Caliban's appropriation of Prospero's gifts takes the form of threats and curses. Caliban, then, is ungrateful for all that has been done for its benefit and enlightenment. Shakespeare's Caliban displays the same kind of imagined ingratitude attributed to the newly manumitted slaves after 1834 who refused to work for their betters in the British West Indies. In the reality of Shakespeare's play, curses, lewdness, barbarism and deception characterize the formless brute. In varying degrees, even by the professed friends of the Negro, similar characterizations filled the pages of Victorian racial discourse in regards to peoples of African descent.

Although neither Carlyle nor Dickens credited *The Tempest* as the Ur-text of their mid-nineteenth century invention, the relationship between Caliban and Prospero in Shakespeare's allegory was a mirror of Victorian racial desires and political anxieties. The peoples of African descent, like the fictive Caliban, were symbols of a historically barbaric world that needed, for the sake of civilization and for the sake of non-European native populations, to be tamed and taught the essentials of progress. For Victorians, the will to subdue and regulate nature geographically and within man was of moral, theological and political importance. In *Caliban's Reason*, Paget Henry notices that *The*

Tempest" dramaticized the new vision of existence as the global conquest of nature and history. To imperial Prospero, native Caliban (the Carib) was identical with nature -- a cannibal, a child, a monster without language, and hence a potential slave to be subdued and domesticated along with nature and history" (4). By mid-century, the Victorian practitioners of racial representation took it as a given that people of African descent were inferior children of nature and, even after sustained contact with the West, subject to lapses into barbarism, laziness and insolence. Many Victorians attributed these moral lapses and imagined signs of regression as the result of emancipation. Because these particular imaginary qualities generated in the African behaviors constantly at odds with British commercial desires, the idea of a Noble Savage was erased almost overnight. In chapter four of this study, in which we address Edward Wilmot Blyden, we also see that even the attitudes of many English missionaries had generated an image of African character that did not resemble the noble type. According to Douglass Lorimer, these representational shifts were because "[t]he British rarely found that their schemes for black advancement fulfilled their exaggerated expectations and, rather than question their own vision, they revived the question of the Negro's racial inheritance and often found it wanting" (60). The African, according to the narrative attached to this new racial type, was constitutionally incapable of progress or participating in ascribed modes of behavior agreeable to the maintenance of civilization. Even the most liberal of racialist commentators dismissed the Africans' present condition (which for some appeared to be frustratingly fixed, natural and eternal) as unsuitable for the exigencies of civilization. In short, very few actually argued (or were ready to argue other than as a possibility in the remote future) that the African had arrived at the point where he could make use of and profit from what he had learned from his former masters and philanthropic benefactors.

Paradoxically, the mid-nineteenth century stereotype of the black West Indian

was the result of Emancipation and his appropriation of the strange new condition called freedom. That is, emancipation made it theoretically possible for members of the historically servant race to not merely engage their former masters as equals but to also determine the conditions of their relationship. Therefore, the ex-slave now felt he or she had control over their anatomy and autonomy, which in the British West Indies translated into deciding on the type of work they would do, the wages they would accept, and (of major importance to planters and former masters) the times of year and the conditions in which that work could and would get done. Without the fear of corporal punishment, the ex-slave was able to exercise what he perceived as autonomy and independence. In other words: while Caliban now saw himself as an agent and adopted British subject, the British descendants of Prospero imagined a recalcitrant and savage child unwilling and incapable of fulfilling a role they perceived as essential for the enrichment of the community. This attitude of the former slave, many planters and observers of the West Indian scene argued, was not conducive to the material progress that the optimistic architects of emancipation had anticipated. Because emancipation did not produce the kind of fruits observers had hoped for, attempts to explain what was perceived as the failure of the emancipation experiment came in the form of stereotypes about the nature and capacities of former slaves. These stereotypes of the black West Indian were created to explain current conditions and black behavior patterns. But since investigations were restricted to the post-emancipated black subject's failure to improve the material and emotional conditions of his former masters, rather than analyzing what blacks were doing for themselves in a language conducive to looking for signs of progress rather than retrogression, these stereotypes were successful in masking and distorting character traits blacks were reported to not have yet acquired. This discursive mask was generated through preconceived economic, political and cultural scripts about the nature of what it

meant to be a responsible and independent British subject. Generally, within these cultural scripts was the idea that certain free and independent subjects had a function, and (because historically the color of their skin had in the imaginations of the British associated blacks with slavery and subservience) the peoples of African descent were expected to continue playing the same but (because they were free from force and received a salary) modified role. The critics of emancipation saw the ex-slave's appropriation of freedom as cultural and moral deviations from their script, and therefore a danger to the economic well-being of the West Indies. According to Frederick Cooper, it was in "the nonconformity of the former slaves to imperial notions [that] shaped the subsequent coding of their behavior in racial terms and the defining of them as outside the bounds of 'citizen'" (9-10). In this period of crisis and change, the Victorians used "rhetorical tropes" that "must be understood as more than merely literary and philosophical; they are the tropes that come into play with establishment and maintenance of colonial authority, or, as sometimes happens, those that register the loss of such authority" (3). Through contextualizing these stereotypes, as well as many of the humorous and not so flattering anecdotes circulating about the former slave, the nature and function of Victorian racial representation is revealed. We, in short, will see that the Quashee's "pumpkin," innate laziness and unwillingness to do the work required for generating the wealth of former masters, as reported throughout the post-emancipation era by many of Britain's most credible and respectable literary talents, were actually strategically masking productive acts of black agency.

Therefore, the stereotyping processes that Carlyle and Dickens participated in with the fervor of a "moral panic," however unorchestrated formally, were attempts to reassemble historical racial roles. By "moral panic" I mean "[a] condition, episode, person or group of persons emerged to become defined as a threat to societal values and

interests; its nature is presented in a stylized and stereotypical fashion by the mass media; the moral barricades are manned by editors, bishops, politicians and other right thinking people" (Thompson 7). As a result of this moral panic, the form of stereotyping practiced by many mid-century Victorians was, in the words of Stuart Hall, "part of the maintenance of social and symbolic order. It sets up a symbolic frontier between the 'normal' and the 'pathological,' the 'acceptable' and the 'unacceptable', what belongs and what does not or is 'Other,' between 'insiders' and 'outsiders', Us and Them. It facilitates the 'binding' or bonding together of all of Us who are 'normal' into one 'imagined community'; and it sends into symbolic exile all of Them - 'the Others' - who are in some way different - 'beyond the pale'" ("The Spectacle" 258).

This discursive masking successfully disguised the realization that many former slaves had their own concept of self and the desire to cultivate their own vision of social space. This new social space, to a great extent a response to the abuses slaves had experienced under slavery and apprenticeship, proved itself to be independent of the influence of planters, policymakers and, in some cases, missionaries. According to Thomas Holt, "there was the quiet reality of the ex-slave's refusal to follow the script envisioned by either planters or policymakers. While planters preferred coercion, and policymakers voluntary wage labor neither accepted the right of the freed people to choose an alternative path" (xxiii). Charles Taylor calls the vision of this space, or what Holt calls an "alternate path," the "social Imaginary." By the social imaginary Taylor "means something much broader and deeper than the intellectual schemes people may entertain when they think about social reality in a disengaged mode" (23). It is "the ways people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images that underlie these expectations" (23).

By consciously pursuing their own social space, and acting on their own social imaginary, the emancipated black became a historical agent. "To be an agent," writes William Sewell, "means to be capable of exerting some degree of control over the social relations in which one is enmeshed, which in turn implies the ability to transform those relations to some degree" (143). According to Mustafa Emirbayer and Ann Mische, agency is "a temporally constructed engagement by actors of different structural environments -- the temporal-relational contexts of action -- which, through the interplay of habit, imagination and judgment, both reproduces and transforms those structures in interactive response to the problems posed by changing historical situations" (970-71). Although no written narrative from the black British subjects during this crucial period exists, we can still analyze their actions against what was being written about them to see that the conflict between the ex-slave and the ruling classes was that both had contrary expectations and visions of what this new relationship entailed. In other words, two ideas of how to *use one's freedom*, and not freedom per se, were at work and in conflict with one another. For one, a vision of autonomy free from the whip, the treadmill, forced servitude, insults and the unpredictable whims of another. For the other, however, a relationship that required and demanded from his erstwhile "property" servitude and submission to traditional work and social relationships. For this latter group, the planter class and for their sympathizers in England, a racial hierarchy was expected to remain intact for this new mode of existence to function properly and to be considered acceptable.

1

THOMAS CARLYLE FROM “THE NEGRO QUESTION” (1849) TO “THE NIGGER QUESTION” (1853)

In “Occasional Discourse on the Negro Question,” which originally appeared in

Fraser's Magazine in December 1849, Thomas Carlyle passionately expressed his unpopular positions that 1) blacks should be compelled to work, 2) the emancipation of former slaves in the British West Indies was deleterious to blacks, whites, the future of the region and 3) that present conditions threatened the natural and traditional racial hierarchy. Perhaps in response to his critics, it was later revised and in 1853 was reprinted and positioned as the "precursor" to his collection of essays called *Latter-Day Pamphlets*. The revised essay was given an additional twenty-three paragraphs and a slightly altered title: "Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question."Carlyle, whom David Levy calls "the theorist of hierarchical obedience" (45), certainly had enemies on Victorian England's discursive battlefield. That is because there was no room in Carlyle's cosmos for Liberal reforms, the rhetoric of the rights of man, and he definitely had no space in his consciousness for the consideration of the rights of blacks. With religious zeal, he believed that civilization was held together because of the Master/Man relationship, and that the ending of such a relationship leads to the type of chaotic society in which no one knows his place and where man does not respect man. As far as the legal rights of blacks in British West Indies were concerned, Carlyle envisioned the murderous pandemonium of a new Haiti, with "black Peter exterminating black Paul, and where a garden of the Hesperides might be, nothing but a tropical dog-kennel and pestiferous jungle" (675). However controversial, Carlyle greatly influenced Victorian thought and, even after the circulation of the unpopular comments in “Occasional Discourse,” a far from disinterested following. Catherine Hall says that the unpopular and backward-looking comments in “Occasional Discourse” were the expression of “words that others would not speak” (349). At his most absurd, Carlyle’s enemies recognized that he was a literary force whose influence on the minds of contemporaries at home and abroad needed to be taken seriously. John Stuart Mill, in his offensive against the views

expressed in “Occasional Discourse,” sheds light on the weight of Carlyle’s opinions when he writes that “[t]he words of writers of celebrity are words of power on the other side of the ocean” (31). According to Mill, “Circulated as [Carlyle’s] dissertation will probably be, by those whose interest profit by it, from one end of the American Union to the other, I hardly know of an act by which one person could have done so much mischief as this may possibly do; and I hold that by thus acting, he has made himself an instrument of what an able writer of the *Inquirer* justly calls ‘a true work of the devil’” (31). As an indication of Carlyle’s influence on the Victorians, George Eliot writes that “there is hardly a superior or active mind of this generation that has not been modified by Carlyle’s writings; there has hardly been an English book written for the last ten or twelve years that would not have been different if Carlyle had not lived” (213-14).

In the 1849 “Occasional Discourse,” Carlyle argued that any talk about the “Rights of Negroes,” in light of what impoverished and unemployed Whites in England and Ireland were experiencing, was “a jumble of human nonsenses” (671). He represented blacks (whom he called “Quashee”) as abnormal and subhuman by arguing that blacks in the West Indian Islands have violated three major tenets of human nature: the divine law of man's natural instinct to work; that servitude and dependence were the natural conditions of the African; and the willingness to trade and exchange were the staples of civilization in which blacks refused to participate. In making these claims, Carlyle actually decontextualizes the significance of reports that many blacks actually sold and profited from products they had grown on their own lands. Black labor as represented by Carlyle does not contribute to the community, and therefore does not have the exchange value that makes their output any value to civilization and culture. In *The Body Economic*, Catherine Gallagher writes that although early Victorians “extolled work as the source of well-being and spiritual grandeur” (64), “almost all other Victorians”

subscribed “to the proposition that value derives from labor, that works make the wealth of nations” (78). If it does not contribute to the wealth and cultural enrichment of the community then it fails to meet Carlyle’s criteria of work and labor. From where Carlyle sat, these acts of self-employment expressed by blacks in the West Indies were re-drawn into caricatures representing the pumpkin eating ex-slave as happy and content with doing very little work. When the black did work, according to Carlyle’s line of thinking, it was only for subsistence or for a short unproductive period of time. Carlyle does acknowledge that the black West Indian grew his own food, but what he perceived as merely subsistence cultivation does not constitute work or labor. The cultivation of pumpkins gets translated by Carlyle as another example of how the lazy, selfishly anti-social and happy Negro received everything gratis and at the expense and discomfort of his white neighbor. In the words of Carlyle,

> Supply and demand, which, science says, should be brought to bear on him, have an uphill task of it with such a man. Strong sun supplies itself gratis, rich soil in those unpeopled or half-peopled regions almost gratis; these are his 'supply;' and half an hour a-day, directed upon these, will produce pumpkin which is his 'demand.' The fortunate Black man, very swiftly does he settle *his* account with supply and demand: - not so swiftly the less fortunate White man of these tropical localities. He himself cannot work: and his black neighbor, rich in pumpkin, is in no haste to help him. (672)

Throughout "Occasional Discourse," it was the imagined Calibanistic trope and the seemingly diminished sense of racial hierarchy that really occupied Carlyle’s thinking. It was, in fact, the traditional racial hierarchy that Carlyle represented as threatened. Registered, as a result of the black's newly granted autonomy and emancipation's destabilizing potential, he suggested that the material welfare of whites in the West Indies was at the mercy of blacks. "Sunk to the ears in pumpkin, imbibing saccharine juices, and much at his ease in the Creation, he can listen to the less fortunate

White man's 'demand,' and take his own time in supplying it" (672). What is interesting about this passage is that he writes as if he knows that his contemporary reader will detect what is unnatural in the relationship he has described. Here, for Carlyle, is the Other's unnatural denial of white authority. Even if Carlyle and his imagined reader had no qualms with a black man "at his ease in the Creation," this "ease" is in conflict with the "White man's 'demands.'" Yesterday's servant now decided the conditions in which those demands were to be negotiated. Furthermore, Carlyle strategically aligns the white man's demands to his food supply, which in this caricature of the relationship is now controlled totally by the former slave. The dynamics of this relationship flew in the face of everything Carlyle and many contemporary middle-class Victorians found acceptable. It is also, in microcosm, a fair picture of the post-emancipation problem that the planter class and many white observers faced, and of the new sense of agency and autonomy that blacks discovered. Black agency, here, then comes across as an ignoble act because it undermines the needs and exigencies of the white community.

Nowhere is it even suggested that individual members of the black population in the West Indies engaged in the form of cultivation that leads towards commerce, exchange and contribute to the demands of culture and civilization. For Carlyle,

> West India Islands, still full of wasted fertility, produce abundant pumpkins; pumpkins, however, you will please to observe, are not the sole requisite for human wellbeing.... The Islands are good withal for pepper, for sugar, for sago, arrowroot, for coffee, perhaps for cinnamon and precious spices; things far nobler than pumpkins; and leading towards commerce, arts, polities, and social developments, which alone are the noble product, where men (and not pigs with pumpkins) are the parties concerned! Well, all this fruit too, fruit spicy and commercial, fruit spiritual and celestial, so far beyond the merely pumpkinish and grossly terrene, lies in the West India lands: and the ultimate 'proprietorship of them,- why, I suppose, it will vest in him who can *best* educe from them whatever of noble produce they were created fit for yielding. He, I compute, is the real 'Vicegerent of the Maker' there: in him, better and

> better chosen, and not in another, is the 'property' vested by decree of Heaven's chancery itself! (674)

Carlyle, in fact, denied the black any aptitude for cultivation and beyond satisfying the desires of their former masters. As Carlyle presented it, blacks nomadically roamed the Islands (for they do nothing that leads to “social developments”), filling themselves on the productions of nature and the work of others. Blacks consume rather than produce and exchange, which places them on the same level as children and animals. The suggestion of the black as producer is nowhere rendered. Moreover, the cultivation of these desired nobler spices in the West Indian Islands were not possible until the appearance of Carlyle's Prospero-like "white Enchanter" (674). Favoring particular commodities as “noble,” as Carlyle does, clearly suggest that value is appointed only if it contributes to the taste and material needs of a particular class of man. According to Carlyle, the Islands' "noble elements of cinnamon, sugar, coffee, pepper black and grey, [were] lying all asleep, waiting for the white Enchanter who would say to them, Awake!" (674-75). Carlyle believed that "[t]ill the end of human history and the sounding of the Trump of Doom, they might have lain so, had Quashee and the like of him been the only artists in the game" (675).

Since, in Carlyle’s representation of current events, the blacks refused to work, "will not honestly aid in bringing out those sugars, cinnamons, and nobler products of the West Indian Islands, for the benefit of all mankind" (675), which is the law of nature, then they must be compelled and enslaved. "Quashee, if he will not help in bringing out the spices, will get himself made a slave again (which state will be a little less ugly than his present one), and with beneficent whip, since other methods avail not, will be compelled to work" (675). In other words, not only should blacks be discouraged from living freely in the Islands "except on terms that are fair toward Britain" (676), but the

Englishman's attitude must be that of a stern parent. Thus, for Carlyle, the best possible world is one resembling that of parentage. This racial hierarchy is "the Law of the World," one of "Heaven's Laws" (677), trans-historical and unalterable by man. Nature created the Master/Slave relationship for the good of both white and black, and defying nature will lead to social catastrophe. "[N]o well-being, and in the end no being at all, will be possible for you or us, if the Law of Heaven is not complied with" (677). The unregulated and independent black, then, posed a threat to civilization as a whole.

In framing black/white relations in such terms, Carlyle naturalized the racial hierarchy. In a nutshell, the Carlylean racialized strategy, his mode of discursive masking, ran as follows. It is to fix the African condition in nature. As a form of discursive masking, it decontextualized the social and economic functions of black labor experienced in the evolution of the black community by emphasizing the deteriorated racial hierarchy and reduction in wealth of whites. The tropological turn of his racial thinking reified and posited as natural a politically and economically motivated relationship. For Carlyle, writes Spurr, "nature has already determined a hierarchy of humanity which government, in the case of the West Indies, would be wise to act upon. In this ideal view of things, power follows reason, history follows nature" (66).The Carlylean form of racial discourse, as well as colonial discourse in general, "naturalizes the process of domination: it finds a natural justification for the conquest of nature and primitive peoples, those 'children of nature'" (Spurr 156). Stuart Hall (1996) writes that this form of racist discourse "dehistoricizes - translating historically specific structures into a timeless language of nature" (57). In "The Spectacle of the 'Other'," Hall posits that "naturalization is thus a representational strategy designed to fix 'difference', and thus secure it forever. It is an attempt to halt the inevitable 'slide' of meaning, to secure discursive and ideological 'closure' (245).

Carlyle's is the type of discursive strategy that occurs during social change and imagined and real social crisis. For Carlyle, the idea of "rights of Negroes" and the rhetoric of equality were contributors to the sense of moral panic registered in "Occasional Discourse." He, in short, imagined the defacement of a God-given hierarchy. According to Michael Taussig, "[w]hen the human body, a nation's flag, money, or a public statue is *defaced*, a strange surplus of negative energy is likely to be aroused from within the defaced thing itself. It is now in a state of *desecration*, the closest many of us are going to get to the sacred in this modern world" (1). In *Poisoning the Lower Order*, Don Herzog writes that "[c]ontempt grows angrier not despite visions of equality but because of them. If social hierarchy is under attack, it calls for vivid new emotional investments that always betray the fear that hierarchy is doomed, or at least it will never again be what it used to be" (363). Since this threat to the hierarchy has perceived cultural and material ramifications, it had the force of a historical event whose momentum must be confronted and curtailed. Because the ideas behind the myth of the Noble Savage open the way for racial representations that can destabilize the racial hierarchy (for the Noble Savage is perceived as a potential equal), the meaning attached to the Other must be altered for a less problematic one. We can see what Hall means when he argues that racial meaning floats, which seems to suggest the importance of particular racialized representations to remedy social change and social crisis. The racial trope that gets privileged is contingent on the demands of the historical moment and it serves political agendas and ideological imperatives. Hall writes that "[m]eaning 'floats'. It cannot be finally fixed. However, attempting to 'fix' it is the work of a representational practice, which intervenes in the many potential meanings of an image in an attempt to privilege one" ("Spectacle" 228). According to Laura Callanan, mid-Victorian racial discourse was often "tropological." This means that a series of rhetorical figures developed, with

which writers conveyed shorthand allusions to complex social negotiations taking place within the culture. These figures took a variety of forms, including symbols, narrative patterns, historical events, and geographical locations (44). Carlyle's Caliban-like figure answered the questions that plagued the contemporary British imagination about the character of blacks in the British West Indies. The Caliban trope fixed the African in a position that availed for many Victorians easy solutions, and more direct and heavy-handed approaches to conduct business in the colonies.

By the time Carlyle reprinted "Occasional Discourse" in his *Latter-day Pamphlets* in 1853, England was in the midst of "Negro-Mania" and "Uncle Tom-Mania," thus inspiring him to discard the acceptable "Negro" in the title for the more derogatory and demeaning "Nigger." According to Audrey Fisch, “[w]hether to purchase narratives written by escaped American slaves in England, to hear speeches, or to see authentic scars of slavery on a black man’s back, Victorians eagerly paid money and queued up” (5). Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was perhaps for the majority of Victorians the most important and recognized product of American slavery. For many British critics of emancipation, the popularity of the novel may have been the cause of anxiety. Marcus Wood correctly describes "[t]he second publication [of “Occasional Discourse” as] a strategic anti-abolition intervention, and the substantial alterations had two main aims. First, it was explicitly designed as an assault on the popularity of Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Secondly, it was designed to create an image of Carlyle himself as martyr to the pro-slavery cause, a figure 'crucified' by the philanthropists" (376). Wood's assessment that Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was a major incentive for the appearance of the revised "Occasional Discourse" is only partly accurate. What is really important about the "Nigger Question" was its placement as the "precursor" to the volume of essays in which it appeared. Whereas "Occasional Discourses" was a topical response to the labor

problems in the West Indies, as well as a corrective against the overturning of the traditional racial hierarchy, "Nigger Question" was positioned to remind middle-class readers swept up by Negro-- and Uncle Tom-- Mania of the nature of the fiction that Stowe, philanthropists, abolitionists, and visiting fugitive American slaves with the popularity of Fredrick Douglass and William Wells Brown propagated. For one, by changing from the more polite "Negro" to the derogatory "Nigger" in the title, Carlyle announced his intention to comment on an unambiguously degraded presence. He wanted his reader to know that he was not writing about the noble-hearted, heroic, virtuous, and inhumanly abused Negro slave of sentimental fiction, but of an actual threat to British well-being. He wanted to remind his reader that the "Nigger," unlike Stowe's Uncle Tom, was not a product of the imagination, but a destructive and dangerous essence within the British kingdom. Secondly, by positioning the "Nigger Question" as a "precursor" (or prelude), as an unnumbered chapter in a volume of essays essentially denouncing philanthropists and humanitarian principles, Carlyle created the equivalent of a cautionary tale. He, in short, positioned his counter-narrative against the romantic, popular, and sentimental sideshow visiting from across the Atlantic.

2

CHARLES DICKENS AND THE IGNOBLE SAVAGE

Charles Dickens's "The Noble Savage" appears in *Household Words* the same year that Thomas Carlyle published his *Latter-day Pamphlets*. Like Carlyle's text, its purpose was to re-draw for the British reader an alternate vision of the Other than what was generally being displayed and paraded throughout Great Britain at the time. Although Bernth Lindfors describes "The Noble Savage" merely as Dickens's "hilarious" example "of the ignobility of uncivilized man," and that "there can be no doubt that Dickens, with his incomparable flair for comic exaggeration, achieved his aim of

debunking the romantic myth of the 'noble savage'" (69), the function and intention of this "hilarious" essay had social ramifications far broader than mere entertainment. It was the last of three attempts in non-fiction in which Dickens demonizes the African personality. Although Dickens, unlike Carlyle, does not express concern for the labor problems in the West Indies, he does posit that white lives are in danger in the tropics and ignored at home because of the desired nature of England's contact and uncritical and romantic obsession with the nobility of African. Although Carlyle specifically limits his concerns to the West Indies, Dickens imagines an essential antagonism between white and non-white races that cannot be ameliorated through Christianity and well-wishing. Dickens, in "The Noble Savage," goes so far as to position the benighted "native" and people of African descent as the source of inattention to the problems of poverty in England. In this way, for Dickens, the African becomes the scapegoat whose final disappearance will be his only true service to humanity. As a result of the "savages" extermination, all talk about his nobility will come to an end and all efforts toward giving form and structure to that nobility, at the expense of those starving at home, will cease. Moreover, in his writings about the African, the Indian, and non-whites, Dickens's representations always showed his contemporary reader that what was at work was a relationship which potentially leads to a fatal and material imbalance that does not always favor whites. Much of his commentary about relationships between races was of the order of keeping groups apart, or of limited contact. This distancing would be, of course, beneficial for the physical well-being of whites, which in turn suggested that blacks had a diseased quality which could only do harm to the Anglo Saxon's body politic. This tendency of Dickens's racialist thinking that favored physical and geographic distancing from the African shows up in "The Niger Expedition", which is a review of Captain William Allen's *Narrative of the Expedition sent by Her Majesty's Government to the*

River Niger in 1841 and "North American Slavery", which is a response to Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Furthermore, though Dickens, unlike Carlyle, never takes the overt leap of advocating slavery, he does adopt a wait and see attitude that favored the pockets of planters in the American South. However, in “The Noble Savage” Dickens does side with Carlyle on the "diabolical" and unstable character of the African and non-European races, the detrimental influence of "savages" on Anglo Saxon lives, and inthe diseased thinking of philanthropists. “The Noble Savage,” in the end, is indirectly an attack on Stowe’s portrayal of the black as having any of the virtuous qualities she endowed them with in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. In other words, though Dickens's writings may have registered some racial ambiguity early in his career, between 1848 and 1853 his views on black humanity were set and in "The Noble Savage" his views were carved in stone.

While some scholars have commented on what may be racial ambiguity in Dickens's published writing, others have pointed to the hold of Carlyle on his racial and political thought. For instance, in "Dickens on American Slavery: A Carlylean Slant", Arthur Adrian writes that although he "did not go all the way in embracing Carlyle's argument for the white man's supremacy," Dickens "did see eye to eye with the essayist on certain aspects of the subject" (316). According to Michael Goldberg, "Carlyle remained a hero to Dickens throughout his life" (62) and that "[l]ike Carlyle, the tone and temper of his social satire acquired a new astringency after 1850, and the subjects he chose to satirize gave frequent offense to liberal opinion" (70). In "Charles Dickens and the Zulus," Lindfors argues that Dickens did not advocate genocide in "The Noble Savage" essay. Lindfors writes that "he [Dickens] was very much the Victorian pragmatist striving to puncture an inflated Romantic conception of the dignity of 'primitive' peoples. The Zulus were simply a convenient case in point, a group so far

removed from Europe in custom and culture that they could easily be held up as examples of an underdeveloped race obviously in need of moral improvement and mental refinement. Dickens did not suggest that such peoples be exterminated; rather, he wanted them 'civilized off the face of the earth.' He believed in cultural, not literal, genocide"(76-7). In *Dickens and Empire*, Grace Moore rightly recognizes that imperial territories and Britain's domestic socioeconomic troubles were "inextricably linked in Dickens's imagination" (2). According to Moore, "[d]espite his humanitarian principles, when Dickens was afraid of the slave moving above his station he sought to return him to his place through drawing upon what we would consider today a racist discourse" (56). In *Dark Victorians*, Vanessa Dickerson claims that "Dickens's propensity to mock in *American Notes* the victims of the system he would denounce foreshadows the shift in his attitude toward blacks that would occur over the next twenty or so years. As Michael Goldberg has observed, 'Whereas in 1842 Dickens felt an unequivocal horror for the "accursed and detested system" of slavery and was glad to turn his back on the states that practiced it, by 1865 he was confessing himself a 'Southern sympathizer to this extent – that I more believe in the Northern love of the black man, or in the Northern horror of slavery having anything to do' with the beginnings of the Civil War" (30).

As far as Dickens's racial attitudes are concerned, many critics of Victorian racial discourse seem to have overlooked (or under-emphasized) the importance of "race" as a relational concept. Dickens's racialist thinking, and the stereotypes he contributed to making, were both implicitly and explicitly couched in relational modes. Therefore, these racial representations were the manifestations of a relationship between groups. In *Difference and Pathology*, Sander Gilman writes that "[t]he complexity of the stereotype resulted from the social context in which it is to be found" (19). This was particularly the case when it comes to nineteenth century England and the cultures they sought to

dominate. Neither Carlyle, Dickens, nor any participant in Victorian racial discourse engaged the representation of race as if it were in isolation from the cultural self, national identity and national desires. The nature of this relation was usually one of power, control, temporal and ideological stability. According to Gordon K. Lewis, "the essence of ideology is perceived self-image, how any societal group sees it function within the general matrix of the social structure, how it sees other groups, and what particular arguments it produces as a means of self-justification" (108). Gilman writes that, "[o]ur self-image not only reflects our representations of the external world, but, by influencing our perceptions of objects and their integration into that mental representation, shapes it as well. The objects exist, we interact with them, they respond to (or ignore)our demands upon them. But when we relate to them, we relate to them through the filter of our internalized representation of the world. This representation centers around our sense of control" (19). Therefore, the type of stereotyped representations generated by Victorians must be analyzed in terms of the nature of England's material relationship to the Other as well as how they imagined the relationship between white and non-white. The questions to be asked when engaging Victorian racial discourses are: what material and psychological investments are registered in the construction of the Other? And, what is the context of these investments? This means that you cannot thoroughly deal with the racial attitudes of Thomas Carlyle, Charles Dickens and their contemporaries without taking into account the type of racial relationship they had envisioned and imagined and the type of relationship they believed would be of benefit to the whites of England.

Dickens's questionable sympathies for blacks and the instability he had imagined resulting from relations with non-European peoples had been registered before 1853. For instance, in "The Niger Expedition," Dickens used Captain Allen's report of the ill-fated expedition as a narrative of the dangers and futility of contact with a people as dishonest

and dangerous as the Africans had proven themselves to be. The aim of the expedition was the establishment of treaties with various West African nations in an attempt to eradicate the slave trade at its source. As a result, England would contribute to civilizing indigenous peoples through the introduction of Christianity and increased commerce. Commerce was to come in the form exchanging native products for British goods and the terms of these treaties were determined by England. Dickens's main point in this review was that the African was constitutionally unfit and unprepared for civilization. Dickens opens "The Niger Expedition" with a stab, as Carlyle would do a year later in "Occasional Discourse," at the philanthropists of Exeter Hall. "It might be laid down as a very good general rule of social and political guidance, that whatever Exeter Hall champions, is the thing by no means to be done" (117). When considering the implications of this statement, it is important to remember that Exeter Hall championed the protection of aboriginal cultures. Even in this piece of sarcasm about of small group of philanthropists, Dickens has supplied an indication of where Victorians should not address attention. He warned his reading public that if they were foolish enough to transport civilization to Africa, it must be done "by other means than the exposure of inestimable British lives to certain destruction by an enemy against which no gallantry can contend" (118). Dickens is never explicit as to why the African was an "enemy," but this "enemy... which no gallantry can content" must be of the scope of a monster to resists British gallantry. This enemy could be environmental, for he does call the entrance to the Niger “The Gate of the Cemetery” (119-120), as well as referring to the Englishman’s “perfect impotency in opposition to their climate, their falsehood, and deceit” (118). This "enemy," that the philanthropists of Exeter Hall sought to elevate, was for Dickens the source of disease and death. Contact with blacks, then, was fatal for whites. He suggests the vast difference between black and white, and the infeasibility of

them occupying the same space, when he writes that "[t]he air that brings life to the latter brings death to the former" (133). Although he suggested the then conventional belief in the unhealthiness of the tropical climate on the European body, he was also suggesting that both groups are warring ("enemy") and different species. He makes clear his belief that a tremendous moral and intellectual gulf exist between the white man and the black man. In the words of Dickens, "Between the civilized European and the barbarous African there is a great gulf set" (133). His use of "enemy" makes this "gulf" more than a mere cultural one.

The African, for Dickens, is represented as diabolical and unable to engage in honest relations with civilized nations. Throughout "The Niger Expedition," he described the African's dishonesty when it comes to honoring treaties drawn by British missionaries. The treaties presented to African leaders stated the terms in which Africans were to conduct their external and domestic affairs. Among the concerns in the treaties was that the African would cease the selling of slaves to Western nations. For Dickens, the civilizing of the African, and desire to make him Christian, what he called "the railroad Christianisation of Africa" (133),were dangerous and self-destructive acts of folly. This was the context that Dickens wanted to get across. The energy, material resources and the humanitarian enthusiasm expressed by the architects of the Niger Expedition should have been redirected toward ameliorating the conditions of the poor at home, rather than toward the menacing peoples abroad. "Believe it," Dickens writes at the end of "The Niger Expedition," "African Civilisation, Church of England Missionary, and all other Missionary Societies! The work at home must be completed thoroughly, or there is no hope abroad" (133-34). Dickens concludes by suggesting that if it was possible to elevate the African from his degraded state (for Dickens, blacks were always in a degraded state), Christian and European wisdom must be in the form of a black man

to a black man, as others had also argued. According to Dickens, "there is sound wisdom in his idea of approaching the black man through the black man" and that "he can only be successfully approached by a studied reference to the current of his own opinions and customs instead of ours" (134). Black mediation, then, seems to serve as protection against contact with black persons and the African climate.

Dickens, in "North American Slavery," which he wrote with Henry Morley (1822-1894), uses Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* as the medium through which his personal commentary is made on the moral and intellectual character and constitutions of the African. This is a highly problematic essay only because the message, at times, seems forced and the reader is able to sense the presence of two hands. Still, he once again draws attention to the African's persona and to how well-meaning whites had misinterpreted the African psyche. In the first paragraph, Dickens writes that

> Uncle Tom's Cabin with all its faults (and it is not free from the fault of overstrained conclusions and violent extremes) is a noble work; full of high power; lofty humanity; the gentlest, sweetest, and yet boldest, writing. Its authoress, Harriet Beecher Stowe, is an honour to the time that has produced her, and will take her place among the best writers of fiction, inspired by the best and noblest purpose. Uncle Tom and Aunt Chloe, George Harris, and the other negroes with whom Mrs. Stowe has by this time made most of us acquainted, are, no doubt, rare specimens of Slaves. (1)

A little further in the article he clarified what was meant by the vague "rare specimens of slaves" with "rare specimens of negro character" (3).Therefore, for Dickens, the glowing "faults" of the novel are the noble and virtuous qualities Stowe has written into her principle black characters. These qualities, which he avoids to elaborate on in "North American Slavery," but which readers of the novel were able to perceive, make Uncle Tom, Aunt Chloe and George Harris "rare specimens" of what slaves were like as human beings.

As far as slavery as an institution was concerned, Dickens believed that the practice (which he believed should eventually be abolished) in North America was more humane than slavery in other countries. However, his solution had a peculiar Carlylean ring because it suggested that abolition must come with as little inconvenience to whites as possible. Therefore, what was morally right takes back seat to what was materially convenient, and racially and ideologically appropriate. Dickens wrote that "A right thing may be done in the wrong way; slaves may be made wretched, as well as holders ruined, by an act which, being only just and merciful in its own essence, might be so done as to become a gain and blessing to all men whose lives are influenced by its effects" (1). Other than suggesting that the lives of blacks under slavery at that moment were not "wretched," Dickens sounds like a practical observer. And if slavery was not as wretched as abolitionists, fugitive slaves in England, and the annoying self-righteous pundits of Exeter Hall had claimed, then North American slaves lived within a certain level of protection and contentment.

This particular essay has peculiar pro-slavery connotations, for it seems to suggests that the material needs of whites must out-weigh the lived conditions of blacks, who are strangely better off once their masters started treating them like valuable live-stock.

> But while the contraband traffic in slaves is essential to the working of the slave system on its present footing in the Spanish Antilles, among the Anglo-Americans importation has entirely ceased. The bodily conditions of slaves under our cousins in America - we speak only of their bodily condition, rating them not as men, but as so much live stock – is good. They are, on the whole, fed as amply, and are as well treated as the upper class of European horses. They have therefore thriven and their stock is multiplied in the land; their inherent power of reproduction more than balances the amount of physical decay. (2)

Dickens's description of the well-fed and productive slave framed for his contemporary

reader (some of whom were aware that he had visited North American in the early 1840s) the image of American blacks as nothing more than animal-like. It was the virtue of the American system of slavery to treat their slaves like "the upper class of European horses." Thanks to the slaves' powerful sex drive, or "their inherent power of reproduction," American slave holders were able to withdraw from participation in the Atlantic slave trade. Moreover, it proved beneficial to the American system that the slaves' animal nature and strong sexual appetites have been able to compensate for those slaves worked to the level of "physical decay." In short, he has constructed an image of the antithesis of the chaste Victorian community. Blacks were rendered as animalistic beings ("live stock," "horses")who cannot, as most middle class Victorians can, control his and her impulses. According to Dickens's representation of the behavior of slaves, they have no sense of restraint and they have a natural inclination to breed.

Dickens goes on to argue that most slaves are content with their position, and look forward to being treated like the slave holder's favorite pet. The purpose of this line of thought is an attempt to reiterate the older notion of the black as a natural servant to white.

> Born to the system, bred to the system, degraded by being set to labour in sight of a whip, like the brutes, so working on a motive against which even a well-bred brute comes to rebel – thousands of negroes are content to be well fed and housed, occasionally patted on the head or played with, and, when the master finds it needful to reduce his stock, part with a mere transitory brutish pang from a contented wife in Maryland, perhaps, to lie down content with a new wife in a new stall in Tennessee. (3)
>
> And,
>
> It is pleasanter to think of slaves in Cuba flying before bloodhounds, than to know that the slaves of North America learn to identify themselves with their masters, and to lie down contented with their place among farm animals, because they are well fed; and that in the year 1850, out of three million slaves only a thousand fled away in search of liberty: the greater

> part even of that thousand seeking not liberty for its own sake, but as a means of escape from the punishment incurred by theft and other crimes. (3)

Dickens, even before "The Noble Savage," does not represent blacks as rational agents. The only act of agency he allowed his construction of blacks to have comes in the form of flight to "escape from the punishment incurred by theft and other crimes." Dickens's representation of what I see as an example of agency seems to correspond to what James Scott (1990) means with the observation that "[r]ebels and revolutionaries are labeled bandits, criminals , hooligans in a way that diverts attention from their political claims"(55).Their acts of agency were decontextualized as crime and theft. Among the acts of theft was the willingness to steal "liberty," for legally they were the property of others. Nowhere in his interpretations of the African character does Dickens remotely suggest that peoples of African descent had a shadow of nobility. As he said in the passage above: "even a well-bred brute comes to rebel." They were all described as being child-like or devious, questionably worthy of protection. The African, for Dickens, was concerned only with satisfying his baser and lower instincts. His ability to seemingly praise the American system of slavery and denounce slavery in the abstract was rendered through the amplification of what he imagined as the African's anti-social and animalistic qualities and negation of African humanity. The racial trope he wanted the middle class Victorian to accept as real was, in short, the exact opposite of the myth and romanticized noble savage.

"The Noble Savage" (1853) can be seen as Charles Dickens's summary on the essential nature of Africans and non-white peoples. Moreover, he offered his final solution on how to handle this racial trope that had been for him and for other British commentators of racial difference, at home and abroad, a "nuisance." "The Noble Savage" is far less complex and has none of the nuances that are present in "The Niger

Expedition" and "North American Slavery." It is a straightforward denunciation of the myth of the noble savage and all of the qualities that attached to its referents. The most important of these qualities, and the one that had influenced many Europeans for centuries, was the belief that natives can be elevated and made equal to (if not better than) whites. The idea of a noble savage, therefore, threatened and insulted Dickens's perception of himself as an Anglo Saxon member in the racial hierarchy. With the only weapons he had at his command, his pen and the credibility attached to his name, he sought to create a portrait of a species of man that must be isolated, controlled and, in the final scheme of things, exterminated.

For Dickens, the "noble savage" was a romantic construct, "superstition," and “nuisance” that many of his contemporaries had inherited. This construct was a “nuisance” because the virtues and essential innocence projected onto the putative Noble Savage entitled him to the respect afforded equals, near equals, and it made him worthy of attention and valuable resources. As an evolving member of the modern human family, this uncorrupted and unspoiled child of nature was the perfect vessel not only of Christianity but also of Christian charity. As the adult member of the modern human family, many Victorians perceived it as their duty to spiritually and intellectually elevate the less capable member. It was perhaps this self-imposed position of protector, teacher, guide and benefactor, which fostered the sense of superiority. The obsession with him, as well as the obsession with the putative moral obligation in relation to the indigenous non-European, however, took attention away from conditions (like the London poor) closer to home. The virtuous and malleable nature of the romanticized subject of this stereotype distorted the vision of Englishmen and caused many Britons to try to bring savages into the folds of civilization. Dickens had no confidence that the characteristics revolving around the noble savage myth existed in the nature of the native. Dickens’s point was that

neither virtue nor potential for development existed in the moral and mental constitution of indigenous peoples. Although this may appear to be somewhat of a turnaround in his thoughts about non-whites, it is really an evolution in his racial thinking that was inspired by personal forces outside of his control. His friend, Lord Thomas Denman (1779-1854), had published a series of articles in which he compared Dickens's treatment of slavery and the slave trade in *Bleak House* with that of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. According to Denman, Dickens was among "our most popular and influential writers" whose literary productions in regard to slavery was "calculated to mislead"(iv). Denman, once a close friend of Dickens, identified Mrs. Jellybee in *Bleak House* and "some papers in the '*Houeshold Words'"* as having been written for the taste of slaveholders only" (11). Therefore, the "nuisance" that he mentioned early in "The Noble Savage" can be seen also as a personal one, for it caused him to respond in a less elusive and much more defining way. He was now able to give his conclusive thoughts.

Dickens introduced the reader of *Household Words* to what he perceived as the true nature of the Caliban-like native by opening "The Noble Savage" with these unambiguous words: "To come to the point at once, I beg to say that I have not the least belief in the Noble Savage. I consider him a prodigious nuisance and an enormous superstition. His calling rum fire-water, and me a pale face, wholly fails to reconcile me to him. I don't care what he calls me. I call him a savage, and I call a savage something highly desirable to be civilized off the face of the earth" (337). Although, by referencing "pale face" and fire-"water," he appeared to be writing about the Indians in North American, his opening includes all non-white races. When he does get to peoples of African descent, he warns his reader of the noble savage's warlike and diabolical nature. "The noble savage," writes Dickens,

> sets a king to reign over him, to whom he submits his life and limbs without a murmur or question, and whose whole life is passed chin deep in a lake of blood; but who, after killing incessantly, is in his turn killed by his relations and friends, the moment a gray hair appears on his head. All the noble savage wars are with his fellow-savages (and he takes no pleasure in anything else) are wars of extermination - which is the best thing I know of him, and the most comfortable to my mind when I look at him. He has no moral feelings of any kind, sort, or description; and his "mission" may be summed up as simply diabolical. (338)

Dickens concludes this short character study where he began:

> My position is, that if we have anything to learn from this Noble Savage, it is what to avoid. His virtues are a fable; his happiness a delusion; his nobility, nonsense. We have no greater justification for being cruel to the miserable object, than for being cruel to a William Shakespeare or an Isaac Newton; but he passes away before an immeasurably better and higher power than ever ran wild in any earthly woods, and the world will be all the better when his place knows him no more. (338)

Considering the almost universal praise of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which at that moment rivaled Dickens's very own *Bleak House,* these words prepared the reader for an alternate rendering of Stowe's popular Negro-type. The noble and sentimentalized Negro of Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was recognized as a fiction through Charles Dickens's "The Noble Savage." Although Dickens neither directly addresses the pressing situation in the British West Indies nor social problems at home in this essay, he participated in the Carlylean racial project indirectly by ending that "the world will be all the better when his place knows him no more." This is a rewording of the beginning of "The Noble Savage" and the conclusion of "The Niger Expedition." The world, for Dickens, will be a better place when the dark "nuisance" is no more. Only then will then English government be able to attend to issues at home and aspirations abroad.

Dickens was much more concerned that attention gets placed on domestic affairs. This was indicated at the end of "The Niger Expedition," and was another reason why

native peoples were regarded as a nuisance. According to Moore, "he also came to conceive of the other worlds of Victorian penury, like London's East End, as areas in need of the type of missionary activity that he regarded as misplaced in the distant colonies when there was still so much work to be done at home" (2). Dickens's attitude toward misusing valuable resources aboard is satirized in the character of Mrs. Jellyby in *Bleak House* (1852-53). With her attention overseas, Mrs. Jellybee doesn't notice that her own children are unfed, uneducated and unhappy. This, for Dickens, is an allegory of what concern for the dark Other has brought England. According to Grace Moore,

> By the time of *Bleak House* (1852-3) Dickens's frustration with the policy of domestic *laissez-faire* - in his view a euphemism for downright negligence - had become so overwhelming that he could only envisage the British nation as Mrs. Jellyby's home, and the dispossessed as analogous to her disregarded children. The disorder of the Jellyby household is, of course, equivalent to the delapidated state of the nation, and Caddy Jellyby identifies its ruin as resulting from her mother's exertions overseas when she laments, 'Ma and Africa, together, upset the whole house directly... Ma's ruinous to everything'. (36)

But Dickens's interpretation did have a much broader function: he, as with Carlyle, provided the materials for an alternate interpretation of an entire race that were used in analyzing England's problems in the West Indies and later in Africa. Within the lens that Dickens and Carlyle had constructed are acts of agency reconfigured as racial flaws and dangerous anti-social short-comings.

3

IGNOBILITY VERSUS AGENCY: THE LANGUAGE OF THE SILENT NEGRO

In this chapter I have been arguing that the interpretations of post-emancipation black social and political negotiations in the British West Indies that many midcentury Victorians circulated, implicitly and explicitly, unintentionally and by design, masked acts of agency. In the process of masking the agency of people of African descent, the

Victorian commentator of race was able to discursively erase evidence of black consciousness and replace it with essentialist notions mapping the limits and nature of black progress. By doing this, many Victorian policy makers and officials were able to drawthe desired parameters of cross-cultural and interracial relations that favored white leadership and dominance. Although Dickens did not directly address the behavior of black British subjects, his racial repertory greatly contributed to the templates by which the African personality was fixed and measured. By his measurement, the African was ill-suited for the exigencies of progress and his innately subhuman constitution placed him beneath the consideration showered upon him by England's philanthropists and humanitarians. For him, the African (as represented in his evaluation of the master/slave relationship in the American South) was either contented with his servitude or, as evidenced by the reports of the Niger Expedition, he was selfish, morally and intellectually stunted, and an untrustworthy liar. Therefore, the functions of the discursive strategies expressed in Carlyle and Dickens were designed to limit and contain the African within a dependent relationship or a distanced and carefully monitored relationship which would serve British interests. Very few observers seem to have bothered to seriously analyze the motives of black actions. This omission in itself sheds light on whether the ex-slave's interpretation and desire held any weight in post-emancipation social and political negotiations. Even the paternalistic strategies of British missionaries, which we will analyze through the writings of Edward Blyden in chapter four, were merely polite arguments for African containment. What their discursive practices had achieved in masking was the fact that many of what was presented as flaws and forms of lack in blacks were creative, productive and conscious acts of agency and, as we will later see in the West African situation (chapter three), a strong desire for autonomy. However, these acts of black agency were responses to new found freedom

and independence, the history of abuses Africans had experienced under slavery and apprenticeship, and they were directed toward a future if not completely free of British influence, then at least of a life greater autonomy and independence. The conflict, then, as a result of emancipation, can be seen as a power struggle to determine the proper uses of freedom. In *The Problem of Freedom* (1992), Thomas Holt writes that "the struggle to define the content of freedom was at bottom a contest for social power, a struggle at once intellectual and political, social and economic" (xxi). Since these acts of agency were also relational, they must be interpreted as responses to and critiques of the structures peoples of African descent found themselves negotiating.

Not all observers of England's emancipation experiment interpreted black modes of agency and reactions to independence as regressive movements toward barbarism or the "Quashee syndrome." Some of these observers realized, in the words of Cooper, that "[w]hat some called savage sloth was in fact an alternative vision of economic life, based on small plots and that slaves had been able to use even before emancipation.... Slaves did not flee from the plantations but sought to determine the timing and conditions of their labor; they marketed produce in local markets, but not necessarily the produce officials wanted to see" (21). Although Mill may have thought that the African was still among those races unprepared for self-governance, he regarded Carlyle's "great ethical doctrine" a "damnable" literary performance because it professed "that one kind of human being are born servants to another kind" (29). In his response to Carlyle a month later in "The Negro Question"(1850), Mill places great value in the performance of West Indian blacks as *homo economus*. Mill wrote that "the negro, whom [Carlyle] despises, still do *earn* by labour the 'pumpkins' they consume and the finery they wear" (27). The black had also made use of his freedom by making his presence tantamount to the functioning of the region and the economy. The ex-slave, therefore, through

emancipation was able to recognize his labor as a valued commodity used according to his own inclinations rather than at the beck and call of another. The Blacks, writes Mill, "freed from the despotism of their fellow beings, were left to themselves, and to the chances which the arrangements of existing society provide for those who have no resource but their labour. These chances proved favourable to them, and, for the last ten years, they afford the unusual spectacle of a laboring class whose labour bears so high a price that they can exist in comfort on the wages of a comparatively small quantity of work. This, to the ex-slave-owners, is an inconvenience"(26). Part of the "inconvenience" involves the type of resources that the ex-slave is willing to make a profit from. It is not the luxury items that Carlyle and the planters held in high regard. What was profitable for the ex-slave was not exactly the same products favored by Carlyle and the planters. Mill points out that the objects and commodities that Carlyle values are "spices," "cinnamon," "sugar," "coffee," and "peppers" rather than the "pumpkins" grown by the former slaves. These objects are considered, mocks Mill, "noble objects" (28). But pumpkins are not noble objects. Whatever supports life seems to be less dignified than commodities that advance and elevate culture. "Why so?" asks Mill, "Is what supports life, inferior in dignity to what merely gratifies the sense of taste?" Spices contribute to "'commerce, arts, polities, and social developments'. Perhaps so; but of what sort?"(28). When the American journalist John Bigelow (1817-1911) visited Jamaica in 1850, he "was surprised to find how general the desire among the negroes to become possessed of a little land, and upon what sound principles that desire was based" (115). He discovered that "[u]pon their little tracts they raised not only what they required for their own consumption, but a surplus which they take to market, usually in small pannies upon donkies, or upon their heads" (117). In *Jamaica in 1850*, Bigelow not only contrasted the present condition and attitude from that of life under slavery and apprenticeship, but he

implicitly suggested that these blacks were in essence destabilizing a traditional relationship and hierarchy :

> One of the most interesting spectacles to be witnessed about Kingston, is presented on the highroad through which the market people, with their donkies, in the cool of the morning, pour into the city from the back country. They form an almost uninterrupted procession four or five miles in length; and what strikes the eye of an American at once, is their perfect freedom from care. Neither anxiety, nor poverty, nor desire of gain, has written a line upon their faces, and they could not show less concern at the result of their trip if they were going to a festival. One may readily perceive how strong and universal must be the desire of the poor laborers to exchange their servile drudgery, on the lands of others, for this life of comparative ease and independence. (117)

Bigelow's use of "this life," which had once been the property of planters, suggested that the former slave was operating within a space of his own making; and "independence" indicated the severing of the natural bond Carlyle saw as important. Bigelow further suggested how the traditional racial hierarchy had been challenged by the agency of ex-slaves: "He is driven by necessity to the purchase and cultivation of land for himself, and he finds such labor, so much better rewarded than that bestowed upon the land of others, that he very naturally takes care of his own first, and gives his leisure to the properties of others, when he feels inclined; in that particular acting very much as if he were a white man" (126). As a result of black West Indian agency, in 1852 the British educated African American minister Alexander Crummell was able to deliver the following words in Bristol on behalf of The Ladies Negro Education Society: "[T]he black population, on the whole, is rising,... in some places, rising on the ruins of the planters, yet it is also a sad fact, that, in some places, they are going down to ruin with the proprietors " (315); and "the black population, generally, are advancing, to the disadvantage of the planters" (n.315).

However, black British subjects were measured by their contribution to the

material needs of the Anglo-British rather than by what they were able to accomplish or not accomplish for themselves. The decline in sugar production and other profitable species was seen as evidence of laziness and innate deficiencies. According to Curtin,

> Many planters believed that wages would cause no trouble, if only labor could be made 'continuous.' The demand for 'continuous labor' came up constantly in their discussions and has to be understood in its full meaning. It was not a question of the Negroes' refusing to work on plantations all year round. They no doubt would have refused, if asked, but full time work was not being offered all year round. Sugar and coffee being seasonal crops, the problem was to meet the special labor demands of the planting and 'crop' seasons. On sugar estates, these periods tended to coincide with the planting and harvest seasons on the provision grounds.... The planters' demand for continuous labor, therefore, was the desire for control, other than wage payments, that would ensure a full working force in seasons of special needs. Taken in the Jamaican context, it was a soft word for peonage. (127)

Therefore, it was imperative that the black laboring population recognized and conducted themselves within the constraints of the traditional racial hierarchy. This, however, for the ex-slave meant that he did not own *his* freedom. Abiding to the traditional script would only have meant that their freedom was, in essence, still regulated by the needs of the white planters. They were expected to fall in line with their ascribed status as an inferior and subservient race of man. "When considering the 'Negro race,'" writes Lorimer, "commentators lost sight of individual diversity and simply assumed all blacks were inferior to all whites. Their assumptions about the characteristics of the Negro race made them less willing to recognize the abilities of individual blacks, and some suggested that even 'a self-improved Negro' could not rise to the elevated status of a gentleman" (15). According to Catherine Hall, "If the period from the early 1830s to the early 1840s was the high moment for abolitionists in Britain, when the universal family of man looked as if it might be an achievable reality, the period from the mid-1840s to the mid-1860s saw a sharp shift in the discursive terrain: a loss of confidence in the language of

negro brotherhood and sisterhood, though those values were upheld by the stalwarts, and an increasing turn to the language of race to explain and justify the inequalities and persistent differences between peoples"(338).

When I talk about agency, I am referring to the black British subject's willingness to construct his or her own social space and become conscious actors in their own destinies. This means that their actions, always self-conscious, were movements towards personal and social independence within resistant social structures. Emirbayer and Mische writes that "[v]iewed internally, agency entails different ways of experiencing the world, although even here, just as consciousness is always conscious of something..., so too is agency always agency *toward* something, by means of which actors enter into relationships with surrounding persons, places, meanings, and events" (973). And, Emirbayer and Mische argue, "[v]iewed externally, agency entails actual interactions with its contexts, in something like an ongoing conversation" (973). This "ongoing conversation" constitutive of Emirbayer and Mische's conception of agency was, before emancipation, absent from the relationship between master and slave. After emancipation, the desire and willingness to enter into the conversation directed toward the avoidance and remedying of past abuses structured all black/white relations in the British West Indies. This is what Harrison White means when he writes that "[a]gency is social, not personal, both in its roots and in its main realization. Chickens in the pecking order of a flock do have agency even though they do not have personhood. Agency is about relations. Agency is the dynamic face of networks"(315). The black actors appropriated the legal and philosophical rules of these social structures to avoid the nature of past relations and to accommodate their present and future needs.

Even though they had been granted freedom, there was no indication that they would receive the type of respect given to a freeman or woman. The past and present

behavior of the planters assured the black West Indians that many of the abuses, though no longer protected by law, were in danger of resurfacing. The spurts of abuse experienced at the hands of planters may have contributed to the continued resistance to working on the estates after apprenticeship. According to Donald Wood, “[t]he majority of those who had left the estates [in Trinidad] after the ending of apprenticeship did so not to escape hard work but for fear that the indignities of the slave system would be perpetuated in a new guise”(6). Rather than the recalcitrant Quashee of Carlyle, Wood assures us that the ex-slave was “quite willing to work on them, but only when they chose and on their own terms” (6). In *A Narrative of Events, Since the First of August, 1834*, the apprentice James Williams supplied an example of the feelings toward freed blacks and on the treatment some freed blacks had encountered:

> I have been ill treated by Mr. Senior and the magistrates since the new law came in. Apprentices get a great deal more punishment now than they did when they was slaves; the master take spite, and do all he can to hurt them before the free come;- I have heard my master say, 'those English devils say we to be free, but if we is to free, he will pretty well weaken we, before the six and four years done; we shall be no use to ourselves afterwards.' (5)

In *The West Indies: Their Social and Religious Condition*, the Baptist missionary Edward Bean Underhill (1813-1901)reports on a conversation he had with a ranger in Jamaica:

> The old ranger then explained how, in his judgment, this state of things had been brought about. When the slaves were made free, they were a 'little obstinate' about wages and their provision grounds, which belonged to the estates; the overseers were a 'little obstinate' too, and wished to do what they had been accustomed during slavery. So the overseers pulled down the people's houses, and discharged them. The people having thus become quite free, went to the mountains, obtained land, made themselves independent, and now they won't come back; they do better on their own land than at estate work. A man with three acres of ground can make £2 a week by his provisions, if he is totally industrious. (387)

And in another parish on the island, Underhill informed a gathering of freed blacks of the

Carlylean lens through which they were perceived in England:

> As a number of persons gathered around us, we began to ask questions about their willingness to work. We told them that we had heard in England that they were idle; that they were content to lie all day under the shade of the mango tree, and to suck its luscious fruit; that, in fact, only the whip would make them work. They became very excited, and for a time we could hardly be heard. They loudly complained of the treatment they experienced. (278-79)

According to Emirbayer and Mische,"[a]lthough ...all experience takes place in the present, this present is permeated by the conditioning quality of the past" (975). Since black British agency was a response to past and current racial relations as well as their hopes for the future, we should look at agency as a conversation and a cultural critique. In other words, we need to look at the type of agency being expressed at this point in British colonial history as a language, especially since the freemen at this brief period in time had not themselves committed their motives and thoughts in print. Walter Benjamin advises us that "[e]very expression of human mental life can be understood as a kind of language, and this understanding, in the manner of a true method, everywhere raise new questions" (314). According to Benjamin, "There is no event or thing in either animate or inanimate nature that does not in some way partake of language, for it is in the nature of all to communicate their mental meanings" (314). By looking at black British agency in the West Indies as a language that questions the ethics and integrity of the guardians of the colonial social structures, we may better be able to interpret the full semiotic value of Thomas Carlyle's "pumpkin." That is, what were cast as signs of obstinate ignobility and laziness were in fact the ex-slaves' nonverbal articulation of agency and protest.

CONCLUSION

In a way, the black British subject's appropriation of freedom was a kind of theft. They were granted freedom with the expectation that they would contribute to the

material wealth of the British government and to that of the planters. However, according to Roger Chartier, "[t]he determination to impose cultural modes on the people does not guarantee the way in which they are used, adapted, understood" (91). Ex-slaves robbed planters of the realization of those expectations and the social conflicts that ensued revealed that the free black's conception and utilization of freedom were in conflict with envisioned expectations. Therefore, the mechanism on which many Englishmen had put their hopes was taken but did not circulate in the agreed form: wealth and progress for the dominant class. This is what Michel de Certeau means when he writes that "users make... innumerable and infinitesimal transformations of and within the dominant cultural economy in order to adapt it to their own interest and their own rules" (xiii). In this sense ex-slaves *poached* [de Certeau's term] the exigencies of freedom from their former masters and used it to create and manipulate evolving and transformed social relations. Although their motives were interpreted and misinterpreted through the discursive practices of writers and observers of the dominant race, the black British writers presented in the following chapters articulated the ramifications of this theft and of the trajectory of black British agency.

CHAPTER TWO

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NEGOTIATIONS IN *THE WONDERFUL ADVENTURES OF MRS. SEACOLE IN MANY LANDS*

INTRODUCTION

This essay argues that Mary Seacole's *Wonderful Adventures in Many Lands* participates in and articulates the political and cultural desires of the colored/ brown populations in the nineteenth century British West Indian colonies. The articulation of the colored subject's cultural desires presses upon Seacole's discursive strategy and thus forms the veiled historical content of her narrative. Through Mrs. Seacole, I also argue, we get a picture of a subjectivity that seems to be absent in much Victorian scholarship pertaining to nineteenth century racial discourse. Because of how Seacole and the colored community racially positioned themselves in the Victorian colonial social structure, we need to look at the autobiographical negotiations in *Wonderful Adventures* as what Ross Chambers has called an "oppositional narrative." The discursive practices of this community advocated, because of shared self-interest with the dominant group, the cultivation of relations rather than a revolution which threatens the overthrow of existing political and economic structures. Oppositional narratives and behaviors, as practiced by the nineteenth century colored colonial community in the British West Indies, were not radically resistant to structures of colonial society as much as they were opposed to the mentality that excluded themfrom full participation in that structure. Seacole personifies herself as an exemplar of progress and transition in England's age of transition, with the aim of being accepted as a member of the British family. This desire is no different from the desires of the rest of the educated members of the colored community. The personal experiences rendered in *Wonderful Adventures*, therefore, have very political referential implications. That is,

Wonderful Adventures is the porthole through which appears the political, social and economic desires of a larger community.

Mary Seacole (1805-1881) was born and raised during a period of contested change for the colored population of Jamaica. If people in England, during the first half of the nineteenth century, can be said to have experienced a period of transition, many members of Mary Seacole's generation in the colored community in the British West Indies were also able to make similar claims. She was part of a generation of colored British subjects who had gone from positions of limited political agency when she was born to that of full legal citizenship by the time she reached twenty-five years of age in 1830. In *Jamaica: Past and Present State*, the Baptist Missionary James M. Phillippo (1798-1879) described the events and repercussions of the Privilege Act of 1830 (which gave free coloreds full civil rights) in terms that may have been useful to Mary Seacole :

> Relieved from these proscriptions by which they had been enthralled and bowed down, they as a body immediately began to advance in the scale of civilization, intelligence, and virtue, so that at the present time they discover a renovation of character and a degree of improvement in manners, customs, and knowledge, of which history, in a similar space of time, scarcely affords a parallel. In their houses, dress, personal appearance (complexion excepted), general deportment, wealth, morals, and religion, many of them are on an equality with the most respectable of whites. (150)

And in *The West Indies and the Spanish Main*, Anthony Trollope (1812-1882), no friend of peoples of color or of African descent, begrudgingly conceded that the coloreds' conception of self had improved with their legal status and that they "look on themselves as the ascendant race. I look upon those of color as being so, or at any rate as about to become so" (73). By 1859, Trollope, the lifelong disciple of Thomas Carlyle, was able to bear witness that members of the colored community had gained access to places they had been denied thirty years ago:

> In Jamaica one does come in contact with coloured men. They are to be met at the Governor's table; they sit in the House of Assembly; they cannot be refused admittance to state parties, or even to large assemblies; they have forced themselves forward, and must be recognized as being in the van. Individuals decry them - will not have them within their doors - affect to despise them. But in effect the coloured men of Jamaica cannot be despised much longer. (74)

Perhaps it was the shifts in political status of the coloreds, occurring alongside the self-congratulatory and anxiety ridden era of progress and transition written about in the mother country, that made it possible in 1857 (the year she composed *Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands*) for her to appropriate the narrative and rhetoric of the day, look back, reflect, and align herself to what she perceived as progress in herself, the colored people of Jamaica, and the British citizens on both sides of the Atlantic when she writes "that the century and myself were both young together, and that we have grown side by side into age and consequence" (1). In *The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830-1870*, Walter E. Houghton writes that the British acutely felt that they were "living in an age of transition" (1). According to Houghton, "[t]his is the basic and almost universal conception of the period. And it is peculiarly Victorian. For although all ages are ages of transition, never before had men thought of their own time as an era of change *from* the past to the future. Indeed, in England that idea and the Victorian period began together" (1). For Seacole, change and the call for change were all around her. She was from a community of people that had publically argued for inclusion and equality with the whites of Jamaica. In other words, the colored population of Jamaica not only felt that complete civil rights and privileges were their birth right because they had white blood in their veins, but that they had mastered and were mastering the requisite credentials for equality.

Much of the significant recent scholarship on Mary Seacole addresses her

negotiations of gender and the maintenance of her Creole identity. And while a few scholars have rigorously analyzed the significance of "Englishness" in her *Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands*, others have treated the text as if it was written from the vantage point of a of colonial and Diaspora subject who had considered herself "black" or who had shared and expressed a "black" subjectivity. This latter approach, however, seems a little anachronistic and shortsighted, for it suggests a subjectivity that she (and most of the people like her) may never have embraced. It may also suggests that even non-whites, as a whole, perceived mixed-race peoples in the same light as they did pure blooded peoples of African descent. What complicates this position is the historical fact that throughout nineteenth century England , newspaper articles, chapter titles in travelogues of the West Indies, plays on the British stage, diary entries as well as works of fiction all expressly represented Mary Seacole's caste as a distinct group with access to resources denied "black" colonial subjects. Still, most scholars frequently and unavoidably allude to her "Creole," "hybrid," and" liminal" statuses without fully unpacking the cultural implications of Seacole's interpretation and construction of her discursive world. This tendency suggests that the ramifications of Seacole's narrative discourse is limited to gender issues and desires peculiar to her (and, perhaps, other woman of color) as a colonial subject. This means that the actual historical forces, which most scholars have recognized as being in the margins or entirely dismissed from her narrative, are to some extent taken for granted. Even when the social energies or cultural discourses beyond the margins are mentioned or alluded to, the full weight of the margins does not seem to be given serious critical consideration. What we tend to miss is the existence of the nuanced and, at times, self-contradictory network of political and cultural discourses with which Seacole skillfully wrestled. Most of this is due, however, to what little Seacole leaves today's critics to work with. Most importantly, as we properly praise

Mary Seacole for her uniqueness, we may fail to see how her narrative strategies mirror (and in some ways it is a convex and concave mirror) the political and social desires of the particular group (the free coloreds or "browns") of which she was a member.

What adds to the complexities of *Wonderful Adventures* are the culturally embedded genre constraints of the autobiography peculiar to a woman of color in mid-nineteenth century England. These genre constraints work to bring to the anterior the multifarious and interrelated discourses in the margins. That is, the form, the subject's representation of self within this cultural form, influences the presentation of the subject's performance in the content. As a form of self-representation that follows an author through the decisive moments of her or his life, autobiography not only shows the contributing forces in the author's development, but it also shows the author as a site of progress and development moving through history . The conspicuous absence of those forces and historical moments, as some of the scholars in the following section have noticed, haunts Seacole's autobiographical narrative and begs for attention. Autobiographies, more than other literary genres, are implicitly committed to the author showing how she or he has developed through a limited period in time. "Autobiography is about change," writes Carolyn A. Barros, and "it narrates a series of transformations" (1). During the Victorian period, notions of change, transition, and progress, were not only essential for the construction of an autobiographical self, but these ideas were equally essential for England's sense of itself as a nation. In all autobiographies an identity is presented to the reader. This identity is contingent on the autobiographer's imagined or interpreted relationship to her/his reader. If Harrison White is correct in his belief that "identities are triggered by contingencies" (5), then the constraints on Mary Seacole were not the same as those that may have formed a John Stuart Mill or a Harriet Martineau. Mrs. Seacole occupied a particular and profoundly complicated space in the

Victorian imagination. She was an entirely different sort of historical agent whose writing consciously and unconsciously served completely different functions. She was not regarded as "white," she did not see herself as "black," nor was she from a respected class or caste in the eyes of the black and white communities in the environment that she was bred. Since she was neither a slave nor had she ever experienced the conditions of slavery except as an observer, Seacole, as a member of the free colored population, was not only writing something new and different from what was by then conventional of the popular slave narratives circulating throughout England but her culturally generated subjectivity complicates our traditional binary reading of racial and colonial discourses.

When considering the history of race relations in the West Indies, Seacole was very cognizant that many of her white middle class readers in England would have approached her autobiography (if not with suspicion) with certain unflattering political, sexual and racialized assumptions. According to George Landow, "[l]ike all writings about the self, Victorian autobiographies embody the question of how the individual relates to what is outside himself; and what makes autobiography as a literary mode so representative of its time - in a word, so 'Victorian' - is that a concern with this problematic relationship lies close to the heart of all literature, all culture, of the age" (xiii). The construction of her autobiographical narrative, then, must always have in mind the tropes that have been ascribed and imposed on her not only as a member of the colored caste but also as a woman of color. She was, as one scholar has said, "doubly Othered." As a discursively strategic responses to the prejudices of her time, she represented herself as the antithesis of most ascriptions projected onto Creole and African peoples. To appeal to her reader, her self-representation was done without explicating racial tropes as products of Imperial power, and especially the powers that have limited the agency of her and her kind, but as transformable products of nature. She was an

outsider who wanted access both literally and metaphorically into wholesome Victorian homes. Therefore, she needed to present herself as a "non-white" British subject and citizen completely different from the "indolent" and static figure that was often read about in newspapers and travel books. To gain the access into white middle-class homes, and to receive the approval that she so much desired, she had to read her reader as she wrote, as well as incorporate what the reader knew about her exploits as "Mother Seacole" and a heroine of the Crimean War. In other words, for Seacole, England was what Raymond Williams (1973) calls a "knowable community" because she had to assess her position vis-à-vis her reader in England to construct her persona. According to Williams, it is always important to assess the position of the observer in and towards the community, "a position which is part of a community being known" (164). In *Orientalism*, Edward Said proposes a similar methodology, though in a different context and having a different trajectory, for analyzing an "author's position in a text" which is applicable to the position occupied by Seacole. Said suggests that we look at the author's "strategic location," which is a way to describe the author's relation and position to the material she or he writes about (20). So what we partially get in *Wonderful Adventures* is her interpretation of what the Victorian reader (who not only had knowledge of Seacole's celebrity but who may have also held many of the prejudices against peoples of African descent) may find acceptable. This is perhaps what Pierre Bourdieu means when he writes that "[a] player who is involved and caught up in the game adjusts not to what he sees but to what he fore-sees, sees in advance in the directly perceived present" (81). She had to construct a persona within a positive rather than a negative relationship to the Victorian community. In other words, Seacole's autobiographical negotiations involved highlighting and emphasizing those qualities and values that she and the reader shared, presenting testimonials and examples of how different she was from what they may have

expected, as well as giving an account of her life which would make it easier for the reader to accept her as a member of the national family. It is also to be remembered that this was being done in a period of high patriotism and nationalism, for England had just come out of a war. But because of the cultural baggage attached to members of hybrid races, she coded her narrative to show that she was among those who had developed and progressed beyond those she left behind.

To accomplish this, a certain amount of self-censorship was employed by Mrs. Seacole. When I say self-censorship I do not mean squashing her inner-most feelings, but rather eliding those social forces that contributed to her inner-most feelings and subjectivity. In *Wonderful Adventures*, she attempted to separate the personal (which she believes her reader is interested in) from the political (which may call into question the moral integrity of her community of readers). This strategy, of course, is in itself a political practice and points to a political awareness of the psychology of power and race relations on the part of the non-white nineteenth century writer who is trying to appeal to her imagined reader in England. Through this strategy of self-censorship the pressures from the margins of Seacole's narrative assume very peculiar discursive shapes and becomes "metacommentary." Fredric Jameson's idea of metacommentary is intricately related to Seacole's reading her reader and her autobiographical negotiations. According to Jameson, "every individual interpretation must include an interpretation of its own existence, must show its own credentials and justify itself: every commentary must be at the same time a metacommentary as well" (10). Metacommentary is unavoidable in an autobiography by a nineteenth century free woman of color who paradoxically identifies and embraces as her own the interests of the dominant community and long-time oppressor. Therefore, in the words of Jameson, metacommentary performed in the autobiographical negotiations of *Wonderful Adventures* finds itself "tracing the logic of

the censorship itself and of the situation from which it springs: a language that hides what it displays beneath its own reality as language, a glance that designates, through the very process of avoiding, the object forbidden" (17). This does not mean that Seacole intended completely to avoid the political; she only uses the genre restrictions imposed on her by the mid-century Victorian autobiography (*peculiar to her* present social and political position at the time) to construct a persona that will contribute to her getting what she wants. This is what James Scott means when he writes that "we must above all recognize that the creation of disguises depends on agile, firm grasp of the codes of meaning being manipulated. It is impossible to overestimate the subtlety of this manipulation" (139). We should then see these genre constraints more as the appropriation of genre constraints. Therefore, self-censorship as a characteristic of the appropriation of genre constraints of the autobiography is a kind of disguise rather than a deceptive mask. For Seacole, this discursive disguise is a thin veil: the face of the veiled subject is perceptible but not all of the details that make up its features.

This appropriation contributes to *Wonderful Adventures* being looked at in terms of what Ross Chambers has called an "oppositional narrative," especially since Mary Seacole seems to have no animus toward the mother country. That is, though she is in opposition to the social and cultural relationships that generated her as an image and personification of the Other, and because this relationship strongly influenced the mode of self-censorship that she employed, she paradoxically presents herself as being at one with the members of the society that has excluded her. According to Chambers, “no oppositional behavior can be *fully* acknowledged, in any society, as a challenge to the structures of power that are in place" (8). We can, then, see *Wonderful Adventures* as an attempt to ameliorate her sense of personal alienation that is also reflected in the cultural agenda of colored population. In fact, rhetorically, her status as an excluded subject is

displaced as abnormal through much of her narrative. In turn, her discursive strategy involves some form of nation building which includes her as the major actor.

1

THE BIOGRAPHY OF A PERSONA

On the surface, *Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands* (originally published by Blackwood in 1857) can be flatly read as the story of one mixed raced woman's voyage from obscurity in her native Jamaica to become what biographer Jane Robinson has hailed as "The Most Famous Black Woman of the Victorian Age." She was born Mary Jane Grant in 1805 in Kingston, Jamaica. Her father was a Scottish soldier and her mother a woman of African descent. Seacole attributes her love for adventure and camp life to her father's blood and her skills as a doctress to her mother, who, according to Seacole, distinguished herself as a healer. However, Seacole was raised by another woman and perhaps functioned as the woman's servant and as the companion of that woman's children. Mary Grant had visited England on several occasions, and upon her return she seems to have evolved into a more enterprising person. She moved back into her mother's home after her "patroness" dies and there perfects her skills in Creole healing arts. She later marries Edwin Seacole who, within a year, dies. There is no mention of children from this union. At the request of her brother Edmund, she goes to Panama to start her own business. It is in Panama, a place rendered as the site of chaos and lawlessness, that she employs her medical skills and seemingly single-handedly battles and defeats a cholera epidemic. She then returns to Jamaica, combats yellow fever, and later turns her attentions to the news of war in the Crimea. Inspired by patriotic zeal, she goes through all of the proper channels in which she would be able to put her medical knowledge to the service of British soldiers, only to get rejected. She, however, is not to be hindered and, with a relative of her dead husband, Thomas Day,

goes to the Crimea as a "sutler" and sets up the "British Hotel." It is during the Crimean War that she becomes famously known throughout England as "Mother Seacole" and , along with Florence Nightingale, as a heroine of the Crimean War. These are the major events that make up the content of Mary Seacole's autobiography.

What is apparent to any reader of *Wonderful Adventures* is that Seacole seems to have conspicuously left out some important political and cultural background about the world that contributed to her life and world view. This is noticeable once we have considered that her autobiography radiates with vivid details and commentary pertaining to her life beyond Kingston, Jamaica. That is, Seacole seems to have intentionally avoided the cultural and colonial forces that inform her subjectivity. What we, as scholars committed to highlighting ethnic identity and multiculturalism, have failed to acknowledge is the possibility that Seacole's discursive strategies may be a reflection of her appropriation of Creole cultural and political strategies and desires, however great the pains she employs to distance herself from the stereotypes projected onto the Creole and colored population. I hesitate to say "unconscious" because I believe that most of the self-censorship in *Wonderful Adventures* is intentional. She is parsimonious, allusive, silent and protectively subtle only when the narrative turns toward her inner self and the social climate of her British dominated Jamaica. This climate had, during the decades preceding the Crimean War, a well-reported and controversial history of which many of her readers would have been aware. In contrast to her characteristically un-detailed sketch of Jamaica, Seacole does offer to her reader vivid portraits of her travels, and she even makes a seemingly strong commentary on North American slavery, but it is rendered without indication or reference to the lived conditions that inform her opinions. Her tone suggests a common intimacy with the reader. It is this sympathetic tone that brings Seacole and her reader closer together. That is, she writes as if there is little

difference between herself and her white middle class English reader because she does not seem to perceive of herself as qualitatively Other. When *Wonderful Adventures* is looked at in this light, her attitude towards blacks and slavery, as well as the peculiar uniqueness of the persona she creates, will seem less bothersome. And it is this very elision that makes *Wonderful Adventures* such a complicated text. We see who Mary Seacole wants us to see, a sympathetic persona, but she skillfully and playfully veils from view the larger and, perhaps, disturbing circumstances that makes the *persona* of "Mother Seacole," for her, necessary. In short, she is intentionally trying to keep publically acknowledged colonial discourses out of her readers' living-rooms, and in this way she avoids what we seem to have uncritically accepted as "alienating" her reader.

The analogy of the "living-room" is a good way to view the personal and political implications and trajectory of Mrs. Seacole's narrative. Traditionally, the living-room is the one location in which the family gathers. This location, for Victorians, is the place of warmth and it is free of the concerns of the outside world. It is the center of the home, the domestic sphere. This place of safely, our scholarship tells us, is heavily protected from the intrusion of politics and all other worldly evils and moral impurities that the patriarch of the home must face on a daily basis. Standing in the open door, at the threshold, is Mary Seacole and all that *a* Mary Seacole represents. For this middle class Victorian family, this liminal figure may have provoked what H.L. Malchow sees as an "intense awareness of the 'natural' in human relationships - that is, of sexual perversion and 'miscegenation,' which often implied the subversion or even reversal of the assumed-to-be natural power relationships of class, gender, and race" (127). She faces the living-room, and may have on occasion been allowed temporary and conditional entrance. This living-room is where she desires to be and she sees that living-room as her birthright. At her back, completely out the view of those sitting in the living-room, are pure (or full)

blooded peoples of African descent, former slaves who may have not only contributed to the luxury that the occupants of the room value but also to the privileges that have made it possible for free coloreds like Mary Seacole to occupy the threshold. The figure at the threshold identifies and sympathizes with the desires of those before her. According to this figure at the threshold, the interests of those in the room are not dissimilar from her interests. But she knows that the only thing that prevents her from having full access and movement to this space is her distant affinity to those to whom she shows her back. At most, she may consider them, depending on the particular historical moment, with more than an anxious anthropological glance over her shoulder. But to completely embrace them, and to claim allegiance with them, can be interpreted as a movement backward in time, especially during a period which considered African agency as a regressive march to barbarism. Moreover, she is of a caste of people that does not perceive the blacks at her back as constitutionally morally or intellectually like her. They are the children of nature, while she is the product of progress. In short, these are not her people. In character and all that is essential for the maintenance of the living-room, she is like those within her gaze.

The irony of nineteenth century British West Indian colonial ironies is that the figure in the threshold is not exactly the familial and political ally Caliban had anticipated in William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. In Caliban's vision, the island, now populated by the offspring gendered from fantasized sexual union with Miranda, would have honored the native and formerly enslaved father rather than dismiss him as a ghost of the past. Nor, for Shakespeare's Caliban, would there have been any ambiguity in regards to political and racial allegiances. Liminal figures, such as Seacole, desiring entrance into the living-room as an accepted and autonomous member of the British family recognize themselves as British. For Mary Seacole and many of the colored folks of the British

West Indies, it is the good blood of Prospero's descendants that courses through their veins and is the criteria that should be used to define them. However, what makes her still a child and spokesperson of Caliban is the desire to break the constraints imposed upon peoples of African descent by the dominant culture. In general, for those in the dominant culture both the coloreds and the darker former slave are threats on multiple levels. Racially, economically, and morally (that is, ideologically and materially) the mixed-raced descendents of Caliban are sites of disturbance and discomfort. During the first half of the nineteenth century, it was the coloreds, more than the former black slaves, who made strong claims that they, rather than the transient whites, were the true native sons of the West Indies.

The figure at the threshold, the liminal West Indian figure of which Mary Seacole was a product, was not altogether radically opposed to the living-room or what it represented. Throughout Mary Seacole's childhood and young adult life, the colored population petitioned for legal access to what they saw as their birthright. They saw the structure as legitimate but not the logic that excluded them from participating in the upkeep and profits absorbed by the structure. As a representative of this liminal caste, Mary Seacole's *Wonderful Adventures* can broadly be called an "oppositional narrative," because her personal desires and the desires of the group she is a part of and in many inadvertent ways resemble, honors the structure she discursively assaults. Therefore, Seacole's personal "oppositional narrative" functions also as a "meta-commentary" on Creole-Anglo Saxon colonial relations.

2

CULTURAL AND DISCURSIVE BACKGROUND OF MARY SEACOLE'S FREE COLOREDS

As I have already stated, Mary Seacole participated in a network of historical and

cultural codes when she composed *Wonderful Adventures*. That is, the social and historical codes that she inherited formed her discursive practices we find embedded in her text. This is perhaps what Karl Marx meant when he wrote in *The Eighteenth Brumaire* that men do not make history “under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly found, given and transmitted from the past" (595). When reading *Wonderful Adventures* one ought to be cognizant of the social history that formed her subjectivity and of how the particular social history of the coloreds in the British colonies may have informed the interpretative practices of her audience in England. However much Mary Seacole may have painted herself as an independent historical agent, her discursive persona and rhetorical strategies were also reflections of the broader political and social desires of other colored persons. The colored community’s political and cultural discourses piggybacked the discursive strategies of Seacole's *Wonderful Adventures*. In other words, as a product of a specific kind of racial self-awareness, her self-interpretation proves to be a reflection of the concerns of the subgroup from which she comes. Thus, embedded in Seacole's discursive negotiations are the cultural desires of the free coloreds of her generation in response to the modes of exclusion in the British West Indies.

The free colored communities in the British West Indies came into being as a result of widespread abuses of power and exclusionary practices on the part of the colonial government. The members of the colored community (sometimes called "brown") were the offspring of white male fathers and freed and enslaved women of African descent. Miscegenation in the colonies began as the result of a scarcity of white women and the abuse of the master/slave relationship in the British colonies. The response to this scarcity ultimately revealed, for the colonial government, an embarrassing public misuse of power and a violation of the idea of freedom. For many

single and married white males who stayed in the colonies there were plenty woman of African descent available as outlets for their sexual pleasures. These women were black and mix blooded slaves and, as slaves, vulnerable to the whims of white masters and of those acting on the behalf of absentee plantation owners. Since slave status passed from mother to child, the offspring of black/white sexual relations were also born slaves. Many slave women and offspring were, according to historians, given preferential treatment and, in many cases, eventually freed long before slavery was abolished in the British colonies in 1834. Unlike the general population of slaves, these "Brown slaves," writes historian Gad J. Heuman, also "had a greater opportunity to learn skills, and many worked as house slaves" (4). The more liberal or generous planters, however, may have had bouts of conscience and, unable to bear the thought that their own blood (also recognized as such by many members of the white community) was in bondage and publicly vulnerable to abuse and exploitation, manumitted their illegitimate offspring. The failure or unwillingness to free one's illegitimate children and not provide some form of education and financial support also opened delinquent white males (married and unmarried) to public ridicule. M.K. Bacchus writes that "[w]hile children born to slave mothers were also slaves, some social stigma was usually attached to those fathers who could afford to purchase their children's freedom and did not do so" (71). Many coloreds, mostly the males, who received education at home or in England, later entered various professions and were taken on in minor administrative positions. "Women in this category," which includes Mary Seacole and her mother, writes Heuman," became shopkeepers and sold provisions, millinery, confectionery, and preserves. They usually had two or three slaves who traveled into the interior of the island to sell commodities on the estates. In addition, freewomen owned and managed lodging houses throughout the island" (9). "But," Heuman reminds us, "whatever their parentage, freedmen did

not become legal equals of whites; for them manumission only meant a release from ownership and was not a grant of full civil rights" (4). For the free coloreds, full legal civil rights was not to come until the end of the 1820s, when Seacole was in her mid-twenties.

A) THE “FALLEN” WOMAN OF COLOR

Because of the pseudo-taboo that impregnated the image of the woman of color, Mary Seacole was born into a discourse that shadowed her as being among the “fallen” and morally tainted. This representation of mulatto and colored women was altered and magnified when more married and marriageable white women established themselves in the colonies in the late 1830s. It was, in fact, the increased presence of white European women that seemed to have transformed the colonial social scene into a possible place of domesticity rather than adventure. Although established modes of impropriety were no longer easily shrugged off, respectable white women were still more inclined to indict the low moral character of the colored woman as the cause of the illicit encounters. It became a conventional practice for observers of the colonial scene to suggestively throw light on the stereotyped carnal inclinations of women of like Mary Seacole rather than on uneven relationships of power, and abuses of freedom, that shaped colonial social life and the sexual interaction between white men and colored women. Therefore, in terms of race relations, the rhetoric of the “fallen woman” as applied to the woman of color was a discursive attempt to keep women like Mary Seacole on the margins of respectable community or beyond the pale of Victorian domesticity.

The writings of this period suggest that the woman of color was a child of her erotic and primitive nature. The colored woman's primal psychological and moral limitations, unformed by education, Christianity and the tools of proper feminine deportment, placed her near or at the level of the Victorian fallen women. Like the

nineteenth century discourse of the prostitute analyzed in Anderson's *Tainted Souls and Painted Faces: The Rhetoric of Falleness in Victorian Culture*, the woman of color is essentially in a fallen condition. Her moral character is always in question and thus falleness is inseparable from perceptions of her as a social agent. The forces that caused a woman to "fall" were suspected of being peculiar to the non-white female subject, and her fate and choices, therefore, cannot fully be attributed to the environment.

In the fiction and non-fiction of the first half of the nineteenth century, colored women were alternately represented as always inclined to gain favor by making themselves sexually available to white men and more appealing than white women. In other words, the Creole woman of color was often described as willing to employ whatever means available to gain access into the broader respectable white community and into a white man's heart. These behavioral practices attributed to the woman of color were not presented as maneuvers in response to the environment. For instance, in the anonymously published *The Woman of Colour*, the colored female protagonist, Olivia Fairfield, is presented as an eligible bride to her white first cousin only because her deceased slaveholder father has left a desirable dowry. In this early nineteenth century novel, it is Olivia's dowry, and not her exemplary and chase character, that many of the secondary characters find appealing. Through the dowry, Olivia may be able to pay for entrance into the community. In *Journal of a West Indian Proprietor,* Matthew “Monk” Lewis describes women of African descent, his very own slaves included, as always ready vessels of procreation. Colored women, writes Lewis, "lay themselves out to captivate some white person, who takes them for mistresses, under the appellation of housekeepers" (169). The beautiful mulatto house servant in *Hamel, the Obeah Man* is not merely consumed with lust for the protagonist of the novel, but is presented as representative of all mixed race women. The following dialogue from *Hamel* enacts the

discourse concerning the sexual nature of the mulatto woman:

> "There is love at the bottom of all this," said the Obeah man in a whisper. "These Mulattoes and Mustees think of nothing else, from the hour in which they are weaned from their mothers' breast until time has wasted away every trace of their beauty; and then they console themselves with the recollection of all the transports they have enjoyed."
> "From the mother's breast?"
> "Yes, master, yes; their mothers breathe it into their very souls with every kiss which they impart on them, fill their heads with the anticipation of the charms they will possess, and the conquest they will make, and the riches they will acquire, by their connection with some great buckra planter." (193-194)

Characterizations in these texts all seem to reflect the representations of free women of color that Mrs. Seacole attempted to write against and negotiate.

Very often we rely on and repeat the idea that the mode of sexual interaction between white men and non-white women was accepted without controversy and contest. This is because we rely on sources very similar to the ones I have used above. However, for Mrs. Seacole and many free colored this issue hit home and some representatives of the colored community recognized the broader cultural significance of what was going on. For instance, John Campbell, the second colored man to sit in the Assembly, questioned the systems of power that places the free colored woman on the level of the prostitute. For Campbell and other members of the colored community, without civil rights and equal protections and privileges, the less favored group is at the mercy of the more powerful. For Campbell, full civil rights has the ability of self-empowerment and thus can contribute to one's self-worth. In his 1816 petition to the Colonial Minister in which he requests the lifting of disabilities for free coloreds, Campbell also implicates the delinquent conduct and abuses of freedom in the colonies. Among Campbell's grievances was a passionate reminder to the Colonial Minister "of the peculiar social conditions relative to the women of his class in the colony. Colored men had no safeguards

against the seduction of their wives and daughters; 'for however great may be the merits and deserts of single colored females, they are only looked upon and considered as the prey and the prostitutes of the white males.' He thought that the repeal of the laws against them would help these females to develop self respect" (Mavis Campbell 85). Years later, the political ramifications around the female mulatto's virtue was still being addressed. Richard Hill, a colored stipendiary magistrate, saw the unstable predicament of many colored women and illegitimate children as a manifestation of power that seemed to pervert the ideas of freedom and liberty. In his history of Jamaica called *Lights and Shadows*, Hill argued that an emancipated colony's total "disregard for social morality" was antagonistic to the purposes of liberty. The imbalance of power, for Hill, has caused a particular type of humiliation which has created situations similar to slavery in which the "family state in which the ordinances of nature is not sanctified as the ordinances of God." The politically and economically weaker, Hill is suggesting, is the most vulnerable. "Freedom," Hill writes, suffers no violation greater than the frail confidence by which the weaker sex is drawn into the power of the stronger (63). Under law, the stronger member of the arrangement is under no obligation to the weaker. Therefore, what white colonials reported and what we uncritically have accept as accepted was an emotionally charged and explicitly political issue for free coloreds. It is also the type of subject that Mary Seacole, in her attempts to acquire entrance into Victorian homes, would elide from her narrative. Falleness questions purity and dignity, and a woman like Mrs. Seacole did not want to participate in making a topic of this nature an ingredient of her persona or connected to her name and story. A more thorough analysis of this particular phenomenon may throw further light on the meaning and psychological

ramifications of freedom in the British West Indies. Such an investigation may suggest that, for many women of color, relationships with white males were more than an accepted financial arrangement. I believe it was the emotional resonance surrounding interracial sexual interaction in Jamaica that caused Seacole to avoid the issue.

B) ON THE FREE COLORED COMMUNITY

However, even in an unstable political climate, the colored community gradually presented themselves as willing competitors and actors on the social stage in the colonies. The restrictions on the colored communities, however, varied from colony to colony. For much of the first quarter of the nineteenth century, free coloreds, however well-off, were not allowed to give testimony against whites and could not serve on a jury; they were forbidden legal action against wrongs perpetuated by whites; they were not allowed to sit with whites in church; they had no vote, were forbidden from occupying political office, even though many free coloreds owned slaves and possessed considerable property. The position they resentfully occupied in the colonial scene was a space between that of the whites above them and the blacks at the bottom of the social scale. A social buffer is not an equal.

The cultural agenda of the free coloreds was, as expressed through Mrs. Seacole's text, assimilationist. In the petitions submitted by coloreds were the acknowledgements of shared interests and ancestry with the white population and they often made strong patriotic claims in support of the British constitution. According to Duncker, "fundamental to all free coloreds was a desire to be measured by the same yardstick as those used for people in similar positions who were white" (Heuman 10). The presence of European blood coursing through their veins, which Mrs. Seacole emphasizes early in her

narrative as character forming, constituted consideration for legal status equal to that of whites in the British West Indies. In other words, many free coloreds of Mary Seacole's generation saw themselves as equal to whites in all that was regarded as essential for full civil rights. The wealth and social advancements that they had achieved marked them as different from the darker and "pure blooded" blacks who occupied the bottom of the colonial social structure. They were not so much antagonistic toward the structure of colonial and slave society than they were toward being excluded from protections and participations within that structure which they claimed as their birthright.

We must not assume that Seacole's middle class white British reader was a naive and uniformed reader. Many members of Britain's reading public were aware of the stereotypes attached to the mixed race population in the West Indies, and others knew (through various newspapers, journals, and travel books about the West Indies, personal experience and from friends and associates who had visited the colonies) of the struggles which had been going on between the planter class and their colored offspring. Many of *Wonderful Adventures'* original readers were able to appreciate and detect that Mrs. Seacole expressed civility and good taste by keeping the unpleasant details of life in the British colonies in the margins of her narrative. Therefore, it was not merely her role in the Crimean War that made her a celebrity; it was also the cultural connotations attached to her as a woman of color that added to their interests in what she had to say about herself. It is doubtful that anyone picking up a copy of *Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands* did not know that the author was a woman of color. When we read and analyze Seacole's narrative, the various degrees of racial and colonial knowledge among England's readership must be kept in mind.

3

THE NARRATIVE AND THE TEXT: *WONDERFUL ADVENTURES OF MRS. SEACOLE IN MANY LANDS*

In *Wonderful Adventures*, Mary Seacole performs what amounts to her appropriation of England's narrative of progress. Her narrative of progress is rendered in three stages. It is important to remember that Mrs. Seacole, and the educated members of the colored population in the British West Indies, felt that they were products and participants of progress. This trait and the evidence of their social practices made it possible for them to argue that they were no different to their white relatives and contemporaries, and far more advanced than the uneducated and degraded blacks. They believed that they had proven their value as social agents, even within unfair legal constraints. These cultural and personal concerns are the generative forces underlining Mary Seacole's autobiographical travel narrative. According to David Parker,

> behind any autobiographical act is a self for whom certain things matter and are given priority over others. Some of these things are not merely objects of desire or interest, but command the writer's admiration or respect. These are the key 'goods' the writer lives by, shaping her acts of ethical deliberation and choice. Such goods may include ideals of self-realization, social justice, equality of respect, or care for certain others. We can say that commitment to these goods orients her morally, or,... constitute her as a self in moral space. Such goods inevitably shape the stories she tells when she projects her future or construes her past or present. In short, these goods are at the heart of life narrative, necessary constituents of it. (1)

Thus, being able to prove that they were on the same level of intellectual and moral development as their white relatives, and that they shared a common bloodline with their white neighbors, they felt that they were in essence the same. The first stage, where Seacole's discursive persona and desired relationship to the reader are developed, is the less the seemingly simple description of her early life in Jamaica and trip to England.

This early stage of her narrative establishes a persona who is eager to engage and embrace the exigencies of progress. The self-image of the colored community of her generation and becomes significant in the later stages. The second stage is the hellish and chaotic landscape of Central America, where she shows herself as the embodiment of Western culture and Victorian values. And the third stage, where she achieves fame as a heroine and the embodiment of Victorian domestic and cultural values, is on the battlefields of the Crimean War. It is in this final stage that she shows herself as the maternal and patriotic embodiment of good Scotch blood. Throughout these performative moments, Seacole's tone suggests sympathy with the reader. I mean sympathy loosely in the sense Foucault suggests in *The Order of Things* as a discursive means of rendering sameness. For Foucault, the "play of sympathies" is a form of "resemblance" (23). As a discursive posture, sympathy is and has a gravitational force that attracts and draws objects together. According to Foucault, "[s]ympathy is an instance of the *Same* so strong and so insistent that it will not rest content to be merely one of the forms of likeness; it has the dangerous power of *assimilating*, of rendering things identical to one another, of mingling them, of causing their individuality to disappear – and thus of rendering them foreign to what they were before" (23-4). The rendering of sameness, rather than putative cultural or racial differences, generates the opening of Seacole's narrative and establishes her identity vis-à-vis her white targeted audience.

A) STAGE ONE

The sympathetic tone and Seacole's rhetoric of sameness confronts the reader in the first paragraph. Mary Seacole presents herself as an active and developing subject of historical events. She writes that she was born in Kingston, Jamaica, "some time in the present century." Her introductory paragraph suggests that she (as well as her reader) is a benefactor of progress and its consequences. "But I do not mind confessing that the

century and myself were both young together, and that we have both grown side by side into age and consequence" (1). Within this brief space, she embeds herself ("we have both grown")within the dialogue of progress, thus making herself constitutionally no different from her reader. Within the following passage, she strategically goes on to blur contemporary notions of racial distinctions between coloreds and whites with the power she attributes to biology and the ambiguity of her use of the term "Creole."

> I am a Creole, and have good Scotch blood coursing in my veins. My father was a soldier, of an old Scotch family: and in him I often trace my affection for a camp-life, and my sympathy with what I have heard my friends call 'the pomp, pride, and circumstances of glorious war.' Many people have traced to my Scotch blood that energy and activity which are not always found in the Creole race, and which have carried me to so many varied scenes: perhaps they are right. I have often heard the term 'lazy Creole' applied to my country people; but I am sure I do know what it is to be indolent. All my life long I have followed the impulse that led me to be up and doing; and so far from resting idle anywhere, I have never wanted inclination to rove, nor will powerful enough to find a way to carry out my wishes. (1-2)

In general, both whites and coloreds in the British West Indies were considered Creole. Although today we may assume that the term only signified degrees of racial and cultural mixture among non-whites, Creole was used also to designate white subjects who were born in the West Indies or who had lived and worked in the colonies for long periods of time. Although she later may suggests that by "Creole" she is referring to the free coloreds, the ambiguity of the term in the first paragraph is her act of miming the reader and infiltrating white consciousness with the language of sameness. As Regenia Gagnier has argued, "[d]iscursive production must be understood in terms of the multifarious purposes and projects of specific individuals or groups in specific material circumstances" (40). In an attempt to move herself closer to her white reader, she goes on to the importance of biology. She writes that she has "good Scotch blood coursing"

through her veins and, by proxy, she is from "an old Scotch family." Through these devices Seacole makes claim to a British heritage and psychological constitution. But it is not any heritage: the qualifying term is "good," which already suggests, deterministically, that she may have inherited those "good" qualities of this "old Scotch family." Thus, her initial self-introduction appears to be that of an autobiographical narrative of a white woman, whose distinguishing personality trait is that some people have called her a "female Ulysses" (2).

In the following paragraph there appears to be some tension in Seacole's narrative and it involves her mother. The idea of "good Scotch blood," "old Scotch family," and the illegitimate circumstances of her birth are indeed incongruous and not easily dismissed. To circumvent the vulgar cultural, political and moral significance of the union that created her, Seacole begins this paragraph with "It is not my intention to dwell at any length upon the recollections of my childhood" (2). Although the mother is mentioned more often than her father, Seacole starts this curious paragraph as though it is a small matter that may bear no reflection on her own personality. Her mother, she tells us, “kept a boarding house in Kingston, and was, like very many of the Creole women, an admirable doctress.” Seacole wants to emphasize for the reader that her mother had a position of respectability by “the officers of both services, and their wives” (2) in the city of Kingston. “It was very natural that I should inherit her tastes; and so I had from early youth a yearning for medical knowledge and practice which has never deserted me”(2). Mrs. Seacole avoids the obvious suggestion of sexual impropriety by placing her mother as the source of purity, respectability, colonial health and distributor medical knowledge. Perhaps it is because her mother's relationship to her father is one that her middle class British audience certainly did not approve of. Dwelling on her childhood, the background of which was given in the previous section, conjures up images of moral

impropriety, domination and abuses. It also opens the characterization of her mother as among the fallen and sexualized women of color, and tarnishes the noble potential of the good Scotch heritage that seems to motivate the psyche of her autobiographical persona.

Seacole's unwillingness to "dwell" on the social contexts that formed childhood memories functions as an overt desire to avoid discourses that she, and perhaps her white middle-class reader in England, may have found disagreeable and alienating. But though marginalized, these unpleasant discourses paradoxically contribute to the writing and enjoyment of Seacole's subtle narrative of progress. What gets dismissed from the text belongs to an unjust and morally tarnished age, the century still in its youth (a political and historical age aligned with childhood development). That is, this period that she will not "dwell" upon refers back to a social relationship both she and many of her middle class readers have outgrown. Moreover, to evoke a detailed description of her childhood would have involved an acknowledgement of the political and social differences she is trying to avoid.

Although Seacole seems to not have been raised by her mother, she was put under the care of an old lady whom she describes as "my kind patroness" (2). The nature of the old woman's patronage is left unuttered, but young Mary was brought "up in her household among her own grandchildren, and who could scarcely have shown me more kindness had I been one of them" (2). Even here, Seacole refuses to apply to herself a concrete employment that may suggests difference and subservience. She paints herself as companion rather than as hired help. To add onto these suggestions of sameness is the ambiguous fantasy of home. It is during her contact with the family of her unnamed patroness that she starts envisioning England as home and destination. She writes that "I was never weary of tracing upon an old map the rout to England; and never followed with my gaze the stately ships homeward bound without longing to be in them, and see the

blue hills of Jamaica fade into the distance" (4). While the idea of England seems to have a metaphysical attraction, the "blue hills of Jamaica" are rendered as a place from which she wishes to escape. These visions of England seem to become more pronounced as she develops into a woman. Her use of "homeward bound" has split connotations: it can suggests that the ships are taking its European passengers home as well as mean that England is her desired home. But England as destination functions more than a form of mere flattery for her reader: England had always been seen as the center of civilization, the site of progress. It is also where many members of the colored community, usually the males, went for education. For Seacole, transport from tropical Jamaica to England is an indication of her own personal development and of her own progress.

Her first visit to England, in the company of "some relatives" (4), is also couched subtly in transitional terms which will have relevance later in her narrative.

> I shall never forget my first impressions of London. Of course, I am not going to bore the reader with them; but they are as vivid now as though the year 18- (I had very nearly let my age slip then) had not been long ago numbered with the past. Strangely enough, some of the most vivid of my recollections are the efforts of the London street-boys to poke fun at my and my companion's complexion. I am only a little brown - a few shades duskier than the brunettes whom you all admire so much; but my companion was very dark, and a fair (if I can apply the term to her) subject to her rude wit. She was hot-tempered, poor thing! and as there were no policemen to awe the boys and turn our servants' head in those days, our progress through the London streets was sometimes a rather chequered one (4).

The important phrases in this passage are "numbered with the past" and "Strangely enough." The former phrase situates the incident in developmental terms, during "those days," while the latter suggests that what follows was not indicative of British character even then. This brief episode, an example of what I had said earlier about her ability to read the reader, is designed to flatter the sensibility and self-image of Seacole's present-

day audience. However, though she critiques prejudices based on the complexion of skin, it is arranged in terms appealing to the imagined reader's sense of self as tolerant and educated. She locates the mentality that generates the incident in the form of undeveloped thinkers like little boys (especially "street-boy," whose level of education and sophistication are held in doubt). This "Strangely enough" is worded as if her modern day reader has evolved from childish modes of thinking and may not sympathize with this uneducated and intellectually undeveloped class of people. After all, these are street boys. The use of street boys as models of racialized thinkers can be seen as her commentary on the intellectual development of prejudiced minds. She distances herself from her darker companion by highlighting the other's emotional nature ("rude wit," "hot tempered"), which seems to suggests that her companion is subject to violent emotions that may be the result of the degree of her race mixture. Her companion, then, is in comparison positioned as less emotionally, developmentally, and intellectually suited than young Mary to meet the cool and logical thinking required for success in a civilized culture. The comparison between Seacole and her companion suggests that Mary, at this age and even before setting foot in London, had already evolved emotionally and intellectually and that she has tamed violent emotions. She is not like the stereotype of the hot tempered and emotional mulatto. That is to say, through this comparison, that the volatile companion is subtly made into the Other.

Although the reason for her stay in London is unspecified, she, like many colored men of her generation, seemed to have received some form of education which may have contributed to the apparent elevation in her activities and perception of self. On her first visit, which lasted for about a year, she is with relatives. Her exact occupation in England is never mentioned: was she there as a servant, which is likely; or was she taken to England to learn a trade? If the latter was the case, then Mrs. Seacole certainly would

have elaborated on this blessing which was not experienced by most colored women. The central point is that Mrs. Seacole is very strategic and selective of the information she is willing to give to her reader. However, when she returns to Jamaica she seems to now have acquired the instincts, aspirations, and talents of a merchant, thus enabling her to drape her persona in the garb of an independent merchant. She writes: "Before long I started again for London, bringing with me a large stock of West Indian preserves and pickles for sale. After remaining two years here, I started for home "(4). She offers no insight into what may have caused this elevation from passive companion and dependent to business woman. Moreover, she couches the nature of her later journeys in terms of commercial progress and gain. She writes that "Before I had been long in Jamaica I started upon other trips, many of them undertaken with a view to gain" (5). These are the actions of a young woman with a sense of self and direction originally not indicated in her native land. In short, she has presented herself as productive and contributing member of Great Britain with signs of independence which may have been much appreciated by her middle class reader. Moreover, her budding entrepreneurial spirit is performed as an indication of commercial energy not attributed to either the indolent colonial whites or the reported lazy and feeble coloreds. This transformation, as Seacole presents it, is the result of coming into contact with England and acquired on English soil.

After Mrs. Seacole has discursively made inroads placing her as a participant in the commercial community, an activity which serves as her bridge between England and Jamaica, she sets into motion the elements of caretaker that later in life brought her fame. These elements are brought into play through the marriage and death of her husband Edmund Seacole. Even here, the information she offers is strategic and selective and arranged to show and emphasize her domestic and saintly virtues. Edmund is presented as sickly. The lack of any indication that there was sexual and emotional attraction and

contact (resulting in pregnancy and children) may suggests that she and Edmund was an asexual couple. The likelihood that their union was asexual is enigmatic because of the way she originally renders their involvement with one another: "I couldn't find a way to say 'no' to a certain arrangement timidly proposed by Mr. Seacole, but married him" (5). Although the idea of her having had a pre-matrimonial sexual relation is alluded to, it is quickly punctuated by the establishment of marriage, which occurred in the Church of England. Mary Seacole was aware of the stigma attached to many women of color. She also knew the social stigma attached to mixed marriages, and by not mentioning Mr. Seacole's race she avoids receiving the condemnation of some readers in England. Edmund, however, may have been white, which accounts for silencing his pedigree. According to Seacole's biographer Jane Robinson, Edmund's grandfather served with Admiral Nelson and he was from prominent family in the West Indies. Her position as caretaker and nurse in this arrangement desexualizes her. Moreover, by making clear to the reader that she has turned away subsequent suitors further removes her from the idea of mulatto woman as fallen woman. Throughout this interlude with her Edmund, only her desires to nurse and serve are presented.

Mary Seacole's narrative suggests that between the Kingston fire of 1843 and the cholera epidemic that swept through Jamaica in 1850, the mature and industrious foundation of "Mother Seacole" had developed. These events prepare her for stage two of her adventures. She paints herself further as a woman of action and value, not given to despair, even after her home and business, along with much of Kingston, had been burnt to the ground. She writes that she had "set to work again in a humbler way, and rebuilt my house by degrees." Moreover, she says that her "reputation as a skillful nurse and doctress, for my house was always full of invalid officers and their wives from Newcastle, or the adjacent Up-Park Camp. Sometimes I had a naval or military surgeon

under my roof, from whom I never failed to glean instruction, given, when they learned my love for their profession" (8).Her education in the medical arts is further developed when a cholera epidemic swept through Jamaica in 1850. "While the cholera raged," she writes," I had but too many opportunities of watching its nature, and from a Dr. B-----, who was then lodging in my house, received many hints as to its treatment which I afterwards found invaluable" (9). After the Jamaican cholera epidemic, she prepares for the second stage of her narrative: the journey to the Isthmus of Panama to assist her brother who has established a store and hotel.

B) STAGE TWO

In stage two of her narrative, Mrs. Seacole represents herself as vessel and image of British culture. During this stage in her narrative, she sets out to impress onto the mind of the reader her desire and ability to transport British values to a world of corruption and chaos. Seacole's career in Central America recalls Marlowe's gothic journey through Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. She attempted to establish businesses there on two separate occasions. During both of her journeys, the climate, terrain and most of its inhabitants are described in terms of evil and Otherness. What she confronts is the antithesis of Western civilization. It is described as a difficult journey in hostile territory that is resistant to progress , "as if nature had determined to throw every conceivable obstacle in the way of those who would seek to join the two great oceans of the world" (10). However, she says that "Not yet... does civilization rule at Panama. The weak sway of the New Granada republic, despised by lawless men, and respected by none, is powerless to control the refuse of every nation which meet together upon its soil. Whenever they feel inclined now they overpower the law easily"(10). New Granada, then, is a lawless and chaotic hell-hole, seemingly impregnated by pirates, with a disease infested climate that alters the constitutions of its inhabitants.

Unlike the gradual transformation that Conrad's hero undergoes as he advanced further into the African jungle , and unlike the altered physical and moral states undergone by his idol Kurtz, the persona of Mother Seacole is presented to her British reader as being strongly determined to uphold the civilized standards and values that have bred her. She represents her moral constitution as being impervious to the morally corrupting and physically deteriorating effects of the tropics. Only her clothes are stained by the effects of the environment but not her sense of self as representative of a civilized nation.

> And as with that due regard for personal appearance, which I have always deemed a duty as well as a pleasure to study, I had, before leaving Navy bay, attired myself in a delicate light blue dress, a white bonnet prettily trimmed, and an equally chased shawl, the reader can sympathize with my distress. However, I gained the summit, and after an arduous descent, of a few minutes duration, reached the river-side; in a most piteous plight, however, for my pretty dress, from its contact with Gatun clay, looked as red as if, in the pursuit of science, I had passed through a strong solution of muriatic acid. (13)

As she paints herself as the image and source of British dignity, the prominent characters she encounters resembles a gallery of inept and corrupt officials, racist and arrogant Americans, and convicts. Among the characters sharing the tropical stage with Mother Seacole are "a coarse black priest" and his "stupid worshippers" (33), a "soldier-police" force incline to taking bribes (43); she "found the Spanish Indians treacherous, passionate, and indolent, with no higher aim or object but simply to enjoy the present after their own torpid, useless fashion" (72). Other than the very pretty and honorable white wife of a black judge (clearly a union her nineteenth-century middle class white reader would not approve), most of the women she sets her eyes on, especially the young American women, are far from candidates for angels in the house. She writes that

> Although many of the women on their way to California showed clearly enough that the life of license they sought would not be altogether unfamiliar to them, they still retained some appearance of decency in their attire and manner; but in many cases... the female companions of the successful gold-diggers appeared in no hurry to resume the dress or obligations of their sex. Many were clothed as the men were, in flannel shirt and boots; rode their mules in unfeminine fashion, but with much ease and courage; and in their conversation successfully rivalled the coarseness of their lords. I think, on the whole, that those French lady writers who desire to enjoy the privileges of man, with the irresponsibility of the other sex, would have delighted with the disciples who were carrying their principles into practice in the streets of Cruces. (20)

But they, too, may be victims of the transformative effects of the climate or an indication of the lack of moral development found across the Atlantic. What is important is that Mrs. Seacole represents herself maintaining Western (at least British) standards of manners and appearances. Although her contemporary reader may have empathized with Seacole's comic plight, it is important for us today to take into consideration that the moral sentiments that she gives expression to are antagonistic and incongruous to the popularly imagined personality ascribed to the typical colored woman. The stereotype of the period suggests that Seacole should have been at home in such a sexually free, promiscuous, and lawless place. By setting herself apart from other women in the tropics of Central America, she has also continued the process whereby she desexualizes herself before the reader. The self-characterization we get is that of an intrepid and unprotected Victorian widow dropped into the wilds of alien Panama, who carries the torch of virtue and righteousness. Her persona, once again illustrating the development of her moral subjectivity, is explicitly sympathetic towards her reader's concern for rules of propriety. As she takes advantage of these moral concerns, Mrs. Seacole simultaneously challenges contemporaneous assumptions pertaining to the colored women's sexual and moral nature.

A landscape as filthy, murky, and damp as the one Seacole has described invites her to further showcase her strength of character and knowledge of modern medicine. In this crucial scene, cholera has broken out, and Mrs. Seacole is the only person available with the knowledge and courage to do battle against the disease. Without the aid of a bona fide medical doctor, she contributed to saving many lives and it appears as if she accomplished this feat almost single-handedly. She writes that "[t]here was no doctor in Cruces; the nearest approach to one was a little timid dentist, who was there by accident, and who refused to prescribe for the sufferer, and I was obliged to do my best" (25). Even the "Spanish doctor, who was sent for from Panama, became nervous and frightened at the horrors around him," could not relieve the fears of the people of Cruces, who "saw that he was not familiar with the terrible disease that he was called upon to do battle with, and preferred trusting to the one who was" (27). Thus Mary Seacole became known to the people of Cruces as "the yellow woman from Jamaica with the cholera medicine" (27).

Seacole, however, knows that humility is an important feminine virtue. She is very aware that a show of humility (combined with a representation of her sense duty) is a quality her Victorian reader will admire. Therefore, to safeguard against charges of grandstanding, she writes:

> And here I must pause to set myself right with my kind reader. He or she will not, I hope, think that, in narrating these incidences, I am exalting my poor part in them unduly. I do not deny (it is the only thing indeed that I have to be proud of) that I *am* pleased and gratified when I look upon my past life, and see times now and then, and places here and there, when and where I have been enabled to benefit my fellow-creatures suffering from ills my skills could often remedy. Nor do I think the kind reader will consider this feeling an unworthy one. If it be so, and if, in the following pages, the account of what Providence has given me strength to do on larger fields of action be considered vain and egotistical, still I cannot help narrating them, for my share in them seems to be the one and only claim I

> have to interest the public ear…. I am not ashamed to confess - that I love to be of service to those who need a woman's help. And where ever the need arises - on whatever distant shore - I ask no greater or higher privilege than to minister to it. (25-26)

As the embodiment of British manners, morals, feminine sacrifice and Victorian liberal thought, she offers her opinions of Americans and the institution of slavery and race prejudice that are still practiced in North America. What is important, however, about her comments about slavery in North America, is her desire to resist rhetorically establishing connections that may suggest the kind of sameness she expresses towards whites.

> my experience of travel had not failed to teach me that Americans (even from the Northern States) are always uncomfortable in the company of coloured people, and very often show this feeling in stronger ways than by sour looks and rude words. I think, if I have a little prejudice against our cousins across the Atlantic - and I do confess to a little - it is not unreasonable. I have a few shades of deeper brown upon my skin which shows me related - and I am proud of the relationship- to those poor mortals whom you once held enslaved, and whose bodies America still owns. And having this bond, and knowing what slavery is; having seen with my eyes and heard with my ears proof positive enough of its horrors - let others effect to doubt them if they will - is it surprising that I should be somewhat impatient of the airs of superiority which many Americans have endeavoured to assume over me. (14)

This relatedness to the blacks and escaped slaves that she observes is rendered in a rhetorical mode similar to that of the American "cousin." That is, the cultural distance that separates North Americans from the modern day Englishmen perhaps equals the distance between Seacole and the blacks she claims a relationship to. The "Atlantic" serves as a duel metaphor, for it refers to space and temporality. That is, Americans and blacks are situated as inhabiting an underdeveloped mentality in an undeveloped space. Both seemingly are in a state of intellectual underdevelopment. The Americans, separated by the great Atlantic gulf from the mother-source of liberal thought, are not what the

English have evolved into today. They have not developed and have not progressed ethically any further than the juvenile street-boys of London. They still own human bodies, while the historical and morally progressive actions of the English suggest that slavery is inconsistent with cultural advancement, not to mention good manners.

As suggested above, however liberal she wants to appear, to maintain the illusion of sameness with her white British reader she must distance herself from blacks. Her mode of observation suggests that she perceives them as not of her caste and as a race completely distinct from her own. This perception of distinctions is consistent with the racial categorizations followed at that time in her native Jamaica. At times her language even assumes an air of disconnected superiority. For instance, near the end of chapter three, her critique of American manners involves the appropriation of Yankee racial language to describe the demand for "the excited nigger cooks to make haste with the slapjacks " (20). Later in her narrative, during a returned excursion to Panama for the purposes of gold-mining, she even goes as far as to compare black babies to monkeys: "With what pleasure... could one foreign to their [Panama natives] tastes and habits dine off a roasted monkey, whose grilled head bore a strong resemblance to a negro baby's?" and "it was positively frightful to dip your ladle in unsuspectingly, and bring up what closely resembled a brown baby's limb" (69). Seacole is clearly writing about blacks and not about her own people.

She is resentful, like many members of her colored community in Jamaica and the British West Indies, toward those who conflate the pure black people with the coloreds, and who present her liminal status as a social disability. For instance, at a farewell gathering in which many Americans were preparing to depart, Seacole responds to a racial slur that may have offended many coloreds throughout the British West Indies. This incident is famous for many of those who have read and studied *Wonderful*

Adventures.

> Well, gentleman, I expect you all will support me in a drinking of this toast that I du ---- . Aunty Seacole, gentlemen; I give you, Aunty Seacole ---. We can't du less for her, after what she's done for us ---, when the cholera was among us, gentlemen ---, not many months ago ---. So, I say, God bless the best yeller woman he ever made, from Jamaica, gentlemen ---, from the Isle of Springs --- Well, gentlemen, I expect there are only tu things we're vexed for ---; and the first is, that she ain't one of us ---, a citizen of the great United States ---; and the other thing is, gentlemen ---, that Providence made her a yeller women. I calculate, gentlemen, you're all as vexed as I am that she's not wholly white ---, but I du reckon on your rejoicing with me that she's many shades removed from being entirely black ---; and I guess, if we could bleach her by any means we would ---, and thus make her as acceptable in any company as she deserves to be ---. Gentlemen, I give you Aunty Seacole! (47).

This toast, for Seacole, goes deeper than emphasizing that it is her African heritage that excludes her, even though the services she had rendered were appreciated: it suggests that, whatever valuable and noble qualities she may possess, she is forever a slave to an inferior status. Although Seacole tries to present her response as distain for intolerance, the humor within the toast reiterates the space of exclusion that she and the members of her hybrid community were trying to overcome. Since she is "not wholly white," she, for these American white men, may not be fully developed and lacks an essential valued humanity. Ideologically, such a notion is the antithesis of what the coloreds of her generation had argued against and of how she saw herself. Moreover, Seacole is being reminded that she is still a member of the black race, which, as we have seen, she and many members of the colored community would have denied. Seacole's response to this toast is just as famous, but I believe misinterpreted and not seen in the context of a colored woman formed by the cultural discourses of nineteenth century Jamaica.

> But, I must say, that I don't altogether appreciate your friend's kind wishes with respect to my complexion. If it had been as dark as any nigger's, I should have been just as happy and as useful, and as much respected by

> those whose respect I value; and as to his offer of bleaching me, I should, even if it was practicable, decline it without any thanks. As to the society which the process might gain me admission to, all I can say is, that, judging from the specimens I have met with here and elsewhere, I don't think I shall lose much by being excluded from it. So, gentlemen, I drink to you and the general reformation of American manners. (48)

It is Seacole's sense of self, her integrity as a proud woman of color, rather than an African connection which she may not have favored with the label of a heritage, that is being defended here. The phrase the she emphasizes, ”as dark as any nigger’s,” is her pronouncement of difference from blacks. The idea of "heritage" may have suggested essential qualities passed from one generation to the next, thus making problematic the coloreds’ identification with whites. Seacole need not explain the difference between coloreds and blacks to her English reader, because she assumes that they know that there are profound qualitative differences between the groups. For Seacole, it may be the primitive nature of American thinking which prevents them from distinguishing between blacks and coloreds. This "general reformation of American manners" may spark some form of moral and intellectual advancement that Seacole had not witnessed in whites on the other side of the Atlantic.

C) STAGE THREE

Stages one and two of Mrs. Seacole’s adventures are suggested by her characterization of events as the acquisition of useful and sturdy Victorian tools and virtues. The two previous stages on which Mary Seacole performed these acts of sacrifice and daring are, when we look closer at her text, inferred in the letters of praise she has strategically distributed throughout *Wonderful Adventures*. The sacrifices she had made in the Crimea, however, are widely documented, and there were credible witnesses to attest to her bravery and willingness to use her skills for the good of her British "sons." The nature of these documents symbolically brought the name and persona of Mother

Seacole into English homes. England and the English people were, for Mary Seacole, what Benedict Anderson calls an "imagined community." According to Anderson, an imagined community exits where "the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible... for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings" (7). This is to say that, "regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation" Seacole may have witnessed in her lifetime in Jamaica and the cases of prejudice that she encountered in London, her allegiances (like many members of the colored community) were to the mother country and its interests. The motherly persona expressed by Mrs. Seacole about her life with British soldiers symbolizes the putative bond of interest that was being claimed by the colored community. Her discursive maneuvers during this stage were aimed at demolishing the doubts of whites who saw her as an outsider.

The third stage of *Wonderful Adventures* is the longest and most significant stage of her narrative and her life. Up to this point, her discursive practices have been constructed as performances aimed at eliding alterity and in the representation of herself as a medium which had contributed to the advancement of British ideals in the wilds of Panama and the ideological battlefields of Jamaica. However, as Paquet has claimed, "[t]he public and political event that gives her written life meaning is the Crimean War, not the crisis of community that afflicted Jamaica" (62). As she continues these discursive practices in stage three, the tropes she makes use of places her firmly as a member of the British community. For the English reader, the essentials of "Mother Seacole" were an open book. *Punch Magazine* had immortalized her in print and cartoon in 1856 and 1857 respectively. The poem entitled “A Stir for Seacole” appeared on 6 December, 1856, announcing her bankruptcy, and in the May 30, 1857 issue of *Punch* is a cartoon of Mother Seacole at the bedside of a wounded soldier. William Russell, the

first to bring her to public attention, and others had described her heroic exploits in the British press. In the Preface to *Wonderful Adventures*, William Russell suggests that she had become a household word when he writes that "I should have thought that no preface would have been required to introduce Mary Seacole" (vii). As England had been a part of her personal identity, Mary Seacole had become an accepted figure in the British imagination. This means that an image and an idea of Mary Seacole were circulating at least a year before *Wonderful Adventures* was written. Moreover, it was known and well publicized that she had returned from the war bankrupt. Although profit was one of the reasons she had gone to the Crimea, most of her narrative emphasizes patriotic motives. News of her bankruptcy, which she does allude to later in her narrative, only served to highlight her persona as a woman willing to sacrifice everything for her sons. According to Barbara Herrnstein Smith, "[a]ny narrator's behavior will be constrained in part by various assumptions he will have made concerning his present or assumed audience's motives for listening to him. Although these assumptions will usually be formed on the basis of the narrator's prior knowledge of that audience, they may also be *re*-formed on the basis of feedback from the listener during the transaction itself" (234). With Smith's insight in mind, it is apparent that in her text Seacole is able market "Mother Seacole's" seemingly innate sense of self- sacrifice to her advantage. Seacole's job, then, was to supplya personal touch to the stories that England had already known about her. Most importantly, it was imperative for her to address the doubts as to her motives for going to the Crimea without offending the post-war sensibilities of her readers. In the words of Paquet, "[t]he preexisting public image of Seacole as Crimean heroine shapes her autobiographical self-consciousness. Her life story is skewed to public approval and public patronage" (67).

Seacole's discursive currency lies in the continuous tropes of "mother" and "son,"

and allusions to family, that she seductively rendered to demolish "doubts" that may have been attached to her racialized personality and motives. Furthermore, allusion to the mother/son relationship contributes to Seacole's desire to privilege a biological connection and sameness rather than difference. Her written positions vis-à-vis British soldiers are familial ones. By favoring these tropes she shows the arbitrary nature of the significance attached to her own complexion. Her eight mouth stay in Jamaica in 1853 prepares the reader for the last stage of her *Wonderful Adventures*, for it is a brief account of the yellow fever that struck the island and what she claims to be the natural bond between Creoles and whites. Her rhetoric suggests something close to a family relationship between Jamaican Creoles and Europeans. This sentiment is also a persona publically expressed by members of the British colored community for most of the nineteenth century. The cause of this affinity, the result of shared bloodlines, is not elaborated upon. To explicate on the sexual misconduct and the abuses of power that gave birth to the colored community was an uncomfortable subject for coloreds and whites. Therefore, the feelings towards white Europeans had to be presented as something in nature. According to Seacole, nature has instilled "in the hearts of the Creoles an affection for English people and an anxiety for their welfare, which shows itself warmest when they are sick and suffering" (60).The natural bond that coloreds supposedly have for Europeans reiterates the argument that they have common interests with whites. This statement of affinity, therefore, has historical and political implications. It also suggests the natural affection for a family member. What she has done is converted a relationship built on power and animosity into one of family affection.

In her effort to flatter and seduce her readers' sense of themselves as tolerant, she describes the rebuffs, discouragements, and obstacles that stood in her way under the ambiguous term "doubts." Seacole felt that she was well qualified to serve, for the

prevalent diseases in the Crimean were "cholera, diarrhoea, and dysentery, all of them more or less known in tropical climate; and with which, as the reader will remember, my Panama experience had made me tolerably familiar" (76). But her requests to serve were ignored by all to whom she approached: the War Office, the Quartermaster General's Department and then to the Medical Department. She is also turned down as a recruit by one of Florence Nightingale's nurses. She says of an interview with one of Nightingale's companions that she "read in her face the fact, that had there been a vacancy, I should not have been chosen to fill it" (79). Although she had presented written testimony of her expertise and letters of introduction, Mrs. Seacole does not present herself as one to complain. The blame seems to be on her foolishness in thinking anyone will take her seriously. These nice people may have never met any colored women from Jamaica, and may therefore be unfamiliar with their skills in treating tropical diseases, especially the three prevalent ones. She writes that she is "not for a single instant going to blame the authorities who would not listen to the offer of a motherly yellow woman to go to the Crimea and nurse her 'sons' there, suffering from cholera, diarrhoea, and a host of lesser ills" (78). This is because "In my country, where people know our use, it would have been different; but here it was natural enough - although I had references, and other voices spoke for me - that they should laugh, good-naturedly enough, at my offer" (78). The following is another one of her ways of letting British prejudices off the hook, however disingenuous. "Doubts and suspicions arose in my heart for the first and last time, thank Heaven," she writes. "Was it possible that American prejudices against colour had some root here? Did these ladies shrink from accepting my aid because my blood flowed beneath a somewhat duskier skin than theirs? " (76). Seacole presents the ludicrous idea of English racism as a fleeting thought, "the first and last time, thank Heaven," with the same dismissive tone of her "Strangely enough"(4) encounter with the

street-boys during her first visit to London. Moreover, she seems grateful to realize that her "Doubts and suspicions" were not true. Paravisini-Gebert correctly observes that "[t]he rhetorical nature of the question she poses in the English episode only serves as a fairly transparent strategy to address the racism she identifies with life in London throughout her narrative while evading a direct accusation that would have alienated potential readers. ... The performance of the despair occasioned by the *doubt* allows her nonetheless to instill in the minds of the readers the destructive power of racism" (75).

Even with letters of introduction, these doubts of others do not have the anticipated effect. In most cases, letters of introduction assured entrance into places one may never had been allowed. The author of the letter believes that the holder of such a letter deserves an audience. According to Robinson,

> Letters of introduction, the remote equivalent of verbal introductions, played a significant part in the fabric of nineteenth-century social life. They operated, as did everything else, along strictly hierarchal lines and their purpose was to open doors which would otherwise remain intractably shut. Person A would approach person B for a letter of introduction to person C (or be offered one, like Mary). Generally C's social rank was equal to or higher than A's, and B was never of lower rank than C. Any solecism caused great offence. Failure to produce such a letter when seeking to meet someone of higher rank to whom one had not formally or formerly been introduced usually resulted in suspicion and disappointment. The letters were networking tools, which when properly used, like a passport ... smoothed the path of progress. When abused or neglected, they could destroy one's social credibility. (98)

Mrs. Seacole makes a point of scattering letters of this type throughout her narrative and bringing them to the reader’s attention. For her, these letters have three functions. First of all, they are devices employed to market her value to the British reading community. This, in other words, is their discursive function. These letters contribute to putting the reader in her corner. Within the text, they are testimonials to her character and ability to treat tropical diseases and, in the hands of this particular woman

of color, they may also have a flattening effect on the hierarchy Robinson alludes to. This flattening may have been what occurred between Seacole and Nightingale. While in Malta, a doctor she had known in Kingston had given her a letter of introduction to Florence Nightingale. Nightingale, however, was not pleased to see Seacole. The tone of this encounter suggests that Seacole seems to have faced Mrs. B. and then Florence Nightingale with an air of equality, for at this point there is nothing of value Nightingale can give her that she has not decided on doing herself. The significance of the letter during this scene would not have escaped many of her readers in Jamaica. Seacole uses the letter to subtlely present herself as equal to the great Florence Nightingale. For Seacole, Nightingale is now powerless to impede her progress. And Nightingale may have feared that to refuse an audience with the colored woman from Jamaica may been perceived as an insult by Dr. F, her superior. Seacole writes that "She has read Dr. F---'s letter, which lies on the table by her side, and asks, in her gentle but eminently practical and business-like way, 'What do you want, Mrs. Seacole - anything that we can do for you? If it lies in my power, I shall be very happy'" (91). Since Seacole has committed herself to continuing her journey to the Crimean without Nightingale, she ask merely for place to rest for the night. And she offers "to nurse the sick for the night" (91). At this moment, Mrs. Seacole seems to be modestly requesting a curtsy granted to equals; but in presenting her case to the reader in such a way, she is indirectly claiming equal status not only with Nightingale but with the reader. Seacole had asked only to be put up for the night, and during her stay she offered her assistance rather than empower her counter-part with the request to serve under her. Seacole does not have to explain her credentials, she is not sitting across from Nightingale looking for employment, for her expertise has been authorized by a white male member of the British community. Sandra Gunning has pointed out that "[a]s evidence of the numerous testimonials in *Wonderful Adventures*

that celebrate her ability to cure the sick, Seacole marshals the approval of the same white soldiers whom Nightingale and her nurses vowed to serve, and thus she deauthorizes white women as her judges" (972). She does not ask to be taken on as a nurse, for she has her own plans to enter the Crimea as a doctress. Nor does Nightingale ask Seacole, with her obvious expertise, to join them. Nightingale tells Seacole that the only available bed is in the hospital washerwomen's quarters, which she accepts without protest. As she done through most of *Wonderful Adventures*, without overtly charging Florence Nightingale with racial prejudice, Seacole has left that verdict up to the British reading public and the court of public opinion.

For Seacole's discursive purposes, patriotism comes in the form of assuming the role of the figurative mother to British soldiers. She presents the role and title of "mother" as one that was not only given to her by friends and soldiers, but also because it is a role suited to her nature. This mother/son relationship is reciprocated between Seacole and the British troops, and it is one she wishes to impress on the imaginations of her readers. She says that every place she had gone, she was met with cries of "Mother Seacole" from soldiers and officers she had known and cared for in Jamaica. For instance, while in Gibraltar, she is welcomed by two soldiers who call her "good old Mother Seacole!" (84) and, as with most of her references to British troops, she calls these men her "sons." A request from one soldier begins: "My Dear Mamma" (127). Her tone is indeed motherly and caring, allowing the reader to know that she was there to perform the womanly functions that circumstance had precluded for the biological parents in England:

> had you been fortunate enough to have visited the British Hotel upon rice-pudding day, I warrant you would have ridden back to your hut with kind thoughts of Mother Seacole's endeavours to give you a taste of home. If I had nothing else to be proud of, I think my rice-puddings, made without milk, upon the high road of Sebastopol, would have gained me a reputation. What a shout there used to be when I came out of my little

> caboose, hot and flurried, and called out, 'Rice-pudding day, my sons.' Some of them were baked in large shallow pans, for the men and the sick, who always said that it reminded them of home. (140)

Appealing to the imaginations of her British readers, Mrs. Seacole is very conscious of the importance of rendering the British Hotel at Spring Hill as the site of stability with manifestations of home life in England. She wants her reader to use their imaginations and envision Mother Seacole transporting the comforts and warmth of English domesticity to the battlefields of Crimea. In other words, the British Hotel is represented as the domestic sphere where the men, temporarily relieved from combat, came to rest and rejuvenate themselves. Seacole writes:

> Of course, I had nothing to do with what occurred in the camp, although I could not help hearing a great deal about it. Mismanagement and privation there might have been, but my business was to make things right in my sphere, and whatever confusion and disorder existed elsewhere, comfort and order were always to be found at Spring Hill. When there was no sun elsewhere, some few gleams - so its grateful visitors said – always seemed to have stayed behind, to cheer the weary soldiers that gathered in the British Hotel. (113)

Seacole emphasizes that her position at the British Hotel was that of "doctress, nurse, and 'mother'" (124). The desire to serve and to save lives are represented as coming natural to her.

Seacole's appropriation of the discourse of domesticity has personal and cultural functions. That is, they serve a desired purpose. Seacole is not merely reporting how she embraced her role as Mother Seacole in the Crimea, but she also wants the post-war reader to see that she has proven herself a willing and valued member of the British community, someone the reader may gladly accept into their own homes and as one of them. According to Roger Chartier, "The appropriation of discourse is not something that happens without rules or limits. Writing deploys strategies that are meant to produce

effects, dictate a posture, and obligate the reader. It lays traps, which the reader falls into without really knowing it, because the traps are taylored to the measure of a rebel inventiveness he or she is always presumed to possess" (1). Moreover, In emphasizing her role as “mother,” she challenges and upstages the current stereotypes of the colored woman as sexual being. According to Poon, "[f]or the most part though, she downplays the potential sexual implications of her independent peregrinations and her friendly association with British soldiers by glossing over references to her own sexuality. Claiming motherhood and deploying the attendant rhetoric of care and domestic confront also becomes another way of defusing more problematic questions about sexuality" (Poon 51). In other words, the slightest suggestion that her persona is a sexual agent would elide her persona a “mother.”

However, for Seacole, transporting the idea of "home" to the British soldiers whom she appropriates as her "sons" seems less problematic than identifying the location of her own home. As a young girl, she envisioned England as her castle in the sky. Moreover, the trajectory of her address is England rather than Jamaica. Although I can only use this reference for its symbolic value, even the writer of the letter from Jamaica seems to light-heartedly scold Mrs. Seacole for not writing to them. "Although you will not write to us," says the author," we see your name frequently in the newspapers, from which we judge that you are strong and hearty" (185). Still, at the end of the war, Seacole alludes to having no home to which to return. According to Poon, this is the point where Seacole "seizes on her rootlessness to grant greater legitimacy to her desired identity as an English women and mother. Indeed, Seacole is reticent about any feelings she might harbor towards her place of origin and it is significant that the reader gets no distinct or memorable impression of Jamaica throughout her narrative. She studiously avoids providing a serious and viable alternative to England in Jamaica, attempting thus to

facilitate her entry into the land of her 'sons', by diminishing the land of her birth" (72). Her allusions to rootlessness and poverty are, of course, appeals to the English reader for patronage. She compares her feelings and fate to that of a lone soldier who she encounters during the departure from the Crimea: "for he, as well as I, clearly had no home to return to" (192). Seacole predicts that the only form of existence she has to look forward to may be that of poverty. She writes that "it was pretty sure that I should go to England poorer than I left it, and although I am not ashamed of poverty; beginning life again in the autumn - I mean late in the summer of life - is hard up-hill work" (192-93). The very structure of her published narrative fulfills the desires of her autobiographical negotiations: Russell's Preface introduces her to the English community and the list of prominent names at the end of her text authorizes her right to patronage. She writes that wherever she goes in London, she is met by old friends and kind salutations. Thus she describes herself as a familiar member of the community: "for wherever I go I am sure to meet some smiling face; every step I take in the crowded London streets may bring me in contact with some friend, forgotten by me, perhaps, but who soon reminds me of our old life before Sebastopol" (199).

CONCLUSION

My main point throughout is that Mary Seacole’s displays of Englishness, even the development and manifestations of her British values, are succeeded through travel and transit. Moreover, through the tropes of transit and travel, which by extension suggest the exchange of values and ideas, she has discursively fashioned her persona as the embodiment of progress. My reading of *Wonderful Adventures* argues that the English values in Mary Seacole's persona were developed in Jamaica and during her visits to London, and that her development between Jamaica and London and back are culturally significant, for she is marked with the essentials of progress. Therefore, I am arguing that

what are recognized as Seacole's manifestations of "Englishness" were already present and that the wilds of Panama and the battlefields of the Crimea were the stages on which she was able to test and perform them. It was important for Seacole not to present herself at any moment of her life as what may be considered in any form a "wild child," for such a consideration threatened to place her in comparison to the African rather than to the Anglo Saxon with whom she and other coloreds identified themselves. White blood was central to Seacole's identity and she presents it as the motivating force of her personhood. Furthermore, it was the comparison to whites, rather than to blacks, that the nineteenth century colored politics emphasized. However often Seacole mentioned what might have been attributed to a "Creole" temperament or mindset, it was never anything more inconsequential than manifestations of grief or hot-headedness. Other than that, Seacole tries to show "sameness" rather than difference; and those moments in which she turns attention to the complexion of her skin are there to emphasize the vanity, stunted dispositions, and the possible lack of moral and intellectual development of the individual persons who had discouraged her progress and, as a product of her autobiographical negotiations, to illustrate how far she, her friends, England as a nation and her English reader (the sympathetic person holding the text at that moment) have come. The paradox, however, is that history forces itself on her narrative, calling attention to itself through the modes of self-censorship that Mrs. Seacole employs.

Movement and transit are, of course, important for an understanding of *Wonderful Adventures*. Through travel, she was able to transport and perform what her reader perceived as the performance of Englishness and Victorian domesticity. Moreover, this discursive performance is synonymous to nation building in a post war era. Travel and transit also connects Seacole to the other writers of African descent in this study. Travel and transit causes the circulation of ideas and values, and it contributed to the building of

nations. The coloreds who had followed reports of Mrs. Seacole's wonderful adventures on the Crimean stage, may have detected aspects of how they had envisioned themselves as individuals and as a community. Moreover, many members of the Jamaican colored community may have recognized in Mary Seacole's discursive maneuvers the cultural and political circumstances they had historically and daily found themselves negotiating. For many of them, Mrs. Seacole's behavior and discursive practices had on the British cultural stage the imagined moral and intellectual constitution of Jamaica's colored community.

CHAPTER THREE

ROBERT CAMPBELL AND THE DISCURSIVE ECOLOGY OF AFRICAN SPACE

1
(RE)INTRODUCING ROBERT CAMPBELL

Most analyses of nineteenth century racial discourse center on the psychological and ideological imperatives of the dominant gaze, in which the Other is, simply put, perceived as what the observer is not. This frequently leaves many readers of Victorian racial discourse with the impression that representations of race may have had little to do with the modes of resistance and politically conscious agency on the part of the observed body. It is this habit of thought, which seems to privilege and inadvertently validate the racialized imaginations of the dominant group, in scholarly investigation that inspired the Victorian historian Douglas Lorimer to write that "[o]ur fascination with the stereotype of the Other runs the risk of denying historical agency to the objects of the racist gaze" (203). Therefore, while we may acknowledge that nineteenth century racial discourse was a process that attempted to fix the character of the Other as instinctual, we leave the political, social and cultural implications of the Other's agency and discursive modes of response untouched as the generative motive of racial representations. Furthermore, this habit of thought is carried over in our investigations into counter-discursive practices of the nineteenth century. When we do encounter the counter-discursive practices produced by the Other, we often ignore that something is being said about the putative integrity, motives and objectivity of the nation generating the dominant discourse. Our analysis of nineteenth century racial discourse, as a result of chiefly focusing on unpacking the practices and implications of the dominant group, seems to overlook the fact that the discourse is part of a conversation in response to real discursive and lived actions.

Robert Campbell's (1829 - 1884) seemingly forgotten text, *A Pilgrimage to My Motherland: An Account of a Journey Among the Egbas and Yorubus of Central Africa, in 1859-60*, and the cultural and racial significance of the motility of his own life, sheds critical light on what was perceived by peoples of African descent toward the Anglo-Victorian personality. The topography of Campbell's own motility can be seen as a form of self-imposed exile and racial and national redefinition. He appeared to have been constantly in search of a place in which he could exercise autonomy without the racialized restrictions he had experienced and witnessed in the United States and the British colony of Jamaica. His movements, therefore, resemble that of the newly freed West Indian slaves we had discussed in chapter one who had sought to construct lives independent of the demands and needs of their former white masters. Robert Campbell was born in Kingston, Jamaica, of mulatto and white ancestry. By his own estimation, he was three-fourths white. According to Howard Bell, Campbell "received a good education" and, for five years, worked as a printer's apprentice (2). Richard Blackett writes that Campbell had "entered a normal school for two years" and "then became a parish teacher in Kingston" (9). He later travelled to Central America, immigrated to the United States in the 1850s and became a science teacher at the Institute for Colored Youth in Philadelphia. By 1859, Campbell had joined Martin R. Delany as a member of the Niger Valley Exploring Party to find a location in what is now southern Nigeria for an African American farming settlement. At the end of their journey in 1860, both Campbell and Delany were invited to present their observations and agenda to the African Aid Society and to the Royal Geographical Society of London. It is through his rocky relationship with Delany (for they did not agree on principles that the latter regarded as

fundamental to the integrity of a black-led mission) and the Niger Valley Exploring Party that Robert Campbell makes his brief, but critically ignored, mark on black intellectual history.

Very little has been written about Robert Campbell's life and work. He is usually given a foot-noted status. That is, although Campbell's presence as a participant in the Pan-Africanist movement has been acknowledged by some contemporary scholars, he is usually positioned as the other guy (the member of the Party willing to accept money from whites) who accompanied Delany's exploration of the Niger Valley. Moreover, his involvement in nineteenth-century trans-Atlantic political thought is usually overshadowed by the reputations, literary outputs, and contributions of Delany, Alexander Crummell, and Edward Wilmot Blyden. No extensive discussion of *A Pilgrimage* positions Campbell's text as a serious and critical engagement with mid-Victorian racial discourse and trans-Atlantic political thought. *A Pilgrimage* is usually written off as a descriptive travelogue, and its lack of overt militant-separatism (which resonates unambiguously in Delany's "Official Report of the Niger Valley Exploring Party") may have contributed to its lackluster historical attention. However, a close analysis of *A Pilgrimage* shows that Campbell was much more engaged than Delany and, with the exception of Edward Wilmot Blyden, many of his contemporaries of African descent in challenging Victorian representations of the African character. Framed and embedded in Campbell's descriptive narrative are the counter-hegemonic concerns of the nineteenth century native African and Pan-Africanist communities. Therefore, Campbell is among the first diasporic writers to participate in what Paul Gilroy calls "a new discursive economy" (69), for *A Pilgrimage* refuses "to subordinate the particularity" of

the African's experiences "to the totalizing power of universal reason held exclusively by white hands, pens, or publishing houses" (69). Moreover, the creation of Campbell's counter-narrative is not only a discursive intervention but it is also a profoundly symbolic act of racial self-fashioning. He was very conscious of the story the color of his white skin told to the native Africans he encountered. Unlike most members of British Jamaica's colored caste, Robert Campbell came to envision Africa as his home. What completely goes unnoticed about the discursive, personal and historical contexts of *A Pilgrimage to My Motherland* is that Campbell moves in the opposite direction from that of Mary Seacole and many colored members of the British West Indies and identified with the political and economic desires of his African kindred.

As a self-consciously non-white participant in Gilroy's "new discursive economy," Campbell's text is therefore an example of what Deleuze and Guarttari call a "minor literature" whose expression tends to synthesize the diverse moral and political concerns of a subordinate group. According to Deleuze and Guarttari, "[t]he three characteristics of minor literature are the deterritorialization of language, the connection of the individual to a political immediacy, and the collective assemblage of enunciation" (18). First, Campbell "deterritorializes" the image of the African by positioning himself and the conscious demands of the African as authorizing agents. Campbell, in other words, re-configures the contemporaneous stock character of the instinctive and non-reflective African into a clear-headed and forward thinking articulator of cultural and political desires. This is the type of representation that had been denied to the African by many nineteenth century British writers. His mode of representation is relational and the characteristics that he applies to Europeans are not fixed in their nature. That is, while

Victorian racial discourse tends to render the Other as a known and knowable object of investigation, Campbell's text comments on the relationship among racial Others, especially the effects of the alien over the weaker native. Moreover, the derogatory claims, and figures of speech, which usually accompanied descriptions of African civilization to aid in structuring the Western reader's interpretation of text, have been denied a place in Campbell's narrative. Terms like "barbarian" and "savage" often aided the mid-nineteenth century Victorian reader about the essential and innate differences between themselves and the Other. Although the term "heathen" is often used by Campbell, it is to indicate non-Christian practices rather than an irredeemably fixed and innate psyche of the lower order of the species. In other words, the term "heathen" as employed by Campbell is not interchangeable with "savage" and "barbarian." Moreover, by referring to Africa as "My Motherland," *A Pilgrimage* takes on the symbolic connotation of a return to the source of life and growth. Africa, then, within the context of the title, is positioned as the spiritual source of development. Symbolically, Campbell's narrative locates Africa as a beginning, a Trans-Atlantic black rebirth, rather than the dark continent or the putative "White Man's Grave." Furthermore, throughout *A Pilgrimage*, Campbell shows that the social activities of the natives (religious, marital, commercial) are lived within established communities of laws and customs. Nothing about the social practices he describes remotely resembles the representations of nomadic and ungoverned groups made popular in nineteenth century English writings. His descriptions of African life, free of European interpreted practices, do at times resemble descriptions pastoral life. Campbell's African subjects are all involved in traditional and functional activities that contribute to the strength, well-being and growth of their

communities. Lastly, Campbell's narrative is not "an individuated enunciation" (Deleuze and Guarttari 17).That is, *A Pilgrimage* constitutes the common political and cultural desires of both Westernized and native Africans, and this common desire for unhindered racialized autonomy of both parties resonates throughout his text. He is writing for the native and those displaced peoples of African descent, whom Alexander Crummell called the "now scattered children in distant lands" (244). For Campbell, all blacks have stakes in Africa's commercial and technological progress, and these common aspirations inform the world he describes.

In this chapter I argue that Robert Campbell's *A Pilgrimage to My Motherland* was not only an intervention in the Victorian's discourse on the African, but within it he also suggested that there was something nefarious about the British racial personality (or, how the British performed their perceived function in relation to the Other) which could only hinder native progress in Africa. The British, however technologically advanced, were for Campbell the potential source of political and cultural danger that may eventually lead to an unhealthy national and geographical space for the native. Campbell and his Pan-Africanist colleagues argued that the only source of African progress and regeneration was through the black body and black agency, free of British intervention, active participation and influence. Although Campbell's model of cultural transformation was similar to England's "civilizing mission," he, Delany and others were antagonistic to white influence and active participation. They believed that educated people of African descent possessed the intellectual and technological tools to materialize “civilization” in Africa. Although Campbell and Delany radically disagreed over accepting material and economic aid from whites, both felt that success rested on the active participation of

blacks alone. For Campbell and Delany, whites in the United States and Great Britain had shown that their active hands-on participation in the lives of peoples of African descent had limited and limiting results. This ideology in which active white participation is suggested as the harbinger of cultural disruption and stagnation, I argue, informs the framing strategy of Campbell's narrative. In using this ideology of white-exclusion, Campbell in turn places himself in a position of authority equal to his British contemporaries while he authorizes the African as the sole and legitimate agent of his own destiny. That is, in the words of Richard Terdiman, Campbell "competes" with Anglo-British racial discourse with a "counter-dominant" strain which attempts to "challenge and subvert the appearance of inevitability" (39). His discursive practice is resistant to Euro-centric presentations of Africa, which he claims to be distorted and motivated by circumstances beyond the subject being described. Though Campbell (and most Pan-Africanists of the nineteenth century) is complicit in holding Western civilization up as a model to be followed, he is, however, advocating a model of a future Africa that is built, controlled and ruled by enlightened native Africans with the help of sympathetic and displaced brethren returning from across the Atlantic. The trajectory of Campbell's narrative is an attempt to separate both himself and the self-governing African from British hegemony. In other words, in Robert Campbell's vision of Africa the only surviving European staples are its capacity for material production, commerce, and Christianity.

Campbell's intervention is framed in what I call a discursive ecology of African space. In this discursive ecology, the distorting effects of the Victorian's racial gaze are kept in the margins of the narrative. That is, the rhetorical and descriptive framing

strategies of mid-nineteenth century British writers are kept in the borders of *A Pilgrimage* but simultaneously alluded to as historical and potential threats. In fact, the distorting effects of the Eurocentric gaze are strategically referenced in Campbell's book. When the Western discursive and figurative presence appears, they are positioned as the sources and manifestations of community distortion, disruption, and ill-health. This marginalization of the rhetoric of Victorian racialized discursive practices is in itself a criticism of the British psyche and character. Therefore, British prejudices are not allowed an influence of the images Campbell evokes. In a Derridaen sense, Campbell's narrative intervenes on a previous invention of the Other as limited and fixed, a non-progressive humanity, whose perfectibility as autonomous participants in the global community is questionable . According to Derrida, "An invention always presupposes some illegality, the breaking of an implicit contract; it inserts a disorder into the peaceful ordering of things, it disregards the proprieties. Showing apparently none of the patience of a preface - it is a new preface - it goes and frustrates expectations" (1). Campbell's invention, if we are to consider that all narrative representations are inventions, is an intervention. He attempted to marginalize the distorting psyche, or the fetishistic imagination, of the Victorian commentator. Through these narrative means, that can only be noticed if compared to other nineteenth-century texts about Africa and the African, we can see that Campbell cleanses the discursive landscape of what Frantz Fanon a century later calls the arbitrary and imposed " existential deviation on the Negro" (14).

2
HISTORICAL, DISCURSIVE, AND IDEOLOGICAL CONTEXTS OF CAMPBELL'S INTERVENTION

The "existential deviations" referred to by Fanon, and the conditions which

generated the representations of the African's cultural and innate limitations, were not composed in a vacuum. Pro and con representations or "descriptions" of the Other's behavioral traits are, in the words of Uday Mehta, "seldom neutral. They effect moral and political sensibilities and therefore carry, even when intended innocently, a normative valency" (72). These representations were discursive products of desired interactions between England and Africa peculiar to the 1850s and 1860s. According to Lorimer, "domestic as well as imperial influences shaped Victorian racial attitudes" (13). This was a time, according to Kristin Mann, "when the British in general were reluctant to acquire territory in Africa" (84). Reluctance to expand, however, does not mean that England had no interest in exerting influence in the region that Delany and Campbell wanted to establish independent and self-governing settlements. While many British government officials wavered over the necessity and desire of colonial expansion, there were in fact a few independent merchants profiting in the region from the newly evolving palm oil trade. For strategic reasons of commerce, however, many British officials felt it was necessary to have at least a nominal naval presence in the Niger Valley area. This area was strategically central to the British as a site in which efforts could be made to end the movement of African slaves across the Atlantic. Not only had the commerce in human traffic continued long after the British had outlawed the trade and freed their own slaves, but slavery was still being practiced in many interior African nations. Since the disastrous Expedition up the Niger in 1841 attempts had been made to encourage many African chiefs to honor treaties that called for the ending of domestic slavery and promised the advancement of commerce between England and Africa. The frustrating continuation of the trade and its practice on the continent became one of the major topics of debate

among missionaries, humanitarians, and anti-black discourse, and what evolved from this discourse were representations which naturalized the imagined inherent limits of the African character. During this period, the British government also debated not only whether expansion into West and Central Africa were profitable and practical, but healthy and safe. Although the medical use of quinine had proven beneficial during the 1853 expedition up the Niger (for fewer Europeans had succumbed to the tropical illnesses that had devastated crews in earlier attempts up the Niger), the idea of Africa as the "White Man's Grave" remained. Many Victorians still imagined and had appropriated Charles Dickens's representation of Africa (and the African) as the natural enemy of white men. The tropical climate alone, argued Dickens, was a danger to the Caucasian body. Moreover, through Dickens, comes the position that concern for the "savages" abroad is directly correlated to the lack of funds and attention to the suffering at home. Throughout this time, humanitarians continued to counter anti-black and non-expansionist arguments with the belief that British missionaries were necessary for the spread of Christianity and education to the natives. Although education and the spreading of the Gospel were major components of the project advocated by Delany and Campbell, some British missionaries felt that whites were constitutionally better equipped for achieving this task. Only through spreading the Gospel and adopting the practices of civilized European societies, they argued, could the African contribute to the end of slavery and raise themselves out of barbarism and poverty.

This sense of responsibility was strong in the missionaries who followed David Livingstone near the end of the 1850s. These missionaries believed that Christianity and commerce between England and African nations would contribute greatly to elevating

Africa from barbarism, contribute to England's economic and industrial growth, and lead to the end of the slave trade both in the Americas and within Africa. In *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa*, Livingstone declared that "[w]e ought to encourage the Africans to cultivate for our markets, as the most effectual means, next to the gospel, of their elevation" (675). He hoped "for encouragement in every measure for either the development of commerce, the elevation of the natives, or abolition of the trade in slaves" (673). Although, as Patrick Brantlinger says in *Rule of Darkness*, "blatant economic motives were not what impelled Livingstone and the horde of missionaries who imitated him" (181), ideological imperatives caused missionaries to create a particular image of the African that served their institutional and personal desires. According to Brantlinger, "missionaries were strongly tempted to exaggerate savagery and darkness to rationalize their presence in Africa, to explain the frustrations they experienced in making converts, and to win support from mission societies at home" (182). Although both Delany and Campbell noticed this tendency in British missionaries, we will see in the next chapter that this was exactly the mode of engagement between natives and missionaries that Edward Blyden objects to in his essays to *Fraser's Magazine* in the 1870s. The African figure, then, was reduced to the status of humanity's wild-child, greatly in need of tutorage from and the protection of an advanced adult culture. This is what Robinson and Gallagher mean when they write that "[e]xpansion was not simply a necessity without which industrial growth might cease, but a moral duty to the rest of humanity" (2).

Although they agreed on the importance of independent black colonies, the partnership of Delany and Campbell was not a smooth one. Both men were fiercely

independent and did not, especially on fund raising methods, see eye-to-eye. As early as 1850, Campbell had denounced Delany to Frederick Douglass for using his name without his permission. Moreover, he did not believe that Delany's plan economically feasible. "Although he supported the idea of an exploration party to the Niger he made it clear that he disapproved of Delany's operations. He called the plan premature as he saw little hope of financial support" (Blackett 9). At one point Campbell even "announced the severing of ties with Delany's Niger Party," but rejoined under the condition that "he was to maintain an independence of action" (Blackett 9). The most important thing that they did not agree on was the place of white financial support for the Expedition. As far as their companionship went, violating this cardinal rule of Delany's was the deal-breaker. Seeing the black community would not unite in support of emigration to Africa (or anywhere beyond American borders), Campbell was not against accepting financial support from whites. White support, writes Blackett, "flew in the face of all that Delany stood for and further strained the relationship between the two members of the Expedition Party" (10). For Delany and those of his way of thinking, accepting white support opened the doors to white influence and control. Blackett writes that "Delany was certain Campbell's acceptance of support from both white Americans and Englishmen had jeopardized the independence of the Expedition" (15). Moreover, and most importantly, for Delany, white patronage suggested a lack of initiative and dignity on the part of blacks. Campbell, however, was willing to recruit aid not only from American-based Colonization Societies suspected of wanting to cleanse the U.S. of the black population, but he also pursued support from British sources. After his arrival in England, and while Delany was still in the U.S. unsuccessfully trying to raise funds, Campbell had

released a Circular in which he asked for British support for his expedition. In this Circular, Campbell writes that the "enterprise is of importance in the Evangelization and Civilization of Africa, and in affording an asylum in which the oppressed descendants of that country may find the means of developing their mental and moral faculties unimpeded by unjust restrictions, it is regarded as of still greater influence in facilitating the production of those staples, particularly cotton, which are now supplied to the world chiefly by Slave Labour" (Blackett 13). By the end of May Campbell had raised £200 for the Exploration Party (Blackett 14). As an indication of his success in England, Campbell was given free passage from Liverpool to Lagos.

By the Fall of 1859, news of the black-formed and led Exploring Party's project had already been known to concerned individuals and appeared in the British press. Men of influence in England had known about the black-led project a year earlier. Richard Blackett cites a letter which has attached to it the names of Delany and two others about the agenda of the Exploring Party. Considering Delany's aversion to white patronage at that time, it is not exactly clear why he would attach his name to this communication. This letter, originally sent to Dr. Joseph Hobbins, an English History professor at Wisconsin State University, was eventually transmitted to a member of the Royal Geographical Society of London. According to Hobbins, this group of black Americans intended to "own, equip and to arm its own ships, [and] to man them exclusively with colored sailors"(4). According to Brackett, "The Geographical Society's reply, written by Dr. Thomas Hodgkins, very diplomatically opposed the establishment of a colony in any of the areas suggested, but commended the proposal as showing the power of blacks for independent action" (4). The aims of this mission led by blacks received a polite response

in the *Times*, especially since the plan was to contribute to facilitating trade between England and Africa, advance “civilization” on the continent, and undermine the continuation of the slave trade. In a 22 September article entitled “African Civilization Society – A Meeting,” *The Times* reported on a meeting in which black Americans were praised for their initiative to strike a blow against the slave-trade by encouraging Africans to grow and supply their own cotton. Thomas Clegg, a wealthy Manchester cotton manufacturer, who had received a copy of Delany’s letter to Dr. Hobbins a year earlier, is mentioned in the article. According to this 1859 article,

> A meeting was held yesterday at the Mayor's parlour, Townhall, Manchester, of ladies and gentlemen, to hear from the Rev. Mr. Bourne an expedition of the origin and object of a society which has sprung up in the United States, and it is promoted by the abolitionists and coloured people, for civilising Africa by planting colonies in the central and other portions of the continent. Mr. Bourne pointed out the immense strength given to slavery in America by the growing of cotton for Europe (and this country particularly), and dwelt upon the advantages of promoting the growth of cotton in Africa, where the plant is indigenous, thereby promoting civilisation among the people, while the slave-trade will have to compete with free labour. Mr. Bourne gave a number of interesting details connected with the society, and its hopes and prospects, and Mr. J. Clegg and other gentlemen afterward addressed the meeting, and some resolutions approving the movement and pledging support for it were adopted. (7)

A few months later, Henry Venn (1796-1873), honorary secretary of the Church Missionary Society from 1841 to 1873, also acknowledged the wisdom of indigenous-grown cotton to undermine the slave-trade. Venn, the single most influential force in making Samuel Crowther the first African Bishop of the Anglican Church, and who would later play an important role in the life of Liberian scholar Edward Blyden, wrote in the *Times* that among the “various social advantages” of free-grown cotton in Africa is that it will immediately contribute to “stopping the foreign slave trade.” (5).

A few observers, however, suspected that the Delany and Campbell's project had the potential to present problems of influence in the region. As Blackett suggests earlier, in 1858 Dr. Hodgkins of the Royal Geographical Society was against establishing a colony in the region. Only after Delany and Campbell had begun to make their rounds through the region is there any indication of the racially exclusive nature of their project. In his letter to Henry Venn, dated 24 Feb. 1860, the German missionary Reverent Gottlieb Frederick Buhler complained that "[t]he Americans Mr. Campbell and Dr. Delany go ahead without us. They are indeed not the white man's friend though they will take his money.... They have greatly modified their plans but they don't ask us to assist them, they manage for themselves" (Ajayi n.191). In response to Delany and Campbell's "Geographical Observations on West Africa" (1860) delivered in London at the invitation of the Royal Geographical Society in 1860, a Mr. Hanson (described as "a gentleman of colour") expresses subtle skepticism over the wisdom of an independent black colony or settlement. Hanson was doubtful that Delany and Campbell would be able to transport enough educated and talented blacks from the United States to the continent. Rather than establish settlements and "separate communities," he proposed that black Americans "incorporate themselves into the indigenous race, and seek to elevate them by their superior information and knowledge of the arts" (Delany and Campbell 221-22). Although Delany and Campbell's humanitarian concerns over the future regeneration of Africa is addressed in Hanson's proposal, following such a suggestion undermines their desire for an new independent black nation. At the heart of the project lead by Delany, and which Campbell emphatically articulates in *A Pilgrimage*, is that Africa is to be left to Africans and the peoples of African descent. Delany looked upon the elevation of

Africa with a sense of protective entitlement, and scorned those who treated Africa merely as a site for profit and the African natives and his descendants as children. He writes that

> Africa is our fatherland and we its legitimate descendants, and we will never agree nor consent to see this - the first voluntary step that has ever been taken for her regeneration by her own descendants - blasted by a disinterested and renegade set, whose only object might be in the one case to get rid of a portion of the colored population, and in the other, make money, though it be done upon the destruction of every hope entertained and measure introduced for the accomplishment of this great and prospectively glorious undertaking. We cannot and will not permit or agree that the result of years of labor and anxiety shall be blasted at one reckless blow, by those who have never spent a day in the cause of our race, or know nothing about our wants and requirements. (111)

According to Delany, in comments that seems to have been pointedly directed to his young travelling companion, "the black race should take its affairs in its own hands, instead of placing them in the hands of others" (Delany 56). Therefore, self-reliance was the foundation of Delany's nationalistic ideology. His adherence to the substance and implications of this ideology is what set him apart from Campbell. The world, for Delany, had to see that the African was able to form his own destiny without begging for help from whites. To gain the respect of other nations, Delany called for the regeneration of Africa by Africans and the people of African descent alone: "*Africa for the African race, and black men to rule them*. By black I mean, men of African descent who claim an identity with the race" (121). In his "Official Report of the Niger Valley Exploring Party," Delany writes

> that we desired to be dealt with as men, and not children. That we did not desire gratuities as such in the apportioning of their benevolence - nothing eleemosynary but means *loaned* to our people upon their *personal obligations, to be paid in produce or otherwise*. That we did not approve of r*estrictions* as to *where* such persons went (so that it was to some

> country where the population was mainly colored, as that was our policy) letting each choose and decide *for himself*, that which *was best for him.* (124)

Thus, the emigration movement (as conceived by Delany) wanted no part of active white participation or intervention. As Bell succinctly puts it, they wanted to be "unhampered by meddling whites" (1). This desire to be free of white American and European intervention also addressed the function and influence of missionaries. Although Campbell does not mention British missionaries in a negative light, his travelling companion is explicit about the cultural, commercial and political limitations caused by those who carried the gospel to the Africans. Delany argued that the only good that missionaries have achieved concerning the African was the introduction of the Gospel. However, these very missionaries, in Delany's view, perceived Africans as limited, thus incapable of further progress. This attitude toward the African could have limited and limiting effects, especially since the African may suspect that the tools of progress and growth, the very tools that many chiefs had asked for, were being intentionally withheld by someone who does not physically resemble them. The African native, argues Delany, “sees and knows” that the European “is of an entirely different race to himself.” It is also recognized by the native that this representative of a different race and foreign land is in the position of dispersing knowledge of a much needed secular nature, especially in matters “law, government, commerce, military.” But these things of a “temporal and secular matter,” which English missionaries tell them are the “things he is not sent to teach” (107) are exactly the forms of useful knowledge that Delany, Campbell, and other black emigrationists claimed that they were ready to share. Because of the European’s belief in the limitations of black capability, it is, for Delany, imperative that Africans and blacks work to uplift themselves.

What is required to propel the African toward self-reliance and progress, even

while maintaining the Gospel, was a “new element.” For Delany and Campbell, the success of a progressive African civilization must be accomplished by contact with a people the native can identify as among their own. This is what Delany calls a "new element." This element, which Delany emphasizes, inversely suggests that white participation has detrimental and limited influence on African material and technological advancement. Delany is suggesting that the nature and practice of British involvement can only maintain present conditions of dependence, which do not favor African success. To be successful, writes Delany, the elevation of the African “must be carried out by proper agencies, and these agencies must have a *new element* introduced into their midst, possessing all the attainments, socially and politically, morally and religiously, adequate to so important an end” (110). Delany makes racial homogeneity central, for he believes that “*natural* characteristics, claims, sentiments, and sympathies” shared by members of the race (110). Furthermore, the most educated descendants of Africa now living in America are prepared to return, facilitate “the establishment of social and historical settlements among” the natives, “in order at once to introduce, in an effective manner, all the well regulated pursuits of civilized life” (110).Thus, the racialized engine and political trajectory of the civilizing mission posed by Delany and Campbell flew in the face of England's imperialist imperatives as well as England’s racial and nationalistic paradigm of self as the lone carriers of the light of civilization and progress. Within the discourse of Delany and Campbell is the belief that England can do more harm than good, which is certainly a challenge to how the British felt about themselves as the proper facilitators of progress and their paternalistic interactions with the racial Other. In other words, the subtext of Delany's "proper agency" and "new element" is that white participation in the regeneration of Africa is suspect and possibly mercenary. The inclusion of "proper agency" is, then, a back-handed attack on England's putative

humanitarian idea of self in relation to the African, and the "new element" only supplements the belief that the agents of African transformation has been in the hands of a people historically ill-suited for such a project. Although the representation of this point is the main aim of *A Pilgrimage*, Campbell knows that he needs to paint of portrait which presents the African as capable and conscious agents of their own destiny.

3

A PILGRIMAGE TO MY MOTHERLAND AS ECOLOGICALLY DISCURSIVE INTERVENTION

In *A Pilgrimage to My Motherland*, Campbell endeavors to cleanse the discursive field of African representation of what Abdul JanMohamed calls the "manichean allegory" and what Peter Logan has identified as the "Victorian fetish." Both habitual processes of Western thinking toward the African, whether subconsciously or unconsciously generated, have contributed substantially to the discursive framing of the policies and attitudes toward the Other. According to JanMohamed, the economy of the manichean allegory "is based on a transformation of racial difference into moral and even metaphysical difference (skin color, physical features, and such), [and] its allegorical extensions come to dominate every facet of the imperialist mentality" (61). The discursive manifestations of this "mentality" tend to "demonstrate that the barbarism of the native is irrevocable, or at least very deeply engrained, so that the European's attempt to civilize him can continue indefinitely, the exploitation of his resources can proceed without hindrance, and the European can persist in enjoying a position of moral superiority" (62). Logan sees this allegorical tendency as an unconscious process that comes into play when the British enters contact with the West African Other. According to Logan, "[t]he Victorian fetish projects feeling, desire, and belief onto the world, but

does so unawares." These "projections are reflected back in alien form, as though originating in the external world" (3). But since what gets projected back are manifestations of a defensive and self-serving imagination, Logan is able to write that these artificially constructed projections "speak more about the assumptions of westerners than the practices of Africans" (7). In other words, these assumptions contribute to painting a portrait of African life based on feelings and desires about the observer's place in the world in relation to the African Other. It is this allegorical and fetishistic process that Fanon refers to when he writes "My body was given back to me and sprawled out, distorted, recolored, clad in mourning in that winter day. The Negro is an animal, the Negro is bad, the Negro is mean, the Negro is ugly" (113). For Campbell, these British feelings and desires (even held by those who purported to be friends of the African) are responsible for the cultural disruptions and representational distortions of native life and character. In response to British discursive practices he presents to his contemporaries a narrative that (though aggressive in intent) seems to be without aggressive commentary. Although Campbell is not writing a pastoral, *A Pilgrimage* has the propensity of the pastoral "to elicit a variety of political and aesthetic adaptations" (James and Tew 13). The descriptive nature of *A Pilgrimage* is in itself a form of cleansing as well as critique of Victorian racial discourse.

This act of cleansing by the seemingly innocent act of description is a cultural critique I call the discursive ecology of African space. In this critical space, the usual tropes and strategies of nineteenth century racial discourse are alluded to as dangerous specters in the margins. Being in the margins, the historical significance is frequently alluded to in an effort to inform the reader about the importance of the author's project.

In other words, in this discursive ecology the ramifications of cross-cultural contact and trans-Atlantic history are present both as warning and remembrance. Campbell's narrative suggests that European representations and physical presence are and have always been sources of disruption and distortion historically and discursively. Embedded in the representations of many of Campbell's encounters are allusions to the disastrous consequences of Pratt's "contact zone." These are the consequences that Delany and Campbell endeavor to reverse and ameliorate through the exclusion of white participation. Through his seemingly benign narrative strategy, which at times approaches the faux-innocence of pastoral, Campbell is also able to parade his body as a result of cultural disruption and erasure (his African heritage and white skin) and present his eyes as the lens through which the reader gets a portrait of West African life. Although Campbell knows that he probably will not put an end to the racialized thinking of his white contemporaries, his narrative does make an attempt to suggest that racial fantasies are constructions of the mind.

In his "Preface," Campbell briefly gives a nod to the general tradition of anthropological and ethnographic writing which had formed contemporaneous thoughts and attitudes toward the African. This nod initiates his discursive cleansing process. In response to euro-centric chronicles of the continent, Campbell pits the veracity of his eye-witness narrative against what he sees as the *a priori* reasoning drawn from this body of knowledge. In doing this he is suggesting to his reader that what makes *A Pilgrimage* different from present day accounts is that his "narrative is, as far as possible, confined to personal observations" (151). Although other writers have made similar claims of objectivity, the function of Campbell's claim is to shed light on and to emphasize the

jaundiced psychology at work in other observers of Africa. His parenthetical phrase, "as far as possible," suggests an awareness of the influences of unconscious and subconscious energies in the construction of racial identities. It implies that there is a danger of undetected fantasy (especially in imaginations molded by Western education) coming into play. Furthermore, "confined to personal observation" may be an emphasis on his own conscious struggle to do what other observers of Africa have not done, and that is to prevent the western fetishistic imagination from materializing what he calls "details otherwise interesting" (151). In making these preliminary claims, Campbell seems to be engaged in the same type of language of Realist fiction posited by George Levine as “a self-conscious effort, usually in the name of some moral effort of truth-telling and extending the limits of human sympathy, to make literature appear to be describing not some language but reality itself” (8). Like the Realism that Levine finds manifested in the Victorian novel, Campbell is essentially defining his narrative against the excesses he finds in white American and European narratives about Africa.

Because he believes that many mid-nineteenth century Western observers have given in to this impulse, Campbell is able to state that "Much error, particularly in reference to Africa, has been propagated in consequence of writers generally not confining the subject of their books to their own observations" (151). "Propagate," for Campbell, has multiple functions. On the one hand, propagate refers to communication, the transmission of ideas from person to person and from one generation to another. To “propagate,” then, in this sense is the reproduction of euro-centric assumptions and fantasy. On the other hand, propagate has the connotations of infection and corruption. The polite "Much error," then, for Campbell (the man of science), may also suggests a

morbific process at work in the Victorian's representations and attitudes towards the African. This dual discursive function of "propagate," for Campbell, seems to suggest the fetishizing tendency of the Victorian imagination (when it encounters the Other), to create, past down, reiterate and recreate fictitious black legends. These legends or racial figurations are produced, according to the nineteenth-century Haitian anthropologist Antenor Firmin, by "certain extrinsic causes which are alien to science but which have such a stranglehold on the minds of the most intelligent men that they are intellectually paralyzed" (328). By marginalizing Anglo-Victorian racial discourse, Campbell's narrative suggests that Firmin's "extrinsic causes" are products of the mind and material motives of white western observers. The discursive removal, marginalization, and erasure of extrinsic causes, or the feelings and desires Logan argues as central to the Victorian fetish, are essential to Campbell' progressive narrative, for it reveals the character of a motivated African subject.

The first contemporaneous misconception, representational error, or, as Philip Curtin puts it a century later, persistent "black legend," Campbell subtly engages is the popular notion of the West African climate as the natural enemy of white European well-being. Because of this belief, Africa was given the name White Man's Grave. Although it was true that many Europeans suffered in tropical climates, in many cases fatally, there was no concrete evidence that the high white mortality rates were solely the results of race. However, it was commonly believed that European mortality in Africa was racially based. According to Curtin, this gothic image of Africa as antagonistic to the integrity of the white body began to take form between 1780 and 1830. By the mid-Victorian era, "the image of the White Man's Grave was more and more firmly impressed" (104). Curtin

writes that "[b]y the middle of the nineteenth century, the deadliness of the African climate to white men, while Africans were apparently healthy there, had become enshrined at the very heart of pseudo-scientific racism" (104). Charles Dickens, as shown in chapter one, not only believed that "Between the civilized European and barbarous African there is a great gulf set," but that "The air that brings life to the latter brings death to the former" (133). In his 1848 review of Captains Trotter and Allen's *Narrative of the Expedition Sent by Her Majesty's Government to the River Niger in 1841*, Dickens appropriates the legend of the White Man's Grave in the following terms: "At last, on the 12th of May 1841, at half-past six in the morning, the line of battleships anchored in Plymouth Sound gave three cheers to the Expedition as it streamed away, unknowing, for 'the Gate of the Cemetery.' Such was the sailor's name, thereafter, for the entrance to the fatal river whither they were bound" (119). It was important for Dickens to illustrate African/English interaction in such terms because he wanted the government to redirect sympathies and resources to the Condition of England Question at home. Later Victorian writers, like Richard Burton who referred to the region as a "coffin-squadron" (vii), would continue to contribute to the legend, even after the benefits of quinine as a treatment against tropical ailments began to surface after 1841. "Quinine," writes Curtin in *Death By Migration* (1989),"contributed to the decline of fever deaths everywhere. It was the first 'wonder drug' that could attack a specific disease, but its acceptance was neither universal nor simple" (62). But even after the widespread recognition of the benefits of quinine were seemingly confirmed, after the successful *Pleiad* expedition to the Niger in 1854, which resulted in no white fatalities, the image of Africa as the White Man's Grave lingered well into the twentieth century.

Campbell uses, rather than dismiss as white fantasy, the health concerns which resulted from cross-cultural interaction. As a native of Jamaica as well as a traveler through Central America, he was cognizant of the impact of the tropics on the physical constitution of European foreigners. News of whites succumbing to yellow fever even at that time was a commonplace. Nor would news that a native population had contracted smallpox been a surprise for the former director of science. However, Campbell seems to have performed some sort of referential convergence early in chapter one, "Liverpool to Lagos," which suggests what he perceived as the opportune discursive moment to render the disruptive consequences of British/African interaction. That is, his presentation may seem to be an innocent and benign piece of reportage, but in fact the rhetorical convergence and imagery are critiques of the nature and consequence of this relationship. Campbell writes that on the twelfth of July, after they had anchored at Freetown, Sierra Leone, they discovered that

> Affairs were in bad condition, the yellow fever, or as some say, a malignant form of bilious fever had appeared there, and swept off more than a third of the white inhabitants, while small pox was busy among the natives. During the two days that the ship continued in the port I had frequent opportunities of conversing with several of the natives, men of respectability, and in some instances of education; they complained bitterly of some of the Europeans, on account of their laxity of morals and unblushing disregard of the demands of decency. It is fortunate that the number of this class of persons is small compared with the number of high-minded, worthy men who are deservedly much esteemed. (158)

Rhetorically, Campbell positions both diseases as weapons in a contest resulting from cross-cultural contact. The yellow fever "appeared" and "swept off" a substantial number of the "white inhabitants," "while" small pox is "busy" among the natives. Although Campbell avoids explicating causality, the passage enacts a spontaneous outbreak which symbolizes the political and meta-political nature of European/African

interaction. What immediately follows is not an explanation of the possible environmental or biological factors constitutive of both diseases, but a description of behavioral and attitudinal traits of the foreigners which have disturbed the usual workings of the native community. That is, Campbell seems to be symbolically linking competing illnesses as representations of his version of culture clash within the contact zone. Therefore, at the very beginning of his narrative Campbell is suggesting that a foreign presence threatens the physical and moral health of the African community.

In the type of referential convergence Campbell performs, the model of the putative White Man's Grave has been revised and reinvented. The European brings disorder with him. Here, the European is not the only victim of the tropical contact zone, for his very presence (and what he morally and intellectually brings with him) causes the Other's destruction. In Campbell's post-quinine model, European attitudes toward the Other can also contribute to the transformation of the region into a cross-cultural cemetery. The carriers of these disruptive attitudes are among the "[o]ffspring of the Evangelical Revival and the Industrial revolution" who, according to George Stocking (1987), "travelled in a period when the differential in sheer physical power between civilization and savagery was growing rapidly wider" (105). The recognition of the technological distance (translated into the language of morality and natural intellect) between the European self and the Other, contributed to the face-to-face interaction between blacks and whites. "Sustained by that power and those values," writes Stocking, "British travelers overseas carried with them a powerful sense of personal self-confidence and cultural rectitude" (105). In Campbell's version of Stocking's explanation of the Victorian hermeneutic space, European hubris (or "self-confidence and cultural

rectitude") is not only the undertaker of white bodies but it is also the harbinger of African misery, disruption and discontent. It must also be noted that though the effects of unpleasant behavioral traits are not represented as epidemic among the majority of whites, those "high-minded, worthy men," this does not absolve them as carriers of cultural disturbance.

It was perhaps the Victorian's fetishistic perception of the African as naturally servile that gave birth to the paternalistic posture of many travelers. British writers, who imagined themselves at the peak of civilization, often depicted the African as occupying a child-like position in nature. In perceiving themselves as occupying the ideal space beyond the state of nature, Victorians were able to control and frame the Other both discursively and physically. Firmin and other nineteenth-century writers of African descent were aware that this mode of cultural and ethnic consciousness "plays a role even in [the European's] assessment of issues, effecting their very reasoning. Even when nothing is said about it, ethnic consciousness remains a strong, positive, and active force both in the unfolding of events and in the elaboration of theories" (380). Carlyle's West Indian black as natural servant in need of a Prospero-like Englishman, Dickens's North American slave who needs and desired to be cared for and petted, and Mill's "backward states of society in which the race itself may be considered in its nonage," were all derivative of this type of thinking which placed the Englishman, because of technological advances, as members of the adult of humanity and the Other as child-like and closer to untamed nature. This way of thinking about the self in the world also functioned as convenient strategies that dismissed, diminished, or limited the intellectual potential and the agency of the Other in relation to the group in power. What distinguishes Mill from

many other observers of the Other is that for him, as he suggests in his response to Carlyle, the African had proven himself in the post-emancipation West Indies and in Africa as having the capacity for progress. Whereas Mill envisioned a future in which the African in the West Indies can hold his own, Carlyle imagined a future in which the people of African descent will always serve whites.

The trope of the child-like African was very much a part of the discourse of the period we are discussing. The Africa as child-like and servile, as with most racial tropes, also functioned to fix interracial relations in a desirable state of nature. In *The Lake Regions of Central Africa*, Richard Burton argues that the African's barren cognitive processes are infantile and, like a spoiled and untamed child, adverse to the call of order and civilization. According to Burton, in the African "there is no rich nature... for education to cultivate. He seems to belong to those childish races which, never rising to man's estate falls like worn-out links from the great chain of animated nature" (489). Burton further suggests that the African's horror of European architectural structures is symbolic of an aversion to permanency and the exigencies of civilization. In other words, the African is, because of his "vagabond instinct," innately averse to permanent structures. "The African," writes Burton, "has a superstitious horror of stone walls; he is still semi-nomade, for the effects of the Wandertrieb, or man's vagabond instinct, uncurbed by the habits of civilization" (79). In the West Indian situation described by Carlyle and his contemporaries in the late 1840s, this nomadic tendency of the African was proof of the reported march to barbarism. In the context of the labor problem in the British West Indies, black behavior suggested the he was ill-fit for the demands of economic man and that he, according to Carlyle, must be must be made into a worker.

For Burton and observers of Africa in the 1860s, this image suggested that on the continent existed fertile land awaiting development by the industrious European. Winwood Reade, in an attempt to lock the African into the place of eternal tutorage, pursues this trope in *Savage Africa*. According to Reade, the African has the attention capacity similar to that of a child, "riveted by the least thing which is held before it"(28). Among Reade's concluding statements regarding the African's potential to advance above the level of savage is that "[t]hey do not merit to be called our brothers, but let us call them our children. Let us educate them carefully, and in time we may elevate them, not to our level - that, I fear, can never be – but to the level of those from whom they have fallen" (430). Tropes of the child-like and servile African are important for purposes of domination. An infantile people who are incapable of taking care of themselves must be protected. That is the duty of the mature members of the human community to the rest of the world.

In response to representations similar to the ones above, Campbell presents a different type of African community. His, in light of what had been written, is a re-invention. In Campbell's narrative, the West African native not only welcomes civilization, but has proven his capacity for progress. He employs recent history to show the native's capacity and industriousness and also brings to light the type of African community and nation both Burton and Reade try to keep in the dark. The recent formation of Abbeokuta, the independent Africa nation that Burton, in *Abeokuta and the Camaroons Mountains*, cited as adverse to the exigencies of civilization, is used by Campbell as an illustration not only of the African's desire for limited contact with Europeans, but also of their capacity to work, build, and govern themselves. I need to

also note that Campbell’s description of the history of Abbeokuta seems to be an illustration of the Exploring Party’s agenda.

> Before 1839 little if anything was known of Abbeokuta. The Yorubas and Egbas recaptured and taken to Sierra Leone were sold away before any such place existed, and no travelers had before been in the neighborhood, but at this time, vague rumors began to be spread along the coast that the different tribes of the Egbas had united themselves, and had built a new city, powerful from its natural defenses not less than from the brave hearts and strong arms of its people. These were joyful tidings indeed to the Egbas at Sierra Leone, in the bosom of most of whom was immediately kindled the strongest desires, again to be united with their long lost relatives and friends. Conquering a thousand difficulties, they eventually carried out the object of their desire” (200-201).

In “the short time between 1839 and 1842,” says Campbell, “no less than 500 of them left Sierra Leone for their country” (201).This exodus ("for their country") is a conscious movement away from white influence and control (the British colony of Sierra Leone) toward a homogenous and developing independent black nation they call their own. In other words, they were escaping a location constructed and influenced by white rule for a place and a people they could call their own. This exodus was not limited, according to Campbell, to recaptured slaves, a mere 500. "Simultaneously with these occurrences," writes Campbell,

> the peoples of the Brazils and of Cuba, Egbas, Yorubas, and other Aku tribes who had obtained freedom, began to return. From all sources there are scatterd throughout the country, but chiefly at Lagos and Abbeokuta, over five thousand of these people, semi-civilized generally, but in some instances highly cultivated, being engaged as teachers, catechists, clergymen, and merchants. Industrious, enterprising, and carrying with them, one here and another there, a knowledge of some of the useful arts, they have doubtless been the means of inaugurating a mighty work, which, now that it has accomplished its utmost, must be continued in a higher form by the more civilized of the same race, who for a thousand reasons, are best adapted to its successful prosecution. (201)

This population, whom Burton described as "artificialized" (*Abeokuta* 16) because they

have the benefits of a Westernized education, is for Campbell the "means" who have successfully demonstrated inclination, potential and desire for progress and civilization. This group is also the native version of the Delany's "proper element" that Campbell wants to introduce into the African community. What Campbell described in this brief history is, in other words, the "semi-civilized" version of what he and Delany promises to transport from the U.S. A similar homogenous exodus, which British writers interpreted as a march to barbarism, occurred in the British West Indies after emancipation. This was the phenomenon Carlyle and his contemporaries responded to in the 1840s and 1850s. For Burton, like the British writers who responded to the West Indian labor crisis after emancipation and the brief period called "apprenticeship," this movement was evidence of a deeply engrained resistance to civilization and the tools of progress. Campbell, however, suggests pragmatic agency at work rather than primal instincts. Many Africans, of course, for reasons of their own, stayed at Sierra Leone. But he shows that a large number of skilled Africans, as skilled as the former West Indian slave who sought to distance himself from Englishman, *en bloc* and *en masses*, left the protection of a British colony for an incipient independent nation, a "new city," built by the "strong arms of its people."

Moreover, Campbell takes the essentialist ingredient, which Burton and others privileged and emphasized, of civilization out of the equation. That is, he argues that reaching the "higher form" is dependent on racial sympathies -the "same race"- rather than imagined culturally engrained qualities. To become what Campbell sees as "civilized" is simply the competent acquisition of recognizably advanced intellectual and technological tools ("knowledge of the useful arts"), which the generality of the "semi-

civilized” has yet to attain. By “semi-civilized” he is referring to the present level of competence rather than fixed cognitive condition (an essentialist position that Campbell did not entertain). He reiterates the urgency of the exclusionary ideology of Delany's "new element" when he writes that advancement and progress "must be continued in a higher form by the most civilized of the same race, who for a thousand reasons, are best adapted to its successful prosecution." These most adapted members of the same race are diasporic persons of African descent who have ironically been "artificialized" and therefore have incurred from western education an understanding of the mechanics of western culture.

In what follows, Campbell performs an unanticipated turn from an assumed Anglo-European audience to a previously unacknowledged implied native reader. This very brief address to an implied African reader (the "semi-civilized" above, the chiefs who had signed treaties with the Exploring Party's, and the "men of respectability and [...] education" (158) whom he had encountered throughout his narrative) comes in the form of warning and plea which encourages the natives to continue to safeguard themselves against an acknowledged but unmentioned enemy of their progress. "The hand of God is in the work," writes Campbell, "and although many discouragements and impediments might intercept the path of you who would labor toward such an end, there is nothing to fear. Persevere, and the Power, which has already been a safeguard through so many dangers will aid your efforts in the end" (201). The significance of the "discouragements," "impediments," and "dangers" which Campbell mentions are directly referring to the relationships Africa has had with the European world, and of what Crummell identified as the cause of the "exaggerated barbarism" pouring from western

discourse. In his 1861 lecture, "The Progress and Prospects of the Republic of Liberia," Crummell states that

> For three hundred years the European has been traversing the coast of Africa, engaged in trade and barter. But the history of his presence and influence there, is a history of rapine and murder, and wide-spread devastation to the families and the homes of its rude and simple inhabitants. The whole coast... have been ravished wherever his footsteps have fallen; and he has left little behind him but exaggerated barbarism, and a deeper depth of moral ruin. (174)

In *A Pilgrimage* the most obvious manifestation of the cross-cultural disruption of the contact zone, and a sign of the "wide-spread devastation to the families and the homes" which Crummell mentions above, is inscribed on Campbell's body. By his own estimation, the author had "twenty-five percent negro blood" (222).Campbell's discursively strategic reference to his complexion has significance and emotional and cultural value for different audiences: it is, for his nonwhite reader, an indictment of the history the white world has had with peoples of African descent (he thus positions himself as a walking reminder of the abuse of power) ; and it is a sign, for the British reader, of the potential of whites to stray away from their purported benevolent mission. Unlike many of his mixed race contemporaries in Jamaica, he does not seem to present his hybridity as a badge of honor. Campbell was well aware of the story that African/Caucasian amalgamation told. Moreover, the political and cultural story that Campbell's body tells is not lost on the Africans he encounters. Rather than overtly comment on the cross-cultural phenomenon of miscegenation, he allows the natives to speak, respond and reiterate the nature of African/ European relations.

For instance, He writes that while in Abbeokuta, "[t]he natives generally at first regarded me as a white man, until I informed them of my connection with the Negro.

This announcement always gained me a warmer reception" (171). He was, therefore, received with less suspicion than the general European. In regards to an interview with another African chief, he writes that

> On the occasion of my first visit to his Highness, as usual he was informed of my African origin. 'From what part of Africa,' he asked, 'did your grandmother come?' As this was a point on which I possessed no information, I could give him no satisfactory answer. He remained silent for a short time, and at last said: 'How can I but tell that you are of my own kindred, for many of my ancestors were taken and sold away.' From that day he called me relative, and of course as every other African had as good a claim to kindredship, I soon found myself generally greeted as such. (177)

Campbell records that another African chief "took hold of my hand and shook it heartily; and drawing me toward him, he threw his arms about my neck, and pressed me with warmth" (178). And his interview with King Shita is described as "very interesting ," for the latter "Quite unexpectedly [...] permitted us at this first interview to see his face, a privilege he never accorded publicly to any one who had before visited the place, at the same time informing us, that it was because he regarded us as his own people, descendants of native African" (220). Campbell thus presents his own body as, what Joel Williamson says of a different context, "the walking, talking, breathing indictment of the world the white man made" (95). He, therefore, is the walking, talking, written record that symbolizes the disruptive and distorting ramifications of the contact zone. Therefore, Campbell has toured through West Africa a product and in the flesh spectacle of the "natal alienation" that Orlando Patterson writes about in *Slavery and Social Death*: he presents to the African observer a "genealogical isolate" who, because of the slave trade, is "culturally isolated from the social heritage of his ancestors" (5). Campbell's confessed ignorance of the full details of his family line can be seen as the ultimate symbolic

warning of the native’s fate.

CONCLUSION

Although contemporary Victorian scholarship rarely analyzes the racial discourse of the nineteenth-century as a response to African agency, historical knowledge and cultural desire, a close reading of Campbell's *A Pilgrimage* reveals that the natives were not intellectually passive and unthinking observers. The behaviors and descriptions in his narrative suggest that Africans, by the time he and Delany had arrived, had been actively engaged in acquiring the tools and knowledge to reach what Western nations called “civilization.” This conscious and unforced interest of the African in the tools and manifestations of progress, which Campbell records throughout *A Pilgrimage*, is lacking in other ethnographic writings of the times as well as in our present analysis of Victorian racial discourse. Campbell is not just interested in proving that the African capable of progress, but he also wants his reader to reevaluate white participation in African affairs, for it has historically proven to be detrimental to the needs and desires of the native. This relational component which I have analyzed in Campbell suggests that the counter-narrative of the Other is not only in the act of commenting on the European psyche, but that it also is a statement of native desire in relation to the dominant group. In *A Pilgrimage,* Robert Campbell seems to say that the only result to be expected from the European world is cultural disruption rather that a smooth transformation to “civilization.” In employing this descriptive strategy, he is able to register the counter-hegemonic desires of a native and diasporic people as well as their attitudes towards their putative European benefactors. Like all racial discourse, Campbell is giving voice to a desire relationship. The European, in such a strategy, now becomes the Other, for what he

brings to the political and discursive table does not favor health. Campbell is writing about relationships. But the major difference between Campbell's discursive practice and those he criticizes is that he bases his representation of the European Other on historical performance, while the European's racial subject is a fetish and a fantasy.

CHAPTER FOUR

EDWARD W. BLYDEN'S PROVIDENCE AND THE EMPIRE OF THE MELANIN IMAGINATION

INTRODUCTION

Although contemporary scholars tend in general to focus on his contribution to twentieth-century theories of black nationalism, Edward Wilmot Blyden's (1832-1912) fame and original effectiveness came in the form of discursive assaults on American and Victorian racial discourses. His responses to the nineteenth-century discussion of race were not limited to a small group of readers; rather, Blyden's ideas were known to Victorian thinkers, debated and challenged by his contemporaries, and, to some extent, accepted and formed discussions about British/African relations and peoples of African descent. From the late 1850s until his death in 1912, Blyden, whom many contemporary scholars have credited as the father of Pan-African nationalism and even as among the scholars who planted the seeds which contributed to the growth of the early twentieth-century Negritude movement, made it his mission to vindicate the image of the African race to the English speaking world. "His voluminous writings," says Teshale Tibebu in a recent resent critical biography on Edward Blyden, "laid the ground-work for some of the most important ideas of black intellectuals in the twentieth century" (16). Tibebu goes so far as to claim that "Whatever variations of nationalist articulations prominent black intellectuals may have held since Blyden's death, the overarching ideological and philosophical underpinnings were Blydenian" (16).   During his lifetime, his untiring and ambitious discursive agenda was reported to sympathetic and antagonistic audiences in journals and newspapers throughout the English speaking world. In short, Edward Blyden was not unknown to the intellectual communities of the United States, Great Britain, and West Africa.

Fundamental to the vindication of the African race was the establishment of what he perceived as the imperative social, psychological, and ideological requirements necessary for African progress. His major themes for the regeneration of African civilizations are grounded on his interpretation of Divine Providence and his appropriation of Western European theories of progress, culture, and race. In other words, a close reading of Blyden reveals that he not only was aware of contemporaneous theories of culture and development, but that he appropriated these thoughts into his own theory for his own purposes. Moreover, this discursive performance is prominent in the five essays he published in London in *Fraser's Magazine* between 1875 and 1878. Through the essays in *Fraser's Magazine,* Blyden incorporated not only his univocal critique of Victorian and European racial discourse but he also indicated the modes of interaction necessary for his people to strive, progress, and culturally survive.

The essays which appeared in *Fraser's Magazine* brought to Blyden much desired literary recognition in England. The controversial trajectory of his subject matter and the sophistication in which he presented his arguments circulated his name and concerns throughout the British intellectual community. These essays, some in modified form, and others which had appeared in various English language journals, were later reprinted in London in *Christianity, Islam, and the Negro Race* (1886/87), recognized today as Blyden's most significant body of work. Although Blyden was prolific, and his writings covered many topics, his major themes were how actions generated from the privileged representation of whiteness and the derogatory representation of the black person's personality militated detrimental influences on African progress and contributed to a violation of what he perceived as God's historical project. It was therefore the semiotics of whiteness imposed on the African imagination and social structure, and the effect of this imposition on the workings of Providence, which concerned Blyden the most.

Blyden recognized that color and complexion were representations of a cultural and nation building language. That is, he was very aware that the color of one's skin was perceived as having intrinsic meaning and value, and that white-skinned nations self-consciously weighed their intellectual and moral status in terms of skin color. This conflation of moral and intellectual value with the epidermal fact of racial diversity, for Blyden, manifested itself in inter-racial relationships, mannerisms, and attitudes. Blyden was concerned that the valorization of whiteness had infiltrated West Africa, thus initiating undesirable and unnatural social and political transformations in the region. This semiotics of Whiteness, or melanin imagination, was the measuring rod employed to not only determine one's capacity for progress but also the desired direction of progress. The closer one was to whiteness, and by extension to European values and potential for perfectibility, the nearer one was to "civilization." The hierarchal vocabulary of this language suggested one's place in nature and in the particular cross-cultural relationship. The conscious and unconscious force of whiteness and the melanin imagination it inspired caused Blyden to adopt (to coin a concept made by Lola Young) his own "melanin metanarrative" in which the racial ladder drawn from the traditional chain of being model is replaced by "groves" where the races of man (each to his own grove) moved in the same direction according to the pace assigned by God, and the color of one's skin is only an indication of ancestral origins and environmental conditions rather than essential inferiority or superiority.

Rather than adopt a model of racial distribution based on the belief that man had degenerated from the exemplary European type, Blyden, through Scripture as his authority, argued that the global distribution of man was part of God's purposeful design. Blyden's melanin metanarrative is a theological and scientific explanation of race and human progress. The melanin metanarrative is not, however, merely a reading of current

racial theories and an assessment of their cultural and political utility, but it is also, according to Lola Young, "constructed in opposition to discourse but displaying similar discursive strategies. The two key attributes of racialized science may be identified as, first, a belief in a biological definition of 'race' which posits common phenotypical characteristics, and crucially, second, the construction of a hierarchy which places the different 'races' in a relationship of inferiority or superiority (in terms of intellectual, moral and physical indicators of achievement) " (158). Blyden's melanin metanarrative is therefore the simultaneous appropriation of current racial theories as well as a rewriting of those theories into the form of a subtle oppositional narrative. By appropriating well-known European thoughts about culture, race, and progress, Blyden elides the conventional socially constructed hierarchal racial ladder for a grove in which all races are moving in the same direction. This strategy is effective because he has positioned the various racial members of the human family at the same level of existence, with all of them employing their peculiar gifts toward the materialization of a common goal. Through this strategy of the groves, Blyden recruits the major intellectual currents of Western Europe (chiefly ideas derived from Herder, Comte, Taine, and Spencer) to authorize his interpretation of Providence. In other words, he skillfully aligns his thinking with accepted systems of thought and respected producers of knowledge. This appropriation is crucial, especially for non-European nineteenth-century scholars, writes Philip Zachernuk, for "[t]he predicament of the colonial intelligentsia was their need to work within the realm of European ideas in order to defeat some of its intentions; they had to transform ideas set in a largely inimical framework into something more congenial to their own needs" (430). The aim of this study is to show that this melanin metanarrative, used by Blyden, was in fact the generative strategy behind his most famous essays, those which appeared in *Fraser's Magazine.* In the *Fraser's* essays,

Blyden presented to the British middle-class reader his critique of Western racial attitudes, behaviors, and projects that he believed contributed to the abnormal development of Africa and the “pure blooded” African. He therefore, in the *Fraser’s* essays, was responsible for keeping under discussion elements of racial discourse and engagement that contributed to forming the trajectory of colonial practices.

1

BIOGRAPHY IN BRIEF OF A WEST INDIAN LIBERIAN

Edward Wilmot Blyden was born in 1832 in the Dutch West Indies. During this period, most blacks in the Dutch West Indies were still slaves. However, both of his parents were free “pure blood” blacks. His mother, who had contributed to most of his education, was a teacher and his father a tailor. In 1845, Rev. John P. Knox, a white American, became pastor of the Dutch Reform Church in St. Thomas in Virgin Islands. According Hollis Lynch, “Knox was impressed with the studious and pious boy of pious parents and became his mentor” (4). This close association with Knox may have inspired the young Blyden to become a clergyman. To further the young man’s education, Blyden’s parents allowed him to go with the Knoxs to the United States and enroll into a Seminary college. Rutgers’ Seminary School, Rev. Knox’s Alma Mater, and other American theological institutions of higher learning rejected Blyden because of the color of his skin. Because of the passing of the Fugitive Slave Laws in 1850, Blyden realized that his movement was very limited and his freedom precarious. That is, the color of his skin marked him as potential bounty for slave-catchers. Through connections with the American Colonization Society, which led a controversial campaign to return free blacks, and escaped and former slaves to Africa, Blyden secured passage to the Republic of Liberia. According to Robert July, in Liberia Blyden “received his formal education” in the “mission schools, and was therefore early and often exposed to the doctrine of white

superiority and the salvation of Africa through the adoption of European values and institutions" (74). This experience, the manifestations of white supremacy even from putative allies, was to have a formative impact on Blyden's future thinking. In 1858 Blyden was ordained a Presbyterian pastor and appointed principle of Alexander High School in Liberia.

This is the time in which he began to get public recognition as a man of letters and spokesman for African American and black West Indian emigration to Liberia. In 1862 he published his first collection of essays, *Liberia's Offering: Being Addresses, Sermons, etc.*, which includes "Vindication of the African Race; Being a Brief Examination of the Arguments in Favor of African Inferiority." "Vindication" was originally published in Liberia in 1857 and is clearly Blyden's first major discursive assault and analysis of nineteen-century racial discourse. In 1866, Blyden stayed in England for two and a half weeks. During that time he sought out old acquaintances, Brougham and Gladstone, both of whom he had had correspondence with since the early 1850s. His friendship with influential public figures made it possible for him to attend a session in the House of Commons. Details of this visit were recorded in his travel book, *From West Africa to Palestine* and his letters of the 1850s suggest a close friendship with Gladstone, who frequently sent books to the young scholar. As early as the mid-1850s his essays had begun to appear in various English language journals. Although Blyden had an obsessive distrusted of mulattoes, and was forced to flee Liberia on May 5, 1871, owning to derogatory statements against them that appeared in the United States, and temporarily settle in Sierra Leone, he had in 1856 married Sarah Yates, a mulatto woman and niece of the Vice-President of Liberia. His fame came with the publication of five controversial essays that originally appeared in *Fraser's Magazine:* "Mohammedanism and the Negro Race" (November 1875), "Christianity and the Negro Race" (May 1876),

“Christian Missions in West Africa” (October 1876), “Islam and Race Distinction” (November 1876), “Africa and the Africans” (August 1878). In these essays Blyden presents the controversial arguments that Muslim missionaries had been more effective than Christian missionaries in the moral, intellectual, and commercial elevation of Africans, and that much of what he perceived as European ineptitude is generated from their dependence on a tradition of inaccurate and unfair racial representation.

From 1877 to 1879 he was appointed Liberia’s first ambassador to the Court of St. James. This appointment made it possible for Blyden to maintain and establish friendships in influential British circles. In July of 1878 Blyden was given an audience with Queen Victoria and shortly after that he was elected as an Honorary Member of the Athenaeum Club. In a letter to his close friend and confidant, William Coppinger (Secretary of the American Colonization Society), Blyden enthusiastically writes that “On the committee who elected me, are such men as Sir John Lubbock, Lord Carnarvon, Herbert Spencer, Viscount Cardwell, Dean Church, the Marquis of Salisbury” and that he considered this occasion “one of the chief triumphs of my literary life” (*Selected Letters* 275). *Christianity, Islam, and the Negro Race* was published in London in 1886 and, after the first edition of five hundred copies “quickly sold out” (Lynch 74), reprinted in 1887. The introduction to *Christianity, Islam, and the Negro Race* was written by Sir Samuel Lewis, a distinguished Sierra Leonean lawyer and the first black man to ever be given a Knighthood.

2

BLYDENIAN APPROPRITIONS AND THE EXIGENCIES OF PROVIDENCE IN CONTEXT

Blyden positioned his argument of African continental and racial regeneration within the nineteenth-century discourse of progress. A sign of progress was perceived as

one nation's ability, through commerce and the exchange of ideas, to advance and achieve what was regarded as "civilization." Blyden's own idea of progress is strongly based on his Presbyterian convictions about the existence of the laws of Providence. Blyden, however, was also an extremely erudite scholar. Many of the ideas that Blyden encountered in his various studies contributed to the formation of his philosophy of progress, race, and Providence. His adherence to the belief in Divine design is responsible for much of what many twentieth-century scholars perceived as Blyden's political shortcomings, inconsistencies and eccentric opinions. Providence, for Blyden, was the Divine movement of man, man's performance of God's will, and the invisible guide and engine of African progress. Man and history work within the limits of God's plan, within established constraints. The sufferings of a people, for Blyden, are all part of this Divine movement towards the betterment of humanity. This means, as Blyden so controversially makes clear in "The Call of Providence to the Descendants of Africa in America," that the many evils and sufferings experienced by the African race had spiritual and educational benefits, and that the ramifications of the slave trade, the black diaspora, and world events in general were parts of God's meaningful design. These events, for Blyden, made possible the eventual return of the African to the "fatherland" which God had "reserve[d] for them in their absence" (26-27). This is the type of thinking Lynch describes as Blyden's "theocratic determinism." For Lynch, Blyden's way of interpreting events stems "partly from his deeply religious nature and was partly a convenient rationale for the unhappy lot of his race. It possessed the supreme advantage of being able, theoretically at least, to salve the suffering and humiliation of the race in the past and in the present, while holding out to it the promise of a bright future" (79). In "The Origin and Purpose of African Colonization," Blyden gives an example of his mode of theocratic determinism or the poetics of Providences when he writes that "There is not

a thinking being, whatever his religious belief, who does not recognize the fact that everything in the physical and moral world proceeds according to some plan or order" and that "it is the belief of all healthy minds that that law or influence is always tending towards the highest and best results"(*Christianity* 94). Through this statement, Blyden is in fact partly referring to religious and secular intellectuals who seem to have constructed their own terminology for what he calls Providence. He is therefore situating his way of thinking about the laws which govern the limits and trajectory of man within established European philosophical, historical, and scientific systems of thought.

However deterministic, versions of what Blyden called Providence appear in the works of intellectuals as highly regarded as Johann Herder, whose *Outlines for a Philosophy for a History of Man* was translated into English in 1803, Auguste Comte's positive philosophy, Hippolyte Taine's theory of culture, and the social evolutionism of Herbert Spencer. Therefore, many of the "laws" and theories of race and culture during the nineteenth-century, advanced by the century's most significant thinkers, had deterministic qualities or they posited that the movement of man is determined by specific "Laws." For instance, in *History of English Literature*, Taine argues that the "primitive disposition" and energy of all groups operate the same way and move in the same direction (9). Taine believed that however different national and racial personalities appear to be, they "all have ploughed over the same ground" (7). And in *The Positive Philosophy* (which had a major influence on the ideas of many influential Victorian thinkers), Comte states that "all phenomena" are "subjected to invariable natural Laws" (28). Herder, like Blyden, believed in Providence and man's limited conscious agency. In *Another Philosophy of History*, Herder writes that man is "never other than a tool" (71), and that human beings "have always been just a small, *blind instrument*, [used]almost against [his] will" (47). Furthermore, Herder writes that "where the human species is

concerned, *God might have a greater overall plan* than what an individual creature is able to comprehend; because nothing ever leads towards anything merely *individual* "(72).

According to Blyden's theory of Providence, God has a unique plan for each individual human group. The various races of man have specific functions to perform in their struggle to serve humanity. Progress is the eventual fulfillment of these individual national and racial functions. The phrase "peculiar work to perform" runs throughout most of Blyden's writings. In *Imagined Communities* (2006), Benedict Anderson alludes to a nation's imagined function when he claims that "[i]t is the magic of nationalism to turn chance into destiny" (12). In *Our Origin, Dangers, and Duties* (1865), Blyden writes that "[e]very nation and every people has its peculiar work to perform, and each for itself must find out the work to be done and the best methods and instrumentalities of persecuting it" (11). And in "The Origin and Purpose of African Colonization," which was delivered in January 1883 at the anniversary of the American Colonization Society, Blyden, very cognizant of European activities which came to be known as the Scramble for Africa, says that "Among the conclusions to which study and research are conducting philosophers, none is clearer than this – that each of the races of mankind has a specific character and a specific work" (*Christianity* 94). Even racialized geographical locations were established by God's will. The "Almighty," Blyden writes, "drove asunder the nations and assigned them their boundaries; and ours by physical adaptation" ("The Call" 29). In regards to the African's unique position among nations, Herder, in *Outlines for a Philosophy of the History of Man* (1803), argues that "nature took him in hand, and formed of him what was mo[s]t fit for his country, and the happine[s]s of his life. Either no African [s]hould have been created, or it was requi[s]te, that negroes [s]hould be made to inhabit Africa" (271). The law of Providence, for Blyden, is forward moving.

Moreover, it evolves from gifts, values, systems of knowledge present in the culture and psychology already operating within individual groups. In the terms derived from Comte's positivism, individual groups are equivalent to being specialists, possessing individuated gifts that may in the end serve the common good. The members of a nation have shared functional characteristic, and these characteristics suit each race, within its own environment, to perform a particular service.

Like most major Victorian thinkers, Blyden firmly believed that the exchange of ideas and knowledge contributed to the moral and intellectual development of a people. Although he frequently argued that colonialism was in the service of Providence, he was against practices that encouraged the aggressive imposition of one's cultural values and world view onto that of another national and racial group. This type of relational strategy was, for Blyden, an enemy of Providence because it did not recognize the unique gifts individual races were given in the service of humanity. Blyden was, in other words, opposed to practices that worked to elide (rather than respect) differences. For Blyden, once the African had further advanced along the road of progress (as a result of the acquisition of Western knowledge), it was imperative that the African hold onto his own cultural values and praxis and not imitate the ways of the European or foreign mentor. It was just as important, Blyden argued, for the representatives of European nations to resists the temptation of transforming indigenous nations into mirror images of themselves. This particular component of cross-cultural interaction was not only important for Blyden but it seemed also to have been a contested issue of interest in the 1870s among British missionaries in Africa. Blyden believed that the aggressive euro-centric practices of many British missionaries had a retarding effect on the African's development. In his public writings and private correspondences Blyden had emphasized his resistance to the nurturing and creation of Europeanized Africans and African

institutions constructed strictly along European models. In a letter to Sir George Berkeley, the Governor of Sierra Leone, dated 12 February 1874, Blyden wrote that "[t]o mould African institutions after the English model would be to give the people a garment, which not having been made for them, and of which they do not feel the necessity, would not only not fit them, but hang extremely awkwardly upon them … a sort of caricature which, alas, the examples are numerous on the coast" (163). What he says to Berkeley seems to echo what was suggested by Herder at the turn of the century: "But look, your gown is, in turn, too long for the next person!" (*Another Philosophy* 14).

This line of reasoning is resumed a few years later in Blyden's inaugural address as President of Liberia College, reprinted in *Christianity, Islam, and the Negro Race* under the title "The Aims and Methods of a Liberal Education for Africans," in which he proposed an African curriculum that would "not to be organized according to foreign patterns, but will organize itself according to the nature of the people and the country" (71). Later in that same speech he elaborates by saying that "Now in Africa, where the colour of the majority is black, the fashion in personal matters is naturally suggested by the personal characteristics of the race, and we are free from the necessity of submitting to the use of 'incongruous feathers awkwardly stuck on'"(77). Therefore, Blyden is insisting that "The African must advance by methods of his own. He must possess a power distinct from that of the European" (77). These national characteristics, racial peculiarities, are the group's distinctive hermeneutics essential for the advancement and betterment of humanity. In the words of Judson Lyon (1994), this strain of Blyden's writings addressed the "overarching importance of cultural self-expression, and saw it as part of a broader movement for human improvement and world harmony" (233).

Blyden believed that certain modes of homogeneity are required for the harmony and progress of a nation. For Blyden, the nature of a nation's homogeneity is of two-

fold: the intellectual developmental and the biological. With the intellectual-developmental component, Blyden believed, like Herder and contemporaries like Herbert Spencer, nations evolve and advance in accordance to the nature of its contact with other nations. Through the acquisition and appropriation of foreign knowledge an indigenous community can further develop its own native material and cultural resources, but not all forms of cross-cultural dynamics are healthy. In both the original 1878 version and the edited version of "African and the Africans" that appears in *Christianity, Islam, and the Negro Race,* Blyden encourages British readers to see and accept that

> The African at home needs to be surrounded by influences from abroad, not that he may change his nature, but that he may improve his capacity. Hereditary qualities are fundamental, not to be created or replaced by human agencies, but to be assisted and improved. Nature determines the *kind* of tree, environments determine the *quality* and *quantity* of the fruit. We want the eye and ear of the Negro to be trained by culture that he may see more clearly what he does see, and hear more distinctly what he does hear. We want him to be surrounded by influences from abroad to promote the development of his latent powers, and bring the potentiality of his being into practical or actual operation. He has capacities and aptitudes which the world needs, but which it will never enjoy until he is fairly and normally trained (*Christianity* 277).

Theoretically, the new will recognizes itself in the old. The intellect that is developed comes from native cultural roots and is therefore different from the culture from which a certain body of knowledge originated. Through the acquisition of the useful knowledge of the more technologically and scientifically advanced country, the less advanced nation is able to develop within the system of understanding (world-view) peculiar to the natives. The group's ability to manipulate the environment and the conditions peculiar to them (and their racial talents) has been enhanced. Homogeneity still exists, but in an advanced, complicated, and evolved state. Spencer, whom Blyden had met and conversed with during one of his stays in London, and often referred to and

greatly admired, describes this form of education, which initiates progress, as the movement from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous, or from the simple to the complex. For Spencer, foreign knowledge works internally on a culture. In “Progress: Its Law and Cause”, Spencer writes that “actual progress consists of those internal modifications of which this increased knowledge is the expression” (445). Heterogeneity, in the way Spencer here employs the term, is an indication of cultural evolution and social metamorphosis rather than biological transformation and institutional renovation. As a social group acquires more tools of knowledge, it also becomes culturally, self-reflectively, and intellectually more complex than it had been during an earlier stage. This form of heterogeneity suggests that social metamorphosis has occurred. Blyden envisioned West African cultures going through a social metamorphosis peculiar to itself, expanding its cognitive faculties and systems of hermeneutics as a result of the acquisition of new knowledge, rather than having this new knowledge transform them into a completely different and unrecognizable African community. Therefore, Blyden was interested in how the acquisition of new ideas contributed to expanding the capability of members of a cultural community. Blyden is therefore writing about building on ideas that the African already possess, and is used for him to negotiate conditions peculiar to his own history and his own environment. Like Taine, Blyden believed that evolutionary force never confront a blank slate. Dynamic cultural energies, already operating within the psyche of the native, influence the momentum and trajectory of new knowledge. “When natural character and surrounding circumstances operate,” writes Taine, “it is not on a *tabula rasa,* but on one already bearing imprints. According as this *tabula* is taken at one or at another moment so is the imprint different, and this suffices to render the total effect different” (16).This new knowledge gets appropriated by the native culture and used in accordance to the demands and needs of its own

traditions. The appropriation of foreign knowledge, therefore, is a result of group's collective agency. They, in short, not only just take what they need, but consciously make known through the act of appropriation what is important for their development. Heterogeneity, then, is really another way of indicating a culture's advanced intellectual, psychological, and cultural complexity.

But while heterogeneity (in the form of knowledge) has the potential of leading to progress, hybridity, for Blyden, hinders stability, progress, social metamorphosis and, by extension, muddies Providence. Hybridity, unlike the mode of intellectual heterogeneity considered here by Blyden and Spencer, is biological and, according to the logic of the time, racial. "Like his European counterparts," V.Y. Mudimbe accurately observes, "Blyden did not doubt that a racial phenomenon must be the basis of nationalism and the foundation of the Nation" (116). "Nothing," Herder had already written, "appears so directly opposite to the end of government as the unnatural enlargement of states, the wild mixture of various races and nations under one sceptre. A human sceptre is far too weak and slender for such incongruous parts to be engrafted upon it: glued together indeed they may be into a fragile machine, termed a machine of state, but destitute of internal vivification and sympathy of parts" (R. Young 39).Although Spencer believed that the mixture of closely related races may modify social arrangements, these social modifications are structural rather than degenerative biological cross-mixtures. This particular type of mixture of races goes under the heading of "social constitution," or the types of policies enacted for the sake of order. In *The Principles of Sociology* Spencer refers to this social constitution as "the relative homogeneity or heterogeneity of the units constituting the social aggregate" (570-71). This mixed social aggregate is desirable because, like England and France, it has "evolved from mixtures of nearly allied varieties of man, can assume stable structures, and have an advantageous modifiability"(574).

Spencer, Blyden and most nineteenth century intellectuals held the common place assumption that the stability of a nation becomes complicated when blood mixture of disparate races enters the body politic. Biologically disparately mixed-race nations, for Spencer and most of his contemporaries, was undesirable and a source of social and political instability.

Blyden, therefore, had appropriated the race science and the theories of nationalism of the period. He firmly believed that, like Spencer, "hybrid societies are imperfectly organizable" and that they "cannot grow into forms completely stable" (574). As shown in the following section of this chapter, Blyden had publicly made allusions concerning the importance of racial purity and the effects of hybridity on progress, Providence and the destiny of the African race. References to unstable loyalties of hybrid subjects are present in Blyden's "An Address before the Maine State Colonization Society" in 1862, where he had accused mulattoes of being in opposition to African American emigration to Liberia.

> I am not by any means blaming those who, availing themselves of their complexion, can escape the indignities in this land of caste. Nature has given them that advantage, and they should use it. And those who are 'blue-eyed' enough and 'fair' enough with Saxon blood, should go, as many have already done, altogether with the whites. They have a right to do so. But all we beg of them is, to let us alone. Don't divide and distract the councils of coloured men. Don't keep those whom Providence is calling to do a great work in their fatherland, from responding to that call (16).

For the white middle-class British reader of *Fraser's Magazine*, Blyden's language seems a little less direct. Blyden writes in the original 1878 version of "African and the Africans" that "It is becoming more and more evident that for the efficient and successful work of the race, whatever that work may be, homogeneity is an indispensable element. One of the worst difficulties which can beset a nation, especially in the early periods of

its existence, is a heterogeneous people. Homogeneity is essential to harmony, and both are essential not only to effective working, but even to permanent national existence" (188).

3

ENEMIES OF PROVIDENCE AND THE *FRASER'S* ESSAYS

For Blyden, any representational or discursive practice that portray, argues and suggests African capability as essentially limited or immutable, and which subsequently causes social actors to initiate and encourage projects that limit and control African agency, was regarded as a detriment, a hindrance to, and an enemy of Providence. These practices, as Blyden saw them, were injurious to African progress and detrimental to the workings of Providence because the native was no longer perceived as the active agent of his own elevation and not on the same level of humanity as those who are culturally and phenotypically different. In terms advanced by Comte, these practices violate positive Laws which favored the nurturing of specialties (arts, sciences, knowledge) inherent in group differences. Therefore, behaviors and practices that positioned and fixed difference within the inferiority/superiority binary were enemies of Providence. We find what Blyden sees as the performances of the enemies of Providence and African progress suggested and explicated throughout the *Fraser's* essay in the 1870s and in the essays reprinted in *Christianity, Islam, and the Negro Race* in 1886. Although the controversial statements that Muslim missionary's conversion practices were far superior in elevating and educating the African than that of European missionaries was the overt aim of the *Fraser* essays, the subtext was that the semiotics of whiteness (which Blyden had imagined as essential to European missionaries) had proven a detriment to African progress and the African psyche. This semiotics of whiteness, for Blyden, manifested itself in behaviors generated from the ethnocentricities of foreign teachers and the

imagined racial and cultural self-hatred formed in the psyches of Western educated native instructors and leaders. Because of this semiotics of whiteness, material progress and spiritual regeneration are connected to and, in the mind of the practitioner and the observer, embodied in whiteness. This human (or nonhuman) intermediary, object of mediation (the source from which desired knowledge emanates), then, shapes the destiny of the African. This source is in the powerful position of retarding the natural development of the African by placing ethnocentric limits on the Other's agency. In other words, the African subject becomes (based on the internalization of inaccurate and prejudiced knowledge)what alien forces have decided he is to become. These actions were antithetical, as Blyden saw them, to the purposes of Providence because man's ego-driven will gets imposed on the natural development of a people. It resulted in an artificial cultural community whose development is unsanctioned by what he imaged as the will of God. The African becomes what is desired by the mentor, or intermediary, rather than organically evolving through what had been engrafted within the African constitution by Divine design.

The road to this cultural retardation starts with the scientific and the artistic representation and mis-measurement of a people. This mis-measurement is initiated once the character traits and physical characteristics of one group of people become the yardstick against which all other groups are measured and evaluated. According to Blyden, "[t]he standard of all physical and intellectual excellences in the present civilization being the white complexion, whatever deviates from that favoured colour is proportionally depreciated, until the black, which is the opposite, becomes not only the most unpopular but the most unprofitable colour" (*Christianity* 77). For Blyden, prominent British writers and scholars were chiefly responsible for perpetuating the myths of black inferiority. The chief culprits of dishonest representations are partly

drawn from the pens of the members of the Anthropological Society of London in particular and the scientific community in general, especially the likes of Richard Burton and James Hunt, whom Blyden had on several occasions throughout his life identified as the "typical representatives" of "the class of men" who "are untiring in their efforts to expel the negro… from the pale of humanity" (*From West Africa* 62). In Blyden's eyes, these were the types that formed the parameters of racial and cultural discursive practices which fed the British public misrepresentations of weaker races under the disguise of science. In a letter to W.E. Gladstone, dated April 16, 1862, Blyden had suggested the influence that British intellectuals have around the world, thus giving an indication of the dangers of misrepresentation on cross-cultural engagements.

> When I come to this country and see the people who are impressing themselves so wonderfully upon the people of all races and climes, sending their thoughts to influence the four corners of the earth, I fancy that I do not discover any indication in the people generally of a consciousness of their power. They do not seem to know the influence they are wielding over thousands in America, Asia, Africa and the isles of the sea. … This fact imposes serious responsibility upon British writers: their words for good or evil are wafted to the ends of the earth. The authors of the famous 'Essays and Reviews' – which are being carried to all parts of the world unaccompanied, except by accident, by their reputations – certainly did not know the influence of the words they were penning (*Selected Letters* 56).

Christian images and representations seem to frequently cast blacks in inferior roles. As part of the African's conversion and Christian indoctrination is the internalization of an iconography suggestive of white superiority. These were the models newly converted black Christians confronted and were expected to emulate and embrace. They were confronted by representations of heroism and transcendence that favored white skin, realities and motivations alien to their understanding of themselves and the world, thus having a demoralizing psycho-aesthetic effect on African consciousness. In

"Mohammedanism and the Negro Race," the first of his essays to appear in *Fraser's Magazine*, Blyden complains that "the painting and sculpture of Europe, as instruments of education, have been worse than failures" (15). This use of art, for Blyden, raises "barriers" that impede "normal development" because they establish for the black Christian "models of imitation" and "canons of taste" which have impaired, "if not destroyed, his self-respect, and made him the weakling and creeper which he appears in Christian lands" (15). The emphasis on "imitation" and adopting a certain "canon of taste" suggest that what is aboriginal to the student is dismissed as unimportant. The native's entire moral and intellectual foundation, what makes him what he is, are sites of erasure; thus, the measure of his conversion is determined by his distance from what is seen as barbaric and African. Moreover, writes Blyden, "[t]he Christian Negro, abnormal in his development, pictures God and all things remarkable for their moral and intellectual qualities with the physical characteristics of the Europeans, and deems it an honour if he could approximate – by a mixture of his blood, however irregularly achieved – in outward appearance, at least, to the ideal thus forced upon him of the physical accompaniments of all excellence" (15).

These representations favor a man-made racial hierarchy derived from the Great Chain of Being, a ladder-like model nineteenth-century European scholars had inherited from their predecessors. This model, created by Europeans to make sense of past political realities was adopted to explain the contemporary phenomena of human diversity. A model more in agreement to the exigencies of Providence, thus sanctioned by Scripture, comes in the form of parallel groves. The parallel groves of racial difference, favored by Blyden, suggest moral and intellectual equality but highlights differences in the varying directions and functions of the races. According to Blyden, Europeans engaged in or even "considering questions" of the Civilizing Mission in Africa very often assume that "the

Negro is the European in Embryo" but "in the undeveloped stage," and only after he has progressed up the ladder of civilization will he "become like the European." The problem with this line of thought for Blyden is the assumption "that the Negro is on the same line of progress, in the same grove, with the European, but infinitely in the rear" (*Christianity* 276). Blyden goes on at length to say that

> This view proceeds from the assumption that the two races are called to the same work and are alike in potentiality and ultimate development, the Negro only needing the element of time, under certain circumstances, to become European. But to our mind it is not a question between the two races of superiority or inferiority. There is no absolute or essential superiority on the one side, nor absolute or essential inferiority on the other side. It is a question of difference of endowment and difference of destiny. No amount of training or culture will make the Negro a European; on the other hand, no lack of training or deficiency of culture will make the European a Negro. The two races are not moving in the same groove, with an immeasurable distance between them, but on parallel lines. They will never meet in the plane of their activities so as to coincide in capacity or performance. They are not *identical*, as some think, but *unequal*; they are *distinct* but equal; an idea that is in no way incompatible with the Scriptural truth that God has made of one blood all nations of men. (*Christianity* 277)

The two principle sites that Blyden points to as enemies of Providence are the attitudes and practices of missionaries and mulattoes in West Africa. Both the European missionary and the mulatto (most of the latter had migrated from the United States), internalized and appropriated contemporary racial hermeneutics into their respective social practices and interactions with the native communities. Both groups, moreover, had considerable power and influence in West Africa over aboriginal populations. In the *Fraser's* essays, Blyden is suggesting that missionary attitudes toward African cultural praxis impede progress. He does this by showing why Islam has been so successful in Africa. Therefore, the successes of Islam are the vehicles he uses to criticize current and historical Eurocentric practices and racial prejudices of European missionaries. The

mulattoes, on the other hand, are positioned as bastardized performers of the reiteration of Western racial hierarchy which excludes the native from the important materials needed for advancement. The behaviors of both groups maintained a language of separation that kept the African either excluded or dependent.

4

THE MIS-MEASUREMENTS OF THE MISSIONARIES AS ENEMIES OF PROVIDENCE

Blyden's ideas, founded on his understanding of Providence, for the intellectual and moral development of a Christian African resembled that of Henry Venn (1796-1873), the honorary secretary of the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S) from 1841 until his death in 1873. According to Wilbert R. Shenk, Venn believed in Providence and that Christian Missions were established to carry out God's plan. He writes that "[i]ntrinsic to Venn's theological foundation was his belief that God is present and active in history, guiding human affairs according to his plan. Christian mission interprets the acts of God and calls people to obedience" (27). Moreover, writes Shenk, Venn (similar to Blyden's uses of Biblical history) believed that "providential design could be discerned in history" and that the "missionary should understand that design and align himself with it" (27). Venn argued in favor of the creation of self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating native churches. Under Venn's plan, missionaries were to assist in establishing Christian communities in Africa, develop a native Christian leadership within those communities, encourage native churches to appropriate Christian teachings to their aboriginal habits and therefore express their own indigenous characteristics within a national church, and then move on and "repeat the process" (Lynch 85). In the words of Venn's biographer and close friend, William Knight, he encouraged, against persistent opposition and resistance from many missionaries, "the formation, wherever

the Gospel was proclaimed, of a Native Church, which should gradually be enfranchised from all supervision by a foreign body, and should become… self-supporting, self-governing, and self-extending" (277). Venn felt that racial distinctions and peculiarities were very important for a developing people and the spread of the Gospel. Under Venn's policies and influence was it possible for Samuel Ajayi Crowther (1806-1891) to become the first African Bishop of West Africa in 1864. In 1851, Venn issued to the C.M.S "The Native Pastorate and Organization of Native Churches" as a warning that "Care must therefore be taken to guard native teachers from contracting habits of life too far removed from those of their countrymen" (Knight 306). He, like Blyden, saw the danger of dismissing native characteristics and sympathies in misguided attempts to Europeanize the native. Both men seemed to have inherited the position suggested by Herder that no institution or religion works exactly the same in other parts of the world, even under the same name. Venn, then, was insightful enough to perceive the disadvantages of molding black Christians into what Blyden interpreted as caricatures detrimental to the evolution of African culture. He, in other words, distinguished "between missionary work carried on by foreigners" and what he called "Christianity acclimatized" (Knight 276) in an attempt to construct an indigenous national church. For Venn:

> The one was the means, the other the end; the one scaffolding, the other the building it leave behind when the scaffolding is removed; the other subject to constant changes and modifications, as fresh circumstances develop themselves, the other growing up to the measure of the stature of the perfect man, only changing by gradually putting away childish things and reliance on external help and control. (Knight 276-77)

This insight was the foundation of the guidelines, instructions and suggestions that Venn presented to the members and missionaries of the C.M.S. on June 30, 1869 in an essay he titled "On Nationality." Important for our discussion here are Venn's suggestions that missionaries are to take "into account national distinctions" (Knight 282) and "race

distinctions" and that missionaries should "*Study the national character of the people among whom you labour, and show the utmost respect for national peculiarities*" (Knight 283). Venn, as with Blyden, felt that "distinctions of race are irrepressible" and that resentments and "long cherished but dormant prejudices" will present themselves (Knight 285). Venn anticipated the culture clashes in West Africa that welcomed Blyden during his exile to Sierra Leone when he predicted that "*these race distinctions will probably rise in intensity with the progress of the mission*" (Knight 284). His continuous emphasis on the use and study of "national habits" and "race distinctions" shows that the education of Africans should aim beyond the copying stage and more toward a process of development that resembles organic growth. In "Africa and the Africans," the very last of his last essays published in *Fraser's*, Blyden seems to echo Venn:

> It is owing, in a great measure, to the inadequate theories held by those who undertake to deal with the African, whether as friend or foe, that while in the colonies along the coast European influence and teaching furnish new elements of commercial and religious life, they are helpless to raise the people above the 'mimetic' stage, and endow them with creative and reproductive power. What we want is, that the foreign information introduced should properly *educate* the people – that is, should be also assimilated as to develop, and be fertilized by, native energy. (281)

For Blyden, however, the mis-measurement of the African had psycho-historical roots which survived in the current attitudes toward the African and the desired relationship between white Christian teacher and African student. In "Mohammedanism and the Negro Race," Blyden writes that unlike Christianity, "Mohammedanism found its Negro converts at home in a state of freedom and independence of the teachers who brought it to them. When it was offered to them they were at liberty to choose for themselves" (*Christianity* 11). Here he refers to the history and consequences of the slave trade. Fear and forced alienation from cultural practices had always accompanied the African in the face of Christianity. That is, force and punishment were the initial

components of African conversion. That is to say that Christianity was originally given to the African while in a state of captivity. Captivity and Christianity worked in tandem to structure the African's sense of his own agency, thus fear was always an ingredient of his conversion, indoctrination, and acceptance of a foreign creed. "Along with Christian teachings," writes Blyden, "he and his children received lessons of their utter and permanent inferiority and subordination to their instructors, to whom they stood in the relation of chattels" (*Christianity* 12).The imagined resulting psychological constitution is what makes it possible for Blyden to begin his first essay for *Fraser's Magazine* with the controversial statement that "[w]herever the Negro is found in Christian lands, his leading trait is not docility, as has been often alleged, but servility. He is slow and unprogressive. Individuals here and there may be found of extraordinary intelligence, enterprise and energy, but there is no Christian community of Negroes anywhere which is self-reliant and independent" (*Christianity* 10). At the start, then, Blyden presents the introduction of Christianity as the inauguration of actions not only antithetical to the argued purposes of the Civilizing Mission, but also at odds with what he himself sees as the will of God. In other words, Blyden blames the commercial and intellectual stagnation of the African on the fetishistic imaginations of British missionaries. Although attempts during these early stages were not attempts to Europeanize the African *per se*, the African's sense of himself as a man was being formed according to the type of relationship desired of those who had influence over him. He was being designed to fear, serve, and accept his position as servants of men rather than as self-motivating and independent agents in the service of God's providential design. Historically, then,

> owing to the physical, mental and social pressure under which the Africans received these influences of Christianity, their development was necessarily partial and one-sided, cramped and abnormal. All tendencies to independent individuality were repressed and destroyed. Their ideas and aspirations could be expressed only in conformity with the views and taste

> of those who held rule over them. All avenues of intellectual improvement were closed against them, and they were doomed to perpetual ignorance. (*Christianity* 13)

These character traits that Blyden imaged as limited intellectual initiative and apprehensiveness toward independence, were maintained even after the African was emancipated and settled by their British liberators in Sierra Leone. Of the present day "Negro Christian" in Sierra Leone, Blyden is of the opinion that "[t]he most enlightened native Christians there look forward with serious apprehension – and, perhaps, not without good grounds – to the time when, if ever, the instructions and influence from London will be withheld" (*Christianity* 10). Thus, what Blyden had rendered as the historical forced dependence during captivity is, through the medium of Christianity, transformed into a spiritual and material dependence during freedom. The current dynamic between native and foreign missionary participates in erasing the Other's willingness to build from his own culturally generated cognitive resources, which is in violation of what Blyden sees as the exigencies of Providence.

According to Blyden's interpretation of Providence, the conversion strategies of Muslim missionaries seem more agreeable to maintaining and developing African minds and character. In contrast to the African's introduction to Christianity, the native's first engagement with Islam is during a state of freedom within the wholesome surroundings of his own home. Therefore, Blyden argues, African converts generally become Muslims through their own actions and by their own choice. According to Blyden, the native's own desires, and what he saw in the spirituality of this strange new religion, hastened conversion. The native, as an active agent in his own spiritual and intellectual development, saw that he had something to gain without the shadows of fear and force to motivate his choice. Because of this interpretation of native/Muslim dynamics, Blyden is able to suggest that Islamic practices are congruent with the imperatives of Providence

because it “strengthened and hastened certain tendencies to independence and self-reliance which were already at work. Their local institutions were not destroyed by the Arab influence introduced. They only assumed new forms, and adapted themselves to the new teachings” (11). Furthermore, writes Blyden, “what really took place, when the Arab met the Negro in his own home, was a healthy amalgamation, and not an absorption or undue repression” (12). The Muslim convert, for Blyden, because of this “healthy amalgamation,” then becomes a producer of knowledge rather than an imitator of behavior. Finally, it is also easier for the native to accept the Muslim as teacher because of the similarity in skin color. The vehicle to spiritual enlightenment, then, is represented through someone who looks like them and who has shown sympathy rather than distance.

The Christian African convert, according to Blyden and suggested by the urgency of Venn’s continuous instructions to the C.M.S, had historically been encouraged to lose whatever was authentic within himself (his cognitive models of understanding the world) and uncritically copy and approximate the alien lessons taught him as well as assume for himself the outward appearances of the culture of his missionary instructor. That is, according to Blyden, “he is taught from the beginning of his book-training… not to be himself, but somebody else” (*Christianity* 37). According to Mary Kingsley’s testimony, disregard for native cultural habits were still being practiced by missionaries at the turn of the century. In her introduction to R.E. Dennett’s *Notes on the Folklore of the Fjort*, Kingsley writes that missionaries “have no interest in native customs and world view” and they believe that “[w]hat the native African thinks is irrelevant and useless” (v). Therefore, imitation of a cultural script that requires the erasure and suppression of behavioral signs perceived as no-European, non-Christian, and, by extension, uncivilized, were parts of an African convert’s indoctrination. According to George Stocking,

missionary attempts to educate aborigines “were compromised somewhat by an aggressive ethnocentrism” whenever they confronted “people whose cultural values seemed at polar variance” from their own. Many of these missionaries apparently did not weigh the power of the native’s culture and therefore “they assumed that because they themselves had risen from ignorance and low estate by their own exertions and by embracing vital Christianity, the natives to whom they offered education and the word of God would do likewise” (87-88). This type of education, as imagined by Blyden, precluded intellectual growth in the native, for it inspired in the native a hesitancy to go beyond the walls of what he was taught. The intellectual inability to go beyond book learning, then, makes it impossible to become a producer and a builder. The convert, then, for Blyden, even with the Gospel, remains stagnant. In “Christianity and the Negro Race,” the second of his essays published in *Fraser’s Magazine*, Blyden suggests this psyche disposition when he writes that

> The Mohammedan Negro is a much better Mohammedan than the Christian Negro is a Christian, because the Muslim Negro, as a learner, is a disciple, not an imitator. A disciple, when freed from leading-strings, may become a producer; an imitator never rises above a mere copyist. With the disciple progress is from within; the imitator grows by accretion from without. The learning acquired by a disciple gives him capacity; that gained by an imitator terminates in itself. The one becomes a capable man; the other a mere sciolist. (37-38)

This cultural figure, or caricature of a European, evolved, suggests Blyden, because the missionary himself does not see the native as being very capable. This attitude is the result of what the European missionary had previously learned about the African and his own conviction of the Other’s moral and intellectual limitations. “With every wish,” writes Blyden,

> …the European seldom or never gets over the feeling of distance, if not repulsion, which he experiences on first seeing the Negro. While he joyfully admits the negro to be his brother, having the same nature in all its essential attributes, still, owing to the diversity in type and colour, he naturally concludes that the inferiority which to him appears on the surface must extend deeper than the skin, and effect the soul. Therefore, very often in spite of himself, he stands off from his African convert, even when, under his training, he has made considerable advance in civilization and the arts. (20)

In "Christian Missions in West Africa," published in *Fraser's* in October 1876, Blyden again directly addresses the European's inability to let go of the sense of his superiority. "The Christian world," writes Blyden

> trained for the last three hundred years to look upon the Negro as made for the service of superior races, finds it difficult to shake off the notion of his absolute and permanent inferiority…. The influences of representations disparaging to his mental and moral character, which, during the days of his bondage, were persistently put forward without contradiction, is still strong in many minds. (*Christianity* 46)

Therefore, Blyden seems to suggest that because of the European's difficulty and resistance to conceptualizing the "Negro" beyond a state of bondage, essential difference and dependence contributes to structuring his humanitarian efforts in ways that reiterates the master/slave dynamic. Even Christian instruction, within this dynamic, repeats a relationship that limits African agency and separates (this time intellectually) the native from his original source of cultural identification. In other words, the natal alienation under which the African had experienced as a condition and product of the Atlantic slave trade is replaced by a different sort of cultural erasure. This latter sort is what is desired by the European missionary for purposes of control. That is, it is easier to facilitate obedience and conformity after one hermeneutic narrative is eroded, called into doubt, and erased by a different understanding of the cosmos. The African mind thus becomes the imagined of a blank slate much touted, according to Blyden, by missionaries. This, in

regards to the African, Blyden seems to suggest to his English reader, is the only behavioral language the European can speak. Their lack of genuine understanding of African psychology and desire, which generates their "first and constant effort of the missionaries to Europeanize them" and to "bring things to this new field as nearly as possible into conformity with the old" (*Christianity* 63-64), precludes the manifestation of the type of communities perceived as being developed by Muslim missionaries in West Africa. The position that the Europeanization of the African, for Blyden, is in violation of God's will because "neither would the people themselves nor the outside world be any great gainers by it; for the African would then fail of the ability to perform his specific part in the world's work, as a distinct portion of the human race" (*Christianity* 65). In other words, the Europeanization of the African prevents and distorts the development of the native community's natural gifts.

5

THE MELANIN MIS-MEASUREMENTS OF THE MULATTO AS ENEMY OF PROVIDENCE

The jaundiced ideological yardstick used to measure racial, cultural, intellectual and moral superiority, which made it possible for missionaries to encourage and pursue the suppression of native cultural practices and to form their projects around the assumption of innate African inferiority, had its most detrimental manifestations in the behaviors Blyden had witnessed in the mulattoes, or any person of African descent who overtly glorified in the privilege of having discernible Caucasian blood. Lynch writes that there existed in Liberia, as in America, "a social stratifications based on colour – the mulattoes considering themselves superior to the black emigrants, while the colonist,

generally speaking, believed the indigenous people inferior to them"(10). During his brief employment with the C.M.S., Blyden, in a letter to Venn, combined what he perceived as the active distancing practices established between missionaries and Africans to the behaviors of the mulattoes he had encountered in and outside of Liberia. In a letter dated April 17, 1872, Blyden elaborated on a comment he had made to Venn in a previous correspondence (16 October, 1871) regarding the "sensible refrigeration" (*Selected Letters* 97) undergone by European missionaries "as soon as he comes into actual contact with the Negro" (*Selected Letters* 97). Blyden's later letter to Venn suggests the importance of enlisting sympathetic and educated black men, of the same color as those they would teach, as participants in the Christianization and civilizing project. The importance of teachers being roughly of the same skin complexion as would-be native disciples partly contributed to the relationship and the advancement of the Gospel in West Africa, for Blyden believed that phenotypic and epidermal similarities had less alienating repercussions on the consciousness of the receiver. He would allude to the necessity of this epidermal dynamic, for both parties, years later in "Mohammedanism and the Negro Race," when he suggests that part of Islam's success in West Africa is because the "Arab missionary… often of the same complexion as his hearer, does not 'require any long habit to reconcile the eye to him'" (*Christianity* 21). The Arab missionary, then, according to Blyden, is less incline to recoil in dread at the sight of black skin. And on the other side of this communication dynamic, the would-be convert visually imbibes a shared family resemblance to the medium of this foreign religion. According to Blyden's line of thinking, the desired guardian and shepherd of salvation is one of their own, perceived as being just like them and one of them, as a member of the

other's genealogy rather than the other's negative. Blyden's letter to the sympathetic Rev. Venn suggests that, even with the C.M.S., whiteness as the principle medium through which technological and spiritual knowledge gets imparted potentially produced an unstable foundation. "The people here [in Sierra Leone] need a little intercourse with the Negroes of foreign training and culture – not mulattoes whom they have had several, who, they inform me, have kept the place in confusion as the few in Liberia are now doing" (*Selected Letters* 112).

For Blyden it was the mulattoes' imagined intellectual proximity to the white race, and the meaning attached to whiteness *vis-à-vis* blackness, that made them consciously want to distance themselves from the "pure" blooded African while at the same time exercise power and influence over their darker African American kin in the United States and Liberia. According to James Conyers (2009), Blyden had seen in his own native St. Thomas that mulattoes "were in no way considered black people," had "occupied the middle position between the vast social distance that separated white from black," and had "tried to maintain as much social distance between themselves and blacks as whites had maintained from them" (149). It was this dislike for mulattoes that caused Blyden to find himself fleeing Liberia for Sierra Leone. Blyden, who had married a mulatto woman, had early in his public addresses criticized mulatto leadership as damaging to the cause of emigration from the United States and ineffectual and exclusionary once they had settled in Liberia. In 1862, in "An Address before the Maine State Colonization Society," Blyden pointed out that all of the "bitter and unrelenting opposition [to black American emigration to Liberia] comes from a few *half-white* men, who, glorifying in their honourable pedigree, have set themselves as representatives and

leaders of the coloured people of this country" (*Black Spokesman* 15-16). These men, according to Blyden, who "have no faith in Negro ability to stand alone," also "do all they can do to identify themselves with white people" (*Black Spokesman* 15-16). For Blyden, the members of the mulatto community in the United States, who opposed emigration, worked against God's design because their influence threatened to prevent the most talented members of the African American community from transporting the gifts of the diaspora, their Western education (even skills many had acquired during slavery) across the Atlantic to contribute to the spiritual regeneration and intellectual restitution of the fatherland. In his speech before the Maine State Colonization Society, Blyden asked the mulattoes in the audience not to "keep those whom Providence is calling to do a great work in their fatherland, from responding to that call" (*Black Spokesman* 16). Mulattoes, like their white American and European counterparts, were influenced not merely by the face in the mirror but also through a literature that was "anti-Negro" and, therefore, seemed to add to their ego-rewarding desire to "cling to the side of their father" (*Black Spokesman* 17) in attempts to distance themselves from charges of moral and intellectual inferiority putatively inherited from the side of their mothers. "We quite believe that," wrote Blyden in a description that seems to resemble what he says about liberal Europeans and Christian missionaries, "under the guise of all that plausible defense they sometimes make of the Negro, there lurks a secret acquiescence in the slanders and exaggerations of the Trollopes. We cannot blame them. Believe what you please and do what you please, only keep from distracting the councils and deliberations of those who feel the sting of degradation, and have a consciousness of innate power, under fair opportunity to stand alone" (*Black Spokesman* 18). By 1865, in

Our Origin, Dangers, and Duties, Blyden seems to have reached the point of arguing for racial purity in the governance of Liberia. In one of his attempts to recruit African Americans to Liberia, he writes: “Here is a land adapted to us – given to us by Providence – peculiarly *ours*, to the exclusion of alien races” (41). And:

> And let us, in giving an impulse to civilization on this continent, take warnings from the examples of other nations, and so demean ourselves, that Liberia may eventually take her stand among the foremost nations of the earth, ‘free from the blood of all men,’ with laurals unspotted and pure, and with a prosperity untarnished by the tears and anguish and blood of weaker races. (42)

In 1870, Blyden’s most personally damaging statement against mulattoes appeared in the *Smithsonian Institute’s Annual Report* under the title “On Mixed Races in Liberia.” The commentary on Liberia cultural and political affairs printed in the *Annual Report* were taken from an 1869 letter he had written to a member in the New York Colonization Board. It was apparently later sent by Blyden’s friend to Professor Joseph Henry, the first President of the Smithsonian Institute, and, for scientific reasons, published in full without Blyden’s permission and knowledge. “By the use of statistics,” writes Lynch (1967), Blyden argued “that although mulattoes had occupied privileged positions in Liberia, the death rates among them were significantly higher than among Negro emigrants” (53). “My Dear Sir: I send enclosed a catalogue of all of the students who have ever been in Liberia College. It will be seen not only that they were not natives (aborigines), but more than three-fourth the number have been largely mixed with Caucasian blood, and among these death and disease have made sad ravages” (*Black Spokesman* 187). The science of the mulatto question, that is, their legendary inability or ability to survive in tropical climates, had been a matter of public and scientific debate for much of the first half of the nineteenth century. By starting his letter with

information concerning mulatto mortality in Liberia, Blyden does seem to make it a matter of science rather than politics. However, it was the racial and political, rather than the merely ethnological, that really bothered Blyden about the presence of mulattoes and their capacity as mediators of African progress. This was during a period in which Blyden, Alexander Crummell, and other darker members of Liberia College frustratingly argued for the inclusion of aborigines and the expansion of educational opportunities to the interior. Much of "Blyden's energies" at this time, according to Lynch, "were consumed in a conflict between educated blacks and the mulatto ruling class" (38). The basis of this conflict, and the context in which most of what Blyden writes about mulattoes, is because the problem of the color line "had reproduced itself in Liberia," thus providing a "dividing and disrupting influence" (38). "[N]ear-white," writes Lynch, "replaced white as the badge of the social elite," making it possible for mulattoes to take "for granted that they were to be the rulers" (Lynch 38). Blyden was more concerned that as leaders mulattoes were ineffective, and that most of the resources promised for the elevation of the African race and the functioning of the Liberian government, which they had received from American benefactors, were going to the hybrid classes who were favored neither by Providence nor the environment that God had reserved specifically for genuine members of the black family. He thus complained that "the attention of educators have been principally devoted to persons of feeble constitution" (*Black Spokesman* 188). Blyden insisted that "[t]he admixture of the Caucasian and the Negro are not favoured by Providence in inter-tropical Africa" and urgently requested that board members revisit the issue of transplanting mulattoes "before wasting any more thousands upon an impracticable scheme" (*Black Spokesman* 188-89). The resources, distributed under

inaccurate racial premises, seemingly used solely for the frail and unfit mixed-breed, did not, for Blyden, contribute to the development of the darker members of the group. In other words, the regeneration of Africa and the African did not appear to have been a major component of the mulattoes' agenda and the environment (assigned by God as suggested in Scripture) seemed to have made their assumed position as mediators of progress problematic.

However, it was not just the mulatto's identification with whiteness, the power they were given over blacks, their separation into racial cliques and misuse of funds, that Blyden found offensive and having a potentially lasting influence over policies toward the African race; it was, rather, the overall suggestion that the infusion of Caucasian blood was the generative medium for black advancement. It was this idea of the empowering potential of Caucasian blood that seems to have generated the exclusiveness mulattoes felt and profited from at the expense of aborigines. "The idea was that the presence of white blood imparted greater aptitude for learning, and such persons were to be fitted for teachers. Black boys of hale and hearty *physique* were left to grow up unnoticed" (*Black Spokesman* 188). This suggests that both whites and mulattoes, by virtue of blood, were considered by their benefactors as better fitted to rule and administer over darker members of the population. This latter element of the mulatto question, for Blyden, seems to have greater potential in keeping the aborigine alienated from resources and the darker diasporic members of the black race in subordinate and dependent positions.

Although Blyden had appropriated and approved of much that was written about mulatto stock and the progeny of miscegenation (as indicated by his use of "mongrel,"

which parades throughout his private letters in regards mulattoes), he opposed the strain of magical thinking that argued that one drop of Caucasian blood made African improvement feasible. In fact, he does adopt the popular and scientific notions that the mixture of European and African blood produced not only a new race, relatedbut distinct from both white and black, but also a psychologically unstable and degenerate subject. The myth of the improving qualities of Caucasian blood also was part of the reinterpretation of Noah's malediction that Edith Sanders and Philip Zachernuk call the "Hamitic Hypothesis." Blyden himself had employed the Biblical authority of the Hamitic tradition as the rationale for human diversity, for his belief that human races were formed in particular locations to do particular work, and that Africa was the home chosen for blacks by God. He, however, opposed arguments that denied African participation in the formation of civilizations. According to Zachernuk, before the 1800s it was generally believed that Ham was the father of the black races of Africa, "and that all of his progeny were divinely cursed to a life of servitude" (428). But Europeans began to rework this tradition around the end of the eighteen-century and early nineteenth-century. "Theological scholars and ethnographers," writes Zachernuk of this period, were now arguing "that Ham and Egypt were white, thus claiming the newly discovered glories of Egypt for Europe's racial forebears" (428). When biblical ethnography was "superseded" later in the nineteenth-century, "Hamites" (i.e. Egyptians, Phoenicians, ancient Jews, whiter non-European groups) were still seen as the ones "who possessed the ability to inspire civilization in darker races" (428). Therefore, according to this view, black Africans and their descendants "owed whatever progress and improvement they had known to foreign 'Hamites' rather than indigenous forces" (428). In general, the

Hamitic theory from the sixteenth century up to the 1800s regarded Africans as savages and natural slaves. As a result of Napolean's expedition to Egypt in 1798, a new conception of Hamite began to take hold which transformed only Ham's youngest son, Cannan, into a servant of servants. "So it came to pass," writes Sanders, "that Egyptians emerged as Hamite, Caucasiod, uncursed and capable of high civilization" (527). Through the Hamitic Hypothesis, says Sanders, "The Hamites were designated as the early culture-bearers in Africa owing to the natural superiority of intellect and character of all Caucasoids. Such a view point had dual merit for European purpose: it maintained the image of the Negro as an inferior being, and it pointed to the alleged fact that development could come to him only by mediation of the white race" (528-29). By mid-century, the influence of Caucasian blood was generally accepted as among the major mediating forces responsible for examples of talent perceived in peoples of African descent.

The praise for Blyden's own collection of writing, *Christianity, Islam, and the Negro Race*, appears to have traces of the logic of the Hamitic Hypothesis, for some reviewers were astonished that such a work came from the pen of a "pure" African. The reviewer for the *Athenaeum*, notes Lynch, wrote that "the most immediately noteworthy fact about this volume… is that the author is a Negro." The reviewer of the *C.M.S. Intelligencer* seems to divorce Blyden from the general African and says that "if Blyden's formal education stopped at High School, then 'the teacher as well as the pupil could have been no ordinary man'"; and, "Finally," writes Lynch, "a correspondent of *Notes and Queries* questioned Blyden's assertion that he was a 'full-blooded Negro'; the name Blyden suggested that he had at least 'a strain of European blood'"(Lynch 74-75).

Others, in the United States and Western Europe, also seem to have had drawn from the logic of this interpretation of Noah's malediction, which leads to the belief about the intellectual improvement generated by the infusion of white blood into the native. In *The West Indies,* Anthony Trollope's use of the Hamitic Hypothesis indicates its acceptability. According to Trollope, "Providence has sent white and black men to these regions in order that from them may spring a race fitted by intellect for civilization; and fitted by physical organization for tropical labour"(R. Young 142). In other words, Trollope believed that "when sufficient of our blood shall have been infused into the veins of the children of the sun; then… we may be ready, without stain to our patriotism, to take off our hats and bid farewell to the West Indies" (R. Young 142). Monogenesists employed the Hamitic Hypothesis because it supported the belief that all men evolved from the same parent. Polygenesists made use of Biblical authority for their arguments about the innate inferiority of Africans. In *The Inequality of Human Races*, a work that is considered among the pillars of nineteenth-century racial discourse, Arthur de Gobineau makes the claim that "no negro race is seen as the initiator of a civilization. Only when it is mixed with some other can it even be initiated into one" (212). Gobineau thought it unrealistic for the European to "hope to civilize the negro", and that the most he could manage was the transmission "to the mulatto [of] only a very few of his own characteristics" (179). With the transmission of these characteristics the mulatto, who "cannot really understand anything better than a hybrid culture," will find himself, especially if he were to marry a white woman, "a little nearer" to the ideas of the white race. In other words, intellectual capability improves with the addition of white blood. James Hunt of the Anthropological Society of London, whom Blyden had throughout his

career positioned as the poster-boy of inaccurate and unfair racial representation, argues against the notion that education alone is responsible for the general improvement of blacks, and that central source generating African intellectual improvement could only come about through the infusion of white blood. In *The Negro's Place in Nature*, Hunt writes that

> The many assumed cases of civilized Negroes generally are not those of pure African blood. In the Southern States of North America, in the West Indies and other places, it has frequently observed that the Negroes in place of trust have European features, and some writers have supposed that these changes have been due to a gradual improvement in the Negro race which is taking place under favourable circumstances. It is assumed that great improvement has taken place in the intellect of the Negro by education, but we believe such not to be the fact. It is simply the European blood in their veins which renders them fit for places of power, and they often use this power far more cruelly than either of the pure blooded races. (28)

According to Armand de Quatrefages, Caucasian blood is the harbinger of civilization. That is to say that for Quatrefages the amalgamated stock will be more closely allied to the European than the original indigenous group, thus making them more capable for the work of progress in tropical climates. In "The Formation of Mixed Human Races", he argues that the progeny of European and indigenous parents "will receive at birth an aptitude for sustaining the operation of the most varied influences; they will become in advance, as it were, either wholly or partially acclimated" (39). In other words, as a result of the Europeans' inclination to emigrate and populate other countries, it is inevitable that "the future human races will be largely renovated with an infusion of white blood, that is to say, with the ethnological elements which thus far have carried to its highest degree the development of human intelligence" (39).

In his last essay for *Fraser's Magazine*, "Africa and the Africans," Blyden

authorizes African intelligence and right of self-expression over the "hear-say" and the "preconceived notions" of harbored by many of his middle-class reads with the statement that "[o]nly the Negro will be able to explain the Negro to the rest of mankind" (*Christianity* 263). What he does here is explain to his Victorian reader that the African, contrary to claims passed down through Western knowledge, is capable of speaking for himself, especially since what contemporary readers have inherited lacks accuracy and fairness. In this his final statement to a large British and international audience, Blyden seems to be calling for recognition of African agency and intelligence. This assertion reappears in the version published in *Christianity, Islam, and the Negro Race* in 1886 and in the original article form 1878. What is absent, however, from the 1886 version of "Africa and the Africans" is any reference to race mixture. This is probably because Blyden saw it politically expedient at that moment of publication to edit comments about miscegenation and mulattoes that might harm his already unstable relationship with the Liberian government. According to Blyden in the original 1878 version of "Africa and the Africans," among the elements "which seriously affects the problem and prevents a fair test of Negro ability in Christian lands" ("Africa" 188) are in fact the ramifications of Caucasian blood. Blyden argues that although the mixture of white blood artificially, uncritically and arbitrarily designates a person as "Negro," only the white element is singled out as contributing to his success and morality. To put it differently, white blood "is never considered as having any part in the production of the results deplored, but rather, at times, as imposing a salutary and restraining influence upon 'Negro barbarism'" ("Africa" 188). Belief in any derivative of the Hamitic Myth is, for Blyden, contrary to the laws of progress and the exigencies of Providence. White

blood, for Blyden, was one of the "powerful foreign forces" that interferes "to oppose primitive forces" referred to by Taine. According to Blyden's personal experiences and studies, miscegenation precluded nation building because it introduced and brought together what Comte identified as "incoherent materials" (38). Because of these incoherent materials, "a radical contrariety existed between the materials he was endeavoring to combine" (38-39). To aid the African in his own improvement is not white blood, Blyden counters, but the acquisition of knowledge through contact with other nations. The African, in other words, already has the capability, all that is needed are the tools. According to Blyden

> The African at home needs to be surrounded by influences from abroad, not that he may change his nature, but that he may improve his capacity. Hereditary qualities are fundamental, not to be created or replaced by human agencies, but to be assisted and improved. Nature determines the *kind* of tree, environments determine the *quality* and *quantity* of the fruit. We want the eye and ear of the Negro to be trained by culture that he may see more clearly what he does see, and hear more distinctly what he does hear. We want him to be surrounded by influences from abroad to promote the development of his latent powers, and bring the potentiality of his being into practical or actual operation. He has capacities and aptitudes which the world needs, but which it will never enjoy until he is fairly and normally trained. (*Christianity* 277)

V.Y. Mudimbe is accurate when he says that "Blyden uses his literary background to describe the African as a victim of a European ethnocentrism" (110). To achieve what Blyden had presented as his vision for Africa and the African race, the African first "must have a fair opportunity for his development. Misunderstood and often misrepresented even by his best friends, and persecuted and maligned by his enemies, he is, nevertheless, coming forward, gradually rising under the influences of agencies seen and unseen" (*Christianity* 278). As an act of providence, races are called upon to do particular work at

particular times in the history of humanity. Humanity, for Blyden, has not reached its final stage, and every race of man, in its individual groove, is moving in God's time in the same direction. "The present practice of the friends of Africa is to frame laws according to their own notions for the government and improvement of this people, whereas God has already enacted the laws governing in these affairs, which laws should be carefully ascertained, interpreted, and applied; for until they are found out and conformed to, all labour will be ineffective and resultless" (*Christianity* 281).

CHAPTER FIVE

BY WAY OF CONCLUSION, J.J. THOMAS AND THE FROUDACITY OF THE MYTH OF HAITI

1

INTRODUCTION(S): JAMES ANTHONY FROUDE AND JOHN JACOB THOMAS

1888, the Jubilee year of the emancipation of slaves in the British West Indies, was ushered in by the publication of a text that participated in problematizing contemporaneous and future arguments concerning the nature and limits of black agency in relation to the centrality of British influence. The publication in question was the January release of James Anthony Froude's *The English in the West Indies; or, The Bow of Ulysses*. The publication of this text, which may have been the most talked about and controversial travel narrative on the Caribbean during that jubilee period, brought to the forefront and seemingly served to reify for many late-century observers of the West Indian and African scenes an element of imperialist and racial discourse normalized by Thomas Carlyle and that survives even today in our discussions of globalization. This particular ingredient of imperialists and racial discourse positions the Western European (or members of the Caucasian race) as the sole generative source of civilization and progress, and the non-white subject as the eternal dependent.

The English in the West Indies, in which Froude paints self-government as the harbinger of black domination which escorts in the destruction of Western institutions and white lives, is in overall intent and purposes the Caribbean equivalent to *Oceana; or England and her Colonies*. In *Oceana*, Froude argued that self-government was not merely injurious to the political reputation, military strength, and spiritual wellbeing of an

acknowledged great mother country, but that it was also mortally precarious to the safety of the newly formed self-governing group. The territories that chiefly concerned Froude, in *Oceana*, were Australia and New Zealand. However, in his 1888 text on the West Indies his argument against self-government is founded on the fear of racial upheaval. That is, during a period in which the Sepoy Rebellion of 1857 and the 1865 Morant Bay massacre were still topics of discussion, a closer inspection of *The English in the West Indies* reveals Froude's conscious manipulation of existing Anglo-Victorian anxieties toward imagined nationalistic and genocidal tendencies of the darker Other. The sensational violence of both historical events may not have contributed to the construction to Froude's unwavering stance against self-government, but they certainly formed his anxiety-ridden fantasies about the essential nature of black British subjects in the West Indies. The Manichean allegory generating the popular phantom of black brutality was in fact the trope Froude employed in his attempt to influence opinions in England against advocating self-government in the West Indies. In the words of C.S. Salmon (1832-1896), Froude presented a "black man draped out of all recognition as a warning to Englishmen to avoid that unclean thing, local self-government" (7).

Froude's text is clearly an expanded reiteration of Carlyle's contention of the necessity of blacks realizing and accepting the laws of nature which had established the Englishmen as the wiser of the two races, as well as the natural saviors and masters of the region. This way of seeing the relationship between white and black British subjects in the West Indies Carlyle had popularized and set into motion in his famous 1849 essay which appeared in *Fraser's Magazine*. Far too often, it seems, discussions of Froude's *The English in the West Indies* identify him merely as an outdated mouth-piece for the

Anglo-West Indian planter class without seriously considering the fact that he arrived in the West Indies with a cultural knapsack full of racial and political assumptions that had already been circulated and embedded as acceptable commonplaces throughout Great Britain. Furthermore, all of the assumptions he brought with him were employed to validate responses to racial and nationalistic tensions in recent history, as well as the template of blackness he had inherited from the author of "Occasional Discourse on the Negro [Nigger] Question." John Jacob Thomas knew better than to completely ignore the influence of what many optimistic Victorian commentators of his day may have perceived as Froude's anachronistic opinions about race. "James Anthony Froude is," writes Thomas, beyond any doubt whatever, a very considerable figure in modern English literature" (27). Outdated or not, traces of the racial thoughts of Carlyle and Froude still had profound and observable influences on behaviors and colonial policy at the end of the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth-century. In "John Jacob Thomas: An Estimate", Bridget Brereton writes that "[o]ne should not underestimate the influence and power of these slave-holding types even in the later 19th century. There were several of them, at the time he wrote, entrenched in the Trinidad Legislative Council... That the type was dying out, as Thomas maintained, may have been true, but they were taking an unconscionable time about it" (33-34). I therefore agree with Faith Smiththat "It would be absurd to deny the impact of a text such as *The English in the West Indies* had on British colonial policy, as well as its contribution to the prevailing metropolitan image of a Caribbean inhabited by lazy Negroes and well-meaning but beleaguered plantocracy" (10). Froude followed Carlyle in the belief that self-government was the unavoidable prelude to the corrupt evils of democracy and

independence, thus leading to the severing all ties and allegiances from the British Crown. In *Oceana*, Froude was very straightforward about being "no believer in Democracy as a form of government which can be of long continuance" (388). Similar to Carlyle before him, Froude argued that the idea of democracy "proceeds on the hypothesis that every individual citizen is entitled to an equal voice in the management of his country; and individuals of infinitely unequal- bad and good, wise and unwise – and as rights depend on fitness to make use of them, the assumption is untrue, and no institution can endure which rest upon illusions" (391-92).Although, argued Froude, public opinion seemingly favored allowing self-government in the colonies, *Oceana* had still sold, as an indication that Froude's "books commanded an impressive readership,"75,000 copies in its first edition (Maxwell 379). It is safe to assume, then, that his thoughts on the West Indian colonies also garnered interest and that a large body of England's middle class readership may have sympathized with the parameters his racial views (the conditions and limits of black/white relations), if not in his opinions on democracy, human rights and universal suffrage.

The phantasmagoria of the African's innate emotional dependency and unconscious desire for savage expression, with a socially constructed image of Haiti as the power of example, were the center-pieces of *The English in the West Indies*. Through Froude, the mid-century "savage" of Carlyle and Dickens is embodied in the in late nineteenth century re-figuration of the atavistic Haitian. According to Rupert Lewis, "in the nineteenth century Haiti was held up as a symbol of the threat to white domination and cited as the prime example of what would happen if blacks were given civil and political rights" (51). In response to the use of Haiti as the template of African

psychology, Thomas would later that year write in his most famous work, *Froudacity: West Indian Fables by Anthony Froude*, that "[w]ith regard to the perpetual reference to Hayti, because of our oneness with its inhabitants in origin and complexion, as a criterion for the exact forecast of our future conduct under given circumstances, this appeared to us, looking at actual facts, perversity gone wild in the manufacture of analogies" (10). The projection of what constituted a black Haitian, therefore, became the template in which African psychology and capability was measured. Froude positioned what was popularly argued about the black republic as a convex gothic mirror-image of the future of self-government in the British West Indies.

Also vital to Froude's argument against self-government in the British West Indian colonies is the favoring of white blood and European influence as primary civilizing elements. This strategy was desired to keep those regarded as pure blooded blacks (the racial majority in the West Indies) further removed form seats of influence. For Froude, white blood was a defense against the African's predisposition towards the regressive march to barbarism. Only a few members of the West Indian community were fortunate enough to be endowed with European DNA. This aspect of his argument illustrated, for Froude, not only the ups-and-downs of Haitian politics, but it would also shed light on why he had selected a modicum of blacks as examples of what members of the African race may eventually become. However, everything about Thomas's life was a refutation of the deterministic racial ideology advocated by Froude. J.J. Thomas was, first of all, of pure African descent and the son of former slaves. There was, in other words, no observable trace of whiteness. Although he was a product of Trinidad's school system, Thomas, who became a teacher and highly regarded scholar, was commonly referred to

by peoples of African descent in the British West Indies as a "self-made" man. This term, "self-made," bestowed honor on those persons of African descent to whom it was applied. It suggested that with minimum assistance from whites, or no assistance from whites, or formal and institutional resistance from the dominant members of the colonial social structure, the person regarded as "self-made" rose to recognizable prominence in his community. This figure was not uncommon in the West Indies. Self-made meant that he was largely self-educated and respected in Trinidad and London; and, according to Bridget Brereton and biographer Faith Smith, many Trinidadians followed Thomas's career with pride. Brereton describes him as "[t]he outstanding teacher in this period" and "in 1867 Thomas topped the list in the first competitive examinations for entry to the civil service, and came to Port of Spain to fill a minor post" (94). In 1869 Thomas completed and published *The Theory and Practice of Creole Grammar*, "a scholarly work on the Creole patois spoken by the majority of Trinidadians in the nineteenth century" (94). *The Theory and Practice of Creole Grammar* received favorable reviews in England and established Thomas's reputation as a scholar. According to Brereton he had mastered not only patois, but also taught himself French, Spanish, Latin and Greek, and was eventually recognized in London as an expert in philology. J.J. Thomas was also, according to Brereton, "the foremost literary Trinidadian of his day" (94). He had translated Borde's *Histoire de la Trinidad* and wrote the introduction to a reprinted edition of J.B. Philip's popular and controversial 1830s novel *The Free Mulatto*. He started the Trinidadian Athenaeum, which was a literary and debating society whose membership was almost entirely black and mulatto. And he was also the editor of two short-lived periodicals, *The Trinidadian Monthly* and the weekly *Review*. After reading a

paper entitled “Some Peculiarities of the Creole Language” in London in 1873, Thomas was elected as a member to the London Philological Society. He became the symbol of all a “pure black” British subject could become. But “he was in some ways,” writes Brereton, “a typical representative of the black and coloured middle class which was emerging in Trinidad and the West Indies in the years after Emancipation. Like most members of this class, he rose to middle-class status essentially through education and command of European culture”(22). For this particular caste of people of African descent that Thomas represented, those who were “pure-blooded” African and those who showed no visible traces of European ancestry, the suggestion that whiteness was the generating source of their individual improvement, rather than individual agency and hard work, was an insult. It was a belief that generated ideas of the pure blooded blacks as having predetermined limitations on their potential and cognitive capability. The idea, as advanced by Froude and many others, that the withdrawal of white influence may cause all that they had acquired to fall away and reveal a “true” savage African character Thomas also found offensive. This encouraged the belief that white Europeans were required as guides when, in fact, black social and cultural formations in the British West Indies were created in spite of the white community. It was this publically observable characteristic of self-improvement that the rising black middle and educated classes used to distinguish themselves from their putative white betters. It was Trinidad’s black and colored middle class who had considered themselves more cultured and educated than the crassly materialistic whites on the island. It was, moreover, also this particular class of people (educated and professional blacks) who may have posed a problem for the current power structure, especially if Froude’s unlikely vision of self-government in the Antilles

were to take place. This historical fact of post emancipation, which was the observable existence of the emerging black middle class, Froude had denied by discursive exclusion and omission. As suggested before, unlike the mass of blacks in the West Indies, they were educated and their racial ties to the majority of blacks made them a possible threat to planter's continued domination. This class of blacks, differentiated by skin complexion even from the coloreds, represented the imagined and feared political heirs of democracy (for they were the racial majority) if the form of self-government as propagated through Froude's logic should ever materialize.

In response to this vision of the future political reality of the West Indies, Froude makes the imaginative leap of connecting black leadership and independence to unmediated and instinctive violence towards white bodies and institutions. Once the blacks have gained independence, argued Froude, they will sever ties with the creators of universally acceptable cultural, moral and political forms. They will then take revenge on their saviors, or on any material form that reminded them of slavery and of their diasporic condition resulting from the contact zone. In the end, only the skeletal ruins of civilization will remain in the West Indies, for they will have reverted to the savage conditions of their ancestors. According to the racialized and deterministic logic of Froude and some of his contemporaries, once blacks are allowed political participation of any form, all the rudiments of culture and civilization whites had worked hard to clothe them with will fall away and reveal the essential African. Froude's African, then, is retrogressive rather than evolutionary, and he instinctively fights against the forward movement of history.

For Thomas and his black British contemporaries, the Jubilee year of 1888 was

the crucial point of reflection, and the opinions of Froude greatly contributed to opening the door to discursive expressions of black agency. John Jacob Thomas made use of Froude's Haitian allegory to bring to the British reader his vision of the African as an active participant in the movement of history. Throughout *Froudacity,* Thomas's main concern is to show that (during a very short span of time) blacks were the self-generating embodiment of progress. Thomas placed peoples of African descent not as responders to history, but as active agents (rather than passive instinctive actors) in the creation of their own destinies. Furthermore, through Thomas's challenge in *Froudacity* to the nineteenth century notion of black atavism, we are able to link the broader issue of self-government in the West Indies to the parochial white anxieties over the emergent black middle class.

2

THE FROUDACIOUS FABLE: PROCESS AND PURPOSE

James Anthony Froude's "fables," as described by John Jacob Thomas in *Froudacity*, are ideological character and nation building constructs that contribute to the generation of narratives and projects aimed at limiting the agency of the Other. These "fables" favor the supposed superiority of European identity over that of the non-European Other. Froude's particular "fables," "myths," or phantasmagorical representations reflect England's desired relation of domination over the racial and colonialized Other. Throughout *Froudacity* Thomas seems to suggest that there is a strong connection between Froude's representations and the economic desires of the colonial government.

The black West Indian's potential to become an atavistic and cannibalistic Caucasian devouring monster is the very representational strategy of decontextualization

Thomas called an act of froudacity. Through this mode of racial representation that Thomas calls froudacity, a writer knowingly removes the subject of representation from history and constructs an abstraction. The amplitude of the abstraction precludes consideration of the existence of the experienced phenomenon. Through this discursive act, the writer engaged in froudacity positions as factual what he seems to know is an invention. Thomas, however, was one among many observers of England's colonial scene aware of the liberties Froude tended to take with truth. In "Mr. Froude's Negrophobia", for instance, N. Darnell Davis, an Anglo-Granadean, also observed that Froude's misrepresentation of facts was widely known in the West Indian press. Davis himself was among the contemporary opponents who described *The English in the West Indies* as "Froudacious " (109) and "Froudian" (110). He furthermore condemns the text for its "Froudian system of making up facts as the Tourist goes on his way" (110). In *The Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine* (1889), one of the sympathetic reviewers of Thomas's text described *The English in the West Indies* in these terms: "The Froudacity of the book, as a substitute for veracity, is faithfully exposed" (957). Davis writes that "It is clear as the day that Mr. Froude brought out his dread of *Haytia*, ready made, with him from England…. At the same time, he seems to have accepted as evidence against the Haytians, yarns told him by sailors: tales they heard from others, who had, in turn, been told by somebody else" (117). Although this rhetorical strategy had long been a commonplace in Victorian racial and political discursive practices, the term "froudacity" briefly came into popular usage after news of the publication and copies of *Oceana* had reached Australia. One nineteenth-century source suggests that the term was first coined by an irate Australian journalist. The colonist, rather than the reader in the mother

country for whom the text was written, was better positioned to appreciate and to respond to the invention. Because of the transparent nature of the falsehood, it is highly doubtful that the white planters in the British West Indies did not happily notice that Froude had obscured the lived character of the islands in their favor. Whites in Trinidad, for instance, would have noticed that the actual racial composition of the vanguards of self-government was downplayed to the point of near invisibility, and that the existence of a very visible, educated and culturally vibrant black middle class was entirely erased. J.J. Thomas was among its most prominent members. It was more important for Froude to create for his English reader a credible and monstrous nemesis of Western civilization. Like the prototypical monster Franco Moretti analyzes in *Signs Taken for Wonders*, Froude's Haitianated (or even Calibanized) Afro-West Indian "is a *collective* and *artificial* creature" (85) as well as a "*historical product*" (86).

A conscious attempt, then, is made to create (from hearsay and colonial legends) visions that may inspire fear and trepidation in the minds of the readers in the distant mother country. The recital of these racial tales are, moreover, composed of elements that members of the audience might consider as being in the realm of truth, even without the presentation of concrete data. Therefore, a froudacious fable is the selective accumulation of unverified information about a particular group or event, the telling of which has a clearly laid out political agenda. The reader and object of study are separated by geographic location, thus leaving the writer's credibility and cultural credentials as the only capital contributing to the tale's veracity. In this type of text, C.S. Salmon points to the writers' or spokespersons' expertise and reputation as of principal importance in circulating ideas about the West Indies. In *The Caribbean Confederation*, which was his

own response to Froude's text, Salmon writes:

> Of brilliant attainments and great administrative ability and business experience, these men are appealed to by the home public for their special knowledge; and the home public, which knows nothing of the matter or of the people in question, is guided by their views; it is told of the beneficence of a stringent paternal rule; it has also whispered in its ears how these millions of people of other races are backward, or degraded, or weaklings, or one otherwise unfitted to possess any of the elementary rights of freemen Englishmen so dearly prize. (113)

Intentionality and the positioning of the subject of debate in as nearly as possible to a cautionary tale and cultural warning are imperative for the creation of a froudacious tale. In other words, a writer's cultural collateral and a nation's racial superstitions are recruited for the creation, however gothic, of a froudacious tale.

According to the black legend that Froude participates in perpetuating, the institution of slavery had a civilizing and beneficial influence on the displaced African's moral and intellectual development. This line of thinking, of course, was designed to portray black improvement as occurring only under conditions in which they were confinement by whites. Froude argued that "the negroes who were taken away out of Africa, as compared to those who were left at home, were as the 'elect to salvation,' who after a brief purgatory are secured an eternity of blessedness. The one condition is the maintenance of the English crown"(80-81). The tropical climate, which produced an abundance of fruits, foods and resources, was also a hindrance to the possibility of African creativity. The richness of Africa undermined initiative and impoverished the native's intellectual capacity. The abundance found in tropical climates gave the African no incentive for betterment, and no reason to contemplate beyond the satisfactions of the moment. This line of thinking which informed Froude's representation of the black personality was still being propagated at the turn of the century. In *Black Jamaica: A*

Study in Evolution, William Pringle Livingstone writes that “the social advancement of man depends upon temperature. It will be observed that the march of civilization has taken place within the limits of the temperate zone, the conditions there, and the relations they bring about, being most favourable to the development of the qualities latent in his nature” (9).The African environment had itself contributed to what was later perceived in the west as the original cause of African laziness, his intellectual inertia, child-likeness and docility. As though it were an acquired trait of evolution, this inactive condition had become embedded into the African psyche. With the passage of time, and only through their fortuitously traumatic contact with European cultures through the institution of slavery (and the imaginary educational structure implicit in the master/slave relationship), the African had partially adapted to his new condition and acquired some tools of improvement. In other words, only under a European guide did the African learn how to work, how to make use of natural resources, and how to negotiate his barbaric nature.

After emancipation, an interaction favoring what we call paternalism was laid onto the conditions of black/white relations. This interaction took the form of the “duty” one group had toward another. Goldwin Smith, for instance, was among those eminent Victorians who argued that it was the duty of the most gifted to pass-on their ingenuity and knowledge to less educated and gifted individuals and races. “By helping them on they help us and advance their own character in the highest sense;” writes Smith, “and that these exertions of benevolence may take place seems to be the reason why Providence permits such great inequalities in the world” (99). It became generally argued that most of what the African, once free, seemingly was able to do for himself actually came as a result of the contact zone and European benevolence. Any trace of African

ingenuity was perceived as a result of contact with European races. The workings of this assumption, accepted by many mid-nineteenth century conservatives and liberals, were summarized through Smith's vision of England's relation to the world. Although Smith himself was referring to India, in "Expansion of England" he boasted that England was the harbinger and the cement of government. No form of civilized government was possible, many Victorians argued, without the presence and influence of the British. If England were to withdraw her presence and influence, Smith claims, "Not only would immense investments and a vast field of action be lost, but the country would be delivered over to a plundering anarchy. In the British provinces there would be no germ of government or rallying point of order" (526). Most nineteenth century commentators on British imperialism started from assumptions similar to the sentiments expressed by Smith. Smith's position also extended his idea of the value of imperialism in his belief that the West Indian population is better served by British rulers. "No doubt the best government for the mixed population, and the most likely to hold the balance of justice even between whites and blacks, is that of a British ruler to home opinion" (529). When Smith alludes to the centrality of British influence, he is essentially saying that civilization is made possible and endures only because of the genius of the white race. Smith and others, therefore, are suggesting that degrees of restraint (monitored by whites and carefully selected non-whites) are important for growth.

Unlike Smith, who believed that emancipation had contributed to the elevation of the former slave in the British West Indies, Froude locates the conditions of emancipation as the principal source of what he perceives as the black's intellectual and moral stagnation. The conditions of freedom, the lack of restraint and the lack of systematic

influence, stifled black progress. According to Froude, “The African blacks have been free enough for thousands, perhaps for tens of thousands of years, and it has been the absence of restraint which has prevented them from becoming civilized. Generation has followed generation, and the children are as like their father as the successive generation of apes” (Froude 125). It was this lack of restraint, even in the mild forms of guidance, which seemed to have set in motion the atavistic nature of the African in Haiti and elsewhere.

Froude participated in the discourse that argued that the physical and spiritual mediation of the European was what separated the African from accessing the savagery of his deeply embedded tropical nature. The structure of the colonialized African psyche seems to have been represented as comprising of three parts: 1) the original component was the dark African component, which almost always sought for violent and superstitious expression; 2) an unstable wall which represented the African’s cognitive perception of the physical presence and teachings of the European, and 3) the Europeanized behavioral manifestations of civilization. By Europeanized behavioral manifestations, I mean the acquisition of taste, forms of dress, and other visible modes of conduct that was recognized as “civilized.” Before the formation of this psyche wall, the savage and wild inclinations of the African had free undirected expression. The benevolently traumatic events of the contact zone, slavery and diaspora, made it possible (though mostly through outside influence) for the African to regulate his urges. These inclinations remained dormant, though far from extinguished, as long as a wall held firm and protected the Europeanized elements (habits and inclinations developed as a result of contact with Europe). As long as that wall held firm, the peoples of African descent who

had been influenced by Europeans had an opportunity to advance onto the road to civilization.

Moreover, it was the nature of blacks (for Haiti was the historical model) to corrupt and destroy the very European institutions which had held their barbaric tendencies in check. Carlyle, who had earlier also referenced Haiti as allegory and cautionary tale, posited the fate of the West Indies without a European presence. "[L]et him look across to Haiti," writes Carlyle,

> and face a far sterner prophecy! Let him, by his ugliness, idleness, rebellion, banish all white men from the West Indies, and make it all one Haiti, - with little or no sugar growing, black Peter exterminating black Paul, and where a garden of the Hesperides might be nothing but a tropical dog-kennel and pestiferous jungle, - does he think that will for ever continue pleasant to gods and men? (675)

In 1859, Anthony Trollope had written in the very popular *The West Indies and the Spanish Main* that "To recede from civilization and become again savage – as savage as the laws of the community will permit – has been to his taste. I believe that he would altogether retrograde if left to himself" (63). In *Sports, Travel, and Adventure in Newfoundland and the West Indies*, Captain Kennedy reiterates Trollope's claim about the strong connection between British institutions and civilized social practices. "I am of the opinion that the same ceremonies and orgies [cannibalism, infanticide, and Voudoux] would be practiced in Jamaica as in Haiti, were it not for the str ong arm of the law"(355). Froude's comments of the regressive tendencies of the African was an active component of colonial and racial discussion. By the 1880s, the idea of black regression was still circulating in popular journals. In "The Revival of the West Indies" (1883), Nevile Lubbock wrote that imagined hereditary attributes precluded civilization. "In

considering the effects of freedom upon the negro, the natural character of the race must be kept in mind," he councils the readers of *The Nineteenth Century*. "The negro has only for a short time been removed from a condition of the most complete savagery. He has immense physical strength united with the intellect and disposition of a child…. The very fact of his great physical strength stands in the way of the negro's intellectual progress" (1073-74). Furthermore, argues Lubbock, freedom without the wise restraint that is acquired through civilized maturity is detrimental to the moral and intellectual growth of the black man. "Absolute freedom, unaccompanied by the kind of restraint, is not good for man, and, in the case of the negro, who, like all other races upon whom civilization has only recently dawned, is in many ways but a grown-up child, it ought to be no matter of wonder that it has failed to produce the rapid amelioration which was anticipated by those who knew him not" (1074). In "The Future of the West Indies," the writer for the *Westminster Review* seems a little more optimistic about the future of blacks in the West Indies, but this is because of the emphasis he places on the power of England. He writes that although it is "problematic" that blacks may "fall back into savagery," Mr. Froude should remember that "the guardianship of the British Government" is a powerful preventative" (522). In an 1889 article that appeared in *The Saturday Review* entitled "Hayti," the author argues that Haitians, once liberated and on their own, exhibit a particular mode of barbarism once European guidance is withdrawn.

> Here are a people who have been slaves and who are free, who have acquired so much of a European language as enables them to chatter the formulas of European speculators to all lengths and breadths. At the end of it all they have almost completely reverted to the condition of their naked ancestors who were marched on board the slave ships by those other ancestors of theirs who were clothed in a flint-lock musket, a cocked hat, and a bottle of rum. (233)

In other words, according to this *Saturday Review* writer "[t]he only use they have made of their freedom has been to return to their starting-point – and to return a little spoilt" (233). In the preface to the reprint edition of *Hayti, or The Black Republic*, Sir Spencer St. John writes that

> [i]n spite of all the civilizing elements around the Haytians, there is a distinct tendency to sink into the state of an African tribe. It is naturally impossible to foretell the effects of all the influences which are now at work in the world, and which seem to foreshadow many important changes. We appear standing on the threshold of a period of great discoveries, which may modify many things, but not man's nature. (ix)

Also structuring the discursive playing-field in which Froude propagated his atavistic black subject was the belief that white blood was directly correlated to black intellectual and moral advancement. For many Victorians, white blood not only became regarded as a source that reversed intellectual and moral limitations and combatted the volatile nature of blackness, but the transformative power of white blood is seen to have created another race suited to the work required in tropical climates. Since the African in the West Indies or anywhere could not progress without the fertilizing influence of Caucasian biology, Trollope (perhaps in an attempt to excuse or erase white guilt) saw this occurrence as an act of providence which may eventually save the West Indies from the slide toward barbarism many Victorians had feared as the consequences of emancipation. "Providence," writes Trollope," has sent white men and black men to these regions in order that from them may spring a race fitted by intellect civilization; and fitted also by physical organization for tropical labour. The negro in his primitive state is not, I think, fitted for the former; and the European white Creole is certainly not fitted for the latter"(75). Livingstone argued that though it was the white biological energies that contributed to elevating the intellect of the person of African descent, the African element

in his blood is jealously atavistic and vies for expression. Livingstone writes that in mixed race persons "the intelligence of the one meets and amalgamates with the animism of the other, producing a strange nature, the good of which is perpetually forward to higher thing, and the evil, like an unseen hand, perpetually dragging it back to savagery" (7). The member of the new race, then, is never completely free of the African imprint in his psyche, thus reiterating the necessity of a pure white political and cultural presence.

Froude negotiated the significance of white blood through his insistence that blacks in the British West Indies have two powers of example in which to emulate. These were Frederick Douglass of the United States and Chief Justice Williams Conrad Reeves of Barbados, who, in 1889, was appointed Knight of the Realm by Queen Victoria. Froude positioned these men as examples of what the African man can, perhaps within a hundred years of education and mentorship, achieve once his "natural tendencies are superseded by higher instincts" (125). According to Froude,

> Individual blacks of exceptional quality, like Frederick Douglass of the United States, or the Chief Justice of Barbadoes, will avail themselves of opportunities to rise, and the freest opportunities ought to be offered them. But it is as certain as any future event can be that if we give the negro as a body the political powers that we claim for ourselves, they will use them only to their own injury. They will slide back into their old condition, and the chance will be gone for lifting them to the level which we have no right to say that they are incapable of rising. (125-26)

What Froude does in this passage, with these examples, is reiterates the notion of the power of white blood to improve the intellectual and moral constitution of the black man. White blood is the only component that separates Douglass and Reeves from the majority of blacks (pure-blooded) in the West Indies. Froude treats both men as pure blooded blacks rather than what was then socially codified as "coloreds," a racial category distinct

from it parents. Through this strategy, he has subtle suggested that it is the white biological component that is responsible for the levels of creativity and intelligences witnessed in Douglass and Reeves. Their blackness, or Africaness, are not the focal points of Froude's address. In response to what was clearly an open secret of the cross-cultural consequences of colonial life and the ramifications of slavery in the United States and the West Indies, Thomas also reminds the reader in London that, "[f]irst and foremost, neither Judge Reeves nor Fred Douglass is a *black man.* The former is of mixed blood, to what degree we are not adepts enough to determine; and the latter, if his portrait and those who have personally seen him misleads us not, is decidedly a fair man" (135). In other words, Froude was very aware of tri-racial ascriptions (white, African/Negro, and colored) of the West Indies. Both literally and symbolically, the Douglass/Reeve example suggests that the un-deluded majority of blacks in the British West Indies are beyond the pale of full civilization. The only non-white group, however, capable intellectual elevation, then, was the coloreds.

The African's own inescapable nature made it imperative for him to stay under the control of England. The African's happiness, Froude tells the middle class reader in England as well as those readers with influence in the Colonial Office, "depends on the continuance of the English rule. The peace and order which they benefit by is not their own creation. In spite of schools and missionaries, the dark connection still maintains itself with Satan's invisible world, and modern education contends in vain with Obeah worship. As it has been in Hayti, so it must be in Trinidad if the English leave the blacks to be their own masters" (98). Without the guidance the Carlylean great white enchanter, without perceiving the paternalistic hand of European restraints, the African instinctively

turns towards the potent darkness of his natural inclinations which are almost always barbaric and destructive. All of the unsubstantiated reports about Haiti confirm this atavistic tendency of the unmonitored African. "[T]heir education, such as it may be," Froude says in general about "pure-blooded" blacks," is skin deep, and "the old African superstitions lie undisturbed at the bottom of their souls. Give them independence, and in a few generations they will peel off such civilization as they have learnt as easily and as willingly as their coats and trousers" (286-87).

3

THE FROUDACIOUS FABLE TOLD *THROUGH* J.J. THOMAS

At the beginning of this study we saw that Thomas Carlyle had responded to an observable conscious movement of manumitted slaves away from the influence of their former masters. In his own perverse way, Carlyle had unintentionally revealed the freeman's desire for autonomy. This desire for autonomy is significant, for acting on this desire contributed to the existence of the very community of West Indians Froude makes an effort to erase by omission from his text. "[E]mancipation," Brereton tells us, removed "the legal basis of their servitude" and "opened up the possibility of upward mobility" (89). In response to this desire for upward mobility and autonomy, "numbers of ex-slaves and their children became petty traders and artisans after 1838"(89). That is to say that the former commodity and source of another's wealth now (through his/her own initiative) was positioned as competitor for material and cultural resources. Although, Brereton writes, most of them would not become prosperous, they knew that "they were better off than estate labourers, they were more mobile, and they were more ambitious for their children to go to school" (89). This group "formed a 'respectable', ambitious,

potentially mobile working class, and their children might well achieve the climb to middle-class status" (89).This is the group Carlyle brought to the attention of the British public as the lazy pumpkin eating Quashee. But even during the period in which Carlyle attacked black agency (which in effect revealed the Anglo-Victorian's desired relationship between the two races), it was argued that the African's natural impulses compelled him to slide backwards if unattended by European mediation. Any movement on the part of blacks away from the domination and influence of former masters was interpreted as a backward march. European commentators were confident that they knew what the African was; and they all seemed to agree that the African's fate was a dark one without the European's physical, observable, legal and institutional presence.

Froude, similarly, dismissed creative and progressive agency but he responded by also denying the existence and active presence of the particular community and generation of blacks of which John Jacob Thomas was a recognized and, by virtue of his education and cultural and scholarly achievements, prominent member. Therefore, Froude denies that the form of post-emancipation agency black British subjects had expressed during Carlyle's time had begun to evolve, take shape and materialize during his own time. Froude insisted on black stasis as the rule, thus suggesting that individual cases of advancement and intelligence were anomalies. According to Froude, "as yet, and as a body, they have shown no capacity to rise above the condition of their ancestors except under European laws, European education, and European authority, to keep them from making war on one another" (286). Absent from Froude's text is any indication that this middle class that he discursively silences was the source of great anxiety among Anglo-West Indians. In less than fifty years, the white population in the West Indies

watched the conscious evolution of a new cultural and economic entity. Faith Smith writes: "[a]s Blacks and Colored persons of urban and rural laboring-class origin such as Thomas began to enter the lower echelons of the middle class beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, they would participate in, and even be perceived to dominate, what counted as the intellectual character of the society" (34). The group that Carlyle bemoaned in 1849 was mostly composed of uneducated former slaves and the children of former slaves. Thomas was born in 1841, so essentially it was the cultural reality of his generation that was being denied an existence in Froude's representation of West Indian and Trinidadian society. Moreover, between emancipation and Froude's arrival to the West Indies, measures had been taken in areas of education that gradually contributed to a black middle class. For example, the Ward school system was initiated in 1848 and J.J. Thomas was among the most prominent alumnus of that system. Blacks in the West Indies, as well as many blacks in Africa, were in agreement about the necessity of education. Thomas, Blyden, and most serious nineteenth century thinkers of African descent would have found it difficult to argued against the notion of England as the harbinger of civilization. However, the idea of England (to employ Goldwin Smith's phrase) as the singular "cement of government" meant that blacks and other non-whites, by their own ingenuity and unique genius, were incapable of forming and running nations, was the antithesis of what a self-made man like J.J. Thomas stood for and experienced.

The open West Indian secret of the black middle class and of the "self-made" black British subject complicates the substance and trajectory of Froude's ahistorical project. To admit of their existences would have exploded most of his case. Froude, in response

to a fact that refutes his argument, in effect consciously elides what he does not want his British reader to perceive by continuing with the circulation of the “ready-made” Manichean allegory and racial fetish of African savagery in an attempt to initiate the moral panic N. Darnell Davis calls “Haytia” (117,122). “Throughout Mr. Froude’s tour in the British Colonies,” writes Thomas (who makes sure that the range of black life in the Trinidad is suggested), ”his intercourse was exclusively with ‘Anglo-West Indians,’ whose aversion to Blacks he has himself, perhaps they would think indiscreetly, placed on record. In no instance do we find that he condescended to visit the abode of any Negro, whether it was the mansion of a gentlemen or the hut of a peasant of that race”(46). Davis posits that “it is not from personal acquaintance with them [blacks] that he speaks of them. It has evolved from his inner consciousness, or told him by nameless slanderers, that they were tending towards *Haytia*”(Davis 117). In other words, Froude purposely ignored the emerging black middle class, and treated the entire undiluted majority (those without noticeable traces of Caucasian blood) of the African community as though they had not advanced beyond Carlyle’s “pigs with pumpkins” (674) and “indolent two-legged cattle” (675) stages. This strategy of Froude’s, mentioned earlier, was really directed toward the reader in England, because the Anglo-West Indian had a different experience of the group Froude ignored. According to Brereton,

> The white elite could easily ignore the black masses, for they encountered them only in stereotyped class relations. It was less possible to ignore the existence of the growing black and colored middle class. Educated black and coloured men and women had a claim, through their command of British culture and ‘respectability’, to consideration as equals. They therefore represented a greater threat to the continued white control of the society, even though their numbers were relatively few; they held the key to the political and social future of Trinidad, and some far-seeing Trinidadians realized it.(62-63)

Elsewhere in the West Indies, other black British subjects had attempted to illustrate African agency and capacity for self-advancement as well as undermine the implications of the politically crippling myth of white blood. For instance, a group of Jamaican blacks that Deborah Thomas calls the Jubilee Five published and released in London a collection of essays that highlighted the achievements of blacks since the end of Apprenticeship in 1838. Deborah Thomas writes that even before J.J. Thomas's *Froudacity* appeared in London, "The 1888 publication of *Jamaica's Jubilee; or, What We Are and What We Hope to Be* was the first published work by black Jamaicans that codified a critique of racism" (26). The primary purpose of this publication was to demonstrate before "a British audience the progress of former slaves in Jamaica during the fifty years since emancipation and toward assuring them that blacks held no feelings of revenge" (26-27). Read in the light of what Froude had constructed about Haiti as illustration of African psychology, it was crucial that black British subjects composed phrases that distanced them from the consideration of violence. The writers of African descent, during this period, needed to distance their representations of the race relations from the Caucasian-hating atavistic constructions of Froude, Carlyle's Quashee, Dickens's "Noble Savage" and the Calibanistic "Shambo fellow" (240), Christian King George, of "Perils of Certain English Prisoners." In doing so, the black writer assured the white middle class reader of Great Britain of the illusion that life in the West Indies was harmonious, peaceful, and that the events at Morant Bay were in no danger of revisiting the region. In regards to the cultural valorization of European blood, it was critically significant that all of the contributors to *Jamaica's Jubilee* were of pure African stock. According to Deborah Thomas, the mixed-race members of the community were strategically

> not invited to contribute to this volume because of the view that black Jamaicans would more forcefully reflect the impact of emancipation and missionary activity on the population of former slaves. In the preface the authors insisted that they should not be seen as exceptions within the race. Rather, they wanted the British public to know that there were many others like them who also would have been able to write the book. (n2, 26-27)

As evidence that black Jamaicans had advanced, and that they had acquired the self-discipline necessary for civilization, the authors of *Jamaica's Jubilee* emphasized several areas which had seen accomplishments since emancipation. Among them, writes Deborah Thomas, were "[t]he increase in elementary schools after the abolition of slavery," which "was cited as evidence of the former slaves' ability and desire to learn" (27). The Jubilee Five

> also placed great emphasis upon the increased number of mutual improvement societies, reading clubs, and Christian associations; the proliferation of musical and social gatherings during Christmastime; and the increase of legal marriages. They felt that this type of progress was due to fifty years of 'social liberty and equality, of religious privileges, of educational advantages, and of intercourse in various ways with civilized and Christian men'. (27)

The members of this emergent group throughout the British West Indies were aware of the importance attached to the public display of having acquired the accouterments of the vague terms "culture" and "civilization." Black and mulattoes shared and embraced most British values. Ideologically they held, except when the discussion turned to race, essentially the same views. To a great extent West Indian blacks measured themselves by European standards and worked to emulate European taste. Brereton writes that "[f]or the group that we call coloured and black middle class, command of European culture was the essential qualification for membership, rather than wealth and lightness of complexion. Few members of this group were even moderately

prosperous; quite a few were black, not coloured. But they all aspired to European culture" (5). The acquisition, then, of "European culture" produced for the people of African descent more symbolic capital than material gain. "They elevated 'culture' into a supreme value because," writes Brereton, "in the circumstances of nineteenth-century Trinidad, this was the only field in which they appeared at an advantage in society" (94). It was one of the few things blacks were able to hold up as an accomplishment, especially since education and higher forms of thinking were propagated by whites as being beyond their reach. As Paget Henry reminds us in *Caliban's Reason*, "[i]n the European tradition, rationality was a white trait that, by their exclusionary racial logic, blacks could not possess" (12). However blacks were perceived in theory, Brereton also points out that "most members of this non-white middle class were employed in white-collor jobs; they were teachers, minor civil servants, journalist and printers, pharmacists, doctors, solicitors, barristers, and clerks. Education was the key to all these occupations, the crucial factor in the gradual emergence of a coloured and black middle class"(64). According to Brereton, "[i]t was in fact their boast that they were more 'cultured' than the whites, whom they dismissed as being for the most part crassly materialistic and commercially minded. Hence the pride when a member of this group [for instance, J.J. Thomas] was recognized in Britain for his scholarly and literary attainments" (5). This latter group was very visible and Thomas and others contributed greatly to that visibility. As far as his confidence in the present-day advancements of blacks in Trinidad was concerned, Thomas was conclusive, unequivocal, and forthright:

> Taking our author's 'Anglo-West Indians' and the people of Ethiopian descent respectively, it would not be too much to assert, nor too anywise difficult to prove by facts and figures, that for every competent individual

> of the former section in active civilized employments, the coloured section can put forward at least twenty thoroughly competent rivals. (187)

Like the members of the Jubilee Five, Thomas did not regard his intellectual capacity and desire for advancement as unusual. Brereton reports that it was difficult for observers not to notice the changed demographic character of the islands. He writes that

> on the appearance of the first issue of the *Trinidad Monthly* [which was edited and published by Thomas], a newspaper commented 'it is certain that the largest group in the community [non-whites] are in advance of some others in the matter of intellectual culture and literary endeavour'. Another reviewer pointed out that the articles were nearly all by 'self made men – to whom the inner walls of college and universities were unknown and who have had to battle inch by inch and step by step against difficulties and discouragements'. So the journal indicated that 'in the humbler walks of life there are men who without the advantages of European education… are able to hold their own against the best of them. These men could be Carlyle's heroes if only they belonged to a different race'. (95)

It was the implications and recognition of this particular social fact (at a moment in which the merit and wisdom of self-government in the West Indies were under discussion) that brought the greatest anxiety to the white landowners of Trinidad. The primary concern is that if the mother country were to acknowledge black advancement, then existing power relationships in the West Indian colonies were vulnerable and possibly open to challenge. According to Thomas, who certainly noticed the relationship between white anxiety and black advancement, "[s]ince emancipation, the enormous strides made in self-advancement by the ex-slaves have only had the effect of provoking a resentful uneasiness in the bosoms of the ex-masters" (7). Thomas's point is that blacks, unlike the Froudean Haitian template into which the race was placed, had proven that they were active participants of history, as well as producers of wealth and culture. In other words, blacks had responded to the demands of their post-emancipation

environment, and they were fit to participate (even partially) In the workings of government. This is what Thomas meant when he wrote: “be the incentives what they may, it would not be amiss on our part to suggest to those impelled by them that the ignoring of Negro opinion in their calculations, though not only possible but easily practiced fifty years ago, is a portentous blunder at the present time. *Verbum sapienti*”(126-27).

For Thomas, comparisons between Haiti and Trinidad are deceptive and anachronistic if they fail to present and analyze events within their historical contexts. Attention to the behaviors of a people within a particular moment, Thomas suggests, can prevent the observer from generalizations about behaviors in another geographic location. As far as projecting the imagined behaviors of Haiti as the blue-print of African character, Thomas says that “[w]e venture to declare that, unless a common education from youth has been shared by them, the Hamitic inhabitants of one island have very little in common with those of another, beyond the dusky skin or wooly hair” (48). Thomas suggests that there are large historical and phenomenological differences between the Haitians of the Revolution and the contemporaneous blacks of Trinidad. As Randal Johnson writes in his introduction to Pierre Bourdieu’s *The Field of Cultural Production*, “Agents do not act in a vacuum, but in concrete social institutions governed by a set of objective social relation” (6).The blacks of Haiti, during the period of their self-emancipation, were negotiating the turbulence and inter-racial intrigues of a singular and unique historical moment. The demands of the moment, and the disposition of the actors at that point in history, influenced the dynamics of events. Thomas also brings the reader’s attention to Froude’s choice of Haiti as model, when the Republic of Liberia

seemed a more apt example of functioning newly formed African nation. "One would have thought," Thomas had written early in *Froudacity,*

> that Liberia would have been a better standard of comparison in respect of a colored population starting a national life, really and truly equipped with the requisites and essentials of civilized existence. But such a reference would have been too fatal to Mr. Froude's object: the annals of Liberia being a persistent refutation of the old slavery prophecies which our author so freely rehearses. (11-12)

Moreover, the revolution caused a symbolic disturbance in the perceptions of a historical relationship between the African and the European. Anglo-West Indian anxiety over the presence of the emergent black middle class resembles the symbolic disturbance caused by Haiti's successful revolution. Thomas's argument suggests that the circumstances and implications of that historical moment became the raw material and blueprint of Froude's black West Indian. However, the differences between the Haitian past and the Trinidadian present were too temporally profound for comparison. According to Thomas, "[t]he founders of the Black Republic, we had all along understood, were not in any sense whatever equipped, as Mr. Froude assures us they were, when starting on their self-governing career, with the civil and intellectual advantages that had been transplanted from Europe. On the contrary, we had been taught to regard them as most unfortunate in the circumstances under which they so gloriously conquered their merited freedom"(10-11). These Haitians, at the point of their incipient national history, may have been free, but they were also, according to Thomas, "perfectly illiterate barbarians, impotent to the use of intellectual resources of which their valour had made them possessors, in the shape of books on the spirit and technical details of a highly developed national existence" (11). The post-Revolutionary Haitians, in other words, had not access to the tools of civilization and government that blacks in the British

West Indies had studied and acquired since emancipation. Thomas seems to suggest that while the blacks of present day Trinidad had met, through schools and study, the demands of civilization, the abrupt circumstances that gave rise to revolt in Haiti precluded opportunities for similar forms of development. The historical moment, for Thomas, did not allow for it. In making his point in this way, which explodes notions of racial determinism, Thomas also attacks the Oxford historian's ahistorical approach to Afro-West Indian development.

It is important to note that the fate of the mixed race population during and after the Haitian Revolution was well-known throughout the British West Indies. As part of the inter-racial intrigue experienced by Haiti, the mixed-race population has historically been situated as being complicit with either attempting to maintain French hegemony in Haiti, or with complicating the post-Revolutionary Haitian's endeavors toward progress, advancement, and development as a singular and independent nation. Furthermore, the mixed-race/ mulatto population of Haiti has historically been represented as regarding themselves morally and intellectually superior to blacks, thus reiterating the very assumptions that caused the impositions of limits on the movement and aspirations of the majority of peoples of African descent. As a result of the tension between the hybrid and pure blooded groups, reports of the most gruesome forms of violence against the former were frequently circulated throughout the West Indies, the United States, and Great Britain. These stories were more sensational than actual; but the purpose of these tales was to show the "civilized" and Europeanized world an example of the eternal and natural animosity between the races and the extent newly freed blacks would go to express their hatred toward whiteness. Thomas, however, does not avoid contrasting the

historical animosity between blacks and mulattoes throughout the West Indies to his more liberal and cooperative presentation of modern Trinidad. Thomas writes that "We had learned also, until this new interpretation of history had contradicted the accepted record, that the continued failure of Hayti to realize the dreams of Toussaint was due to the fatal want of confidence subsisting between the fairer and darker sections of the inhabitants, which had its sinister and disastrous origin in the action of the mulattoes in attempting to secure freedom for themselves, in conjunction with the Whites, at the sacrifice of their darker-hued kinsmen" (11). Thomas exploits this component of the legend of the Black Republic to call attention to what he wants his reader to believe about the sense of fellowship currently existing between blacks, mulattoes, and many whites in Trinidad. In other words, he wants the reader in London to believe that Trinidad of 1888 does not share the same wide-spread intergroup distrust which had been seen between the mulattoes and blacks in Haiti. Getting across this sense of interracial cooperation was important because Thomas believed in reform and, at least, "semi-representative government in Trinidad" ("An Estimate" 34). According to Brereton, "[a]n essential part of the Reformer's argument was that there was in Trinidad a community of educated, propertied men, mainly white but also black and brown, who would cooperate with each other to exercise the franchise responsibly and intelligently. These men were worthy of the vote because they would work together for common ends regardless of differences of race and colour" ("An Estimate" 34). To show that this vision of present-day Trinidad actually existed, "Thomas depicted as a reality what any right-thinking person might have wished to see: intelligent men who could transcend race and colour in everyone's interests" ("An Estimate" 34). Early in *Froudacity*, he described Trinidad society as

"free, educated, progressive, and at peace with all men" (11). This sense of a unified West Indian community is reframed in terms of reforms: "The demands for reform in the Crown Colonies – a demand which our author deliberately misrepresents – is made neither by nor for the Negro, Mulatto, Chinese, nor East Indian. It is a petition put forward by prominent responsible colonists – the majority of whom are white, and mostly Britons besides" (147).

Thomas recognized that in all aspects of black subjectivity, Froude was attempting to place the race into a template created by white anxiety and desire, and to do so Froude masks the existence of an educated class behind the fantasy and garb of barbarism. The reification of this fantasy may have prevented many Victorians from gaining knowledge about actual social life in the West Indian colonies. But the demystification of the black legend, with a portrait of actual lived experiences in the West Indies, also posed a threat to one's perception of self as central to the maintenance of "civilization." The realization of the African as historical agent may have been *Froudacity*'s greatest contribution to an understanding of Afro-Victorian racial discourse. For it is a direct response not only to one text, but to the entire system of thinking that relentlessly held onto the idea of European centrality and the immanent limitations of the Other.

CONCLUSION

The language of Afro-Victorian discourse, whether behavioral or literary, is always a response to the limiting narrative generated by influential segments of a dominant group. It is a language and an act of agency. What makes it an act of agency is 1), it is self-reflective and 2), it consciously challenges the fidelity of the dominant

narrative's attempts at identity formation. In most cases, it is a conscious attempt to bring to the public stage what peoples of African descent interpret as the motivations of the group generating the dominant narrative. It's behavioral and artistic manifestations are always attempts to communicate a shared essential humanity with members of the dominant community. The insistence on this shared essential humanity, and on the cultural acquisitions that accompany recognition of this shared essential humanity, is, in the eyes of many practitioners of the dominant discourse, what makes Afro-Victorian discursive practices dangerously Calibanistic. However parochial, it was their public representation of themselves as agents that posed the challenge to the Carlylean-Prosperoic White Enchanters.

J.J. Thomas's *Froudacity* is an example of a black Victorian discursive product that describes the very phenomena which the dominant narrative attempts to make invisible. Through Thomas's text we see how an emergent and existing black middle class structures the colonialized monster in Froude's *The English in the West Indies.* In other words, the complete negation of Thomas's historical agent and emergent cultural elite gives structure, form, and substance to Froude's atavistic and Haitianated black British subject.

In *Caliban's Victorian Children*, I have argued that social and discursive practices expressed by peoples of African descent should be interpreted as acts of agency against the exclusionary and limited trajectory of Victorian racial discourse. In this study I have also suggested that we look at Victorian racial discourse as a response to the lived agency of the other. My intentions are not merely to foreground the discursive practices of peoples of African descent, but to also encourage us to take a closer look at the dialectical

tensions between actual behavior and the behavior as represented. That is, my intension is to have us look closer at the behavior being analyzed and silenced, to investigate how the writings of those whose desires are reformed and silenced, and then show how those particular behaviors and texts contributed to the construction of the dominant narratives. The question I have asked myself throughout this study is: what, after placing the literary and discursive products of the Other besides that of a representative (or group of representative) dominant text, phenomena is being made invisible or dismissed? Racialized representations, such as the ones generated midway through the nineteenth century, were attempts to mask and erase indications of historically responsive agency with the belief that the racial Other was a prisoner and victim of his own nature. Consciousness and agency get obscured by the discussion of instinct and primitivism.

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