Pirates, Runaways, and Long-Lost Princes: Race and National Identity in Transatlantic Adventure Fiction

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Abstract

Sarah H. Ficke: Pirates, Runaways, and Long-Lost Princes: Race and National Identity in Transatlantic Adventure Fiction
(Under the direction of William L. Andrews and Laurie Langbauer)

This project brings together adventure novels by white British authors, like Frederick Marryat, Mary Elizabeth Braddon and H. Rider Haggard, and African American and Afro-Caribbean texts by authors like Frederick Douglass, Pauline Hopkins, and Maxwell Philip, to argue that the sensational elements of the adventure genre that were so effective in developing British national identity were appropriated by African American and Afro-Caribbean authors to re-imagine national identity as a flexible and multi-ethnic concept. This project extends previous scholarship on the genre by placing white British adventure novels in the transatlantic context demanded by both the genre's subject matter – the Caribbean, Africa, the wilds of the United States – and publishing history in order to demonstrate that the adventurous vision of national identity featured in those novels was part of a larger, multi-vocal conversation through which national identity was constantly being redefined. I argue that adventure novels were open to this type of rewriting because they were popular and accessible, and because they define national identity at the point where it is most vulnerable: on the nation's frontier. This project focuses on three characters who exist on the margins of the nation – pirates, runaway slaves, and long-lost princes – and the ways that they and the plot elements surrounding them are used

to affirm or challenge the nation's physical, legal, and imaginative boundaries. More than just melodramatic window-dressing, these elements – such as a birthmark that identifies an ordinary man as a long-lost prince – provide an imaginative framework through which authors could engage with serious debates over race, kinship, and national belonging. Though we may be hesitant to connect literary figures like William Wells Brown, Frederick Douglass, or even Mary Elizabeth Braddon to this most popular of popular genres, adventure fiction deserves recognition for its important role in shaping transatlantic and transracial perceptions of what it meant to be Afro-British, Afro-Caribbean, or African American in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

In loving memory of my mother, who taught me to read

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Introduction

Race and National Identity in Transatlantic Adventure Fiction

In May of 2008 Indiana Jones, that quintessential scholar-adventurer, cracked his whip on the big screen for the first time in nineteen years. Adventure sells, as movie companies are well aware (see also the phenomenal popularity of *Pirates of the Caribbean*), especially in the summer months. Adventure movies are simple: an hour or so of incidents strung together with a basic quest-style plot that bring the heroes near death, but never near enough to give the viewers cause for serious disquiet or food for deep contemplation. The story should be light, the plot arc familiar, and the conflict free of moral ambiguity. The character types should be recognizable, and the setting easy to grasp.

John Cawelti, in his 1976 study *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance: Formula Stories as Art and Popular Culture*, stresses the essential timeliness of individual adventure stories or genres. He writes that "Adventure situations that seem too distant either in time or in space tend to drop out of the current catalogue of adventure formulas or to pass into another area of the culture" (40-41). While this is true, there is also a strong nostalgic trend in adventure stories, which often use hindsight in order to both glorify and simplify past times and events.[1] The adventure stories that we read and watch, whether they are contemporary or nostalgic, say a lot about the culture we inhabit. As we decide what types of action plots we enjoy, and the settings for those plots that we find acceptable, we participate in a reconfiguration of our own

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[1] See, for example, the Cold War setting chosen for *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull* and compare it to the moral ambiguity found in the science fiction movie *Iron Man* (2008), which is set in Afghanistan during the contemporary War on Terror.

culture and our own history, sampling and erasing elements of it as we see fit. While this may be seen as a harmless pastime, it can have disturbing implications. Cultural critic Paul Gilroy, in his 2006 book *Postcolonial Melancholia*, points out the troubling aspects of recent British revivals of nationalist World War II nostalgia, the concurrent "mysterious evacuation of Britain's postcolonial conflicts from national consciousness" (89) and the impact of that pairing of nostalgia and evacuation on contemporary British race relations. This complicity of contemporaneity, forgetfulness, and nostalgia is not a recent problem. At the height of the British Empire, British adventure novels alternately presented their readers with nostalgic images of past glory and contemporary scenes of action, both of which reimagined the imperial project as a simplified plot. However, neither the past nor the present can be plotted so easily, and the adventure novels of the nineteenth century display the complexities and tensions of the imperial project despite (or perhaps because of) their structural simplicity and two-dimensional nature.

The goal of this dissertation is to investigate the connections between British adventure fiction, Afro-Caribbean fiction, and African American fiction from 1833-1907 and the ways in which they construct, examine, and/or interrogate the relationship between race, citizenship, and national belonging. I chose the nineteenth century adventure genre because its subject matter and conventions made it a unique arena within which writers could discuss the topic of race explicitly in the context of citizenship, national, and international identity, subjects that became increasingly important during the expansion of the empire in the nineteenth century. The types of adventure stories that appear in this study have certainly "dropped out" of popular culture, replaced by plots and settings more appealing to modern sensibilities. However, at the time of their writing (between the 1830s and World War I) they were wildly popular bestsellers. Because of this, I believe that the adventure genre, which like many other popular genres

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resides outside of the literary canon, should not be overlooked as a key component of British discourse about race and nation in the nineteenth century.

Many studies have established the importance of the written word in creating and maintaining national ideas of British imperialism and racial superiority in the nineteenth century. As Simon Gikandi explains in the preface to his study *Maps of Englishness* (1996), "texts provided the medium through which the crisis of both colonial and domestic identities were mediated" (xix). Though Gikandi focuses on non-fictional texts in his work, fiction played an equally important role in that process. In his foundational book *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914* (1988), Patrick Brantlinger examines how imperial and racial concerns appeared in mainstream British novels and how novels reflected changing ideas about the meaning and purpose of empire.[2] Scholars have also examined the role that popular genres, particularly the adventure novel, played in the creation and maintenance of British imperial discourse and identity.[3] However, there has yet to be a sustained critique of racial discourse in the adventure genre that places it in the transatlantic context that the genre's subject matter (the Caribbean, Africa, the wilds of America) and publishing history (many of these novels were published simultaneously in England and America) demand.

Beginning in the 1830s, British adventure fiction became one of the primary literary ways that nationalism was defined in a racially diverse empire that was in the process of

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[2] Other interesting studies on this topic include Edward Said *Culture and Imperialism* (1993); Diana Archibald Domesticity*, imperialism and Emigration in the Victorian Novel* (2002); Laurence Kitzan *Victorian Writers and the Image of Empire* (2001); Deirdre David *Rule Britannia: Women, Empire, and Victorian Writing* (1995).

[3] For example: Brian V. Street *The Savage in Literature: Representations of 'primitive' society in English fiction 1858-1920* (1975); Martin Green *Deeds of Adventure, Dreams of Empire* (1979); John Mackenzie (ed.) *Imperialism and Popular Culture* (1986); Joseph Bristow *Empire Boys: Adventures in a Man's World* (1991); Graham Dawson *Soldier Heroes: British Adventure, Empire and the Imagining of Masculinities* (1994); Donnarae MacCann *White Supremacy in Children's Literature* (1998); Mawuena Kossi Logan *Narrating Africa: George Henty and the Fiction of Empire* (1999); Steve Attridge N*ationalism, Imperialism, and Identity in Late Victorian Culture: Civil and Military Worlds* (2003).

abandoning slavery as a social and economic system. The Victorian adventure story became an example of, and a model for, the ideals of the British Empire. The adventure hero became a symbol of citizenship and a model for national belonging. But while the Victorian adventure genre is perceived as being intensely nationalistic, its effects reached beyond Britain and Anglo-Saxon nationalism. The adventure novel was adopted as a method of describing and inscribing British race relations during and after the process of abolition; however, the transatlantic nature of slavery and British colonial relations gave it a wider impact that can be traced in the development of Afro-Caribbean and African American popular fiction. Placing these novels in a transatlantic, rather than English or British, context allows us to read the British adventure genre reciprocally with the Afro-Caribbean and African American literature that adopts and adapts the conventions of that genre, as part of a complex and active dialogue about the role race plays in defining national identity.

This project will focus on two main strands of argument. One is a thematic argument. It is my intention to explore nineteenth century British adventure novels dealing with slavery and race in the Anglo-Atlantic world as a discursive site the British used to discuss their concerns about race, nation, and belonging (particularly in terms of their Caribbean territories, and later Africa) during the nineteenth century. I will also examine how Afro-Caribbean and African American writers adopted conventions of the genre within their own texts in order to respond to British ideas and express their own understandings about race, nation, and belonging. At the same time, I will be making a formal argument about the adventure novel as a genre. It is my contention that popular fiction of the adventure type, because of its obsession with national belonging, border-drawing, geography, boundaries, personal development, maturation, and hierarchy facilitated discussions about personal identity and the nation in a way that other

genres did not. For this reason, the adventure genre was a genre of importance to white and

black authors alike.

My plan to look at nineteenth century adventure fiction in an Atlantic context develops

out of recent scholarly interest in transatlantic and diaspora studies. This framework, as Amanda

Claybaugh explains in "Towards a New Transatlanticism: Dickens in the United States,"

accurately reflects the literary culture of the nineteenth century:

"Nineteenth-century novelists and critics took for granted what present-day scholars have only
recently begun to acknowledge: that the literatures of Great Britain and the United States
should not be read in isolation from one another. These novelists and critics could hardly do
otherwise, given the scope of the nineteenth-century literary marketplace. In the absence of an
international copyright law, books written and published in one nation were very often freely
republished in another."

This transatlantic approach has also been embraced by scholars working in the fields of

American literature and racial theory. In his introduction to the 1997 edition of *Emmanuel*

Appadocca, or, Blighted Life: A Tale of the Boucaneers (an 1854 adventure novel by Maxwell

Philip, a mixed-race lawyer from Trinidad), American literature scholar William E. Cain proposes

an approach to scholarship that extends beyond national boundaries to consider "the literature

of the Atlantic world as it has been shaped by the slave trade, slavery, race, and racism" (xvii).

His statement echoes Paul Gilroy's claim in The *Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double*

Consciousness (1993) that the Atlantic world should be approached "as one single, complex unit

of analysis," particularly where race is being discussed (15).[4] I have also been inspired by

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[4] Studies of the Atlantic as a comprehensive unit include Paul Giles's books: *Transatlantic Insurrections*
(2001), *Virtual Americas* (2002), and *Atlantic Republic* (2006); David Armitage and Michael A. Braddick, ed.
The British Atlantic World 1500-1800 (2002); Susan Manning and Francis D. Cogliano, ed., *The Atlantic
Enlightenment* (2008); Books that focus specifically on the issues of race and slavery in a transatlantic
context include Vanessa D. Dickerson *Dark Victorians* (2008); Kari Winter's book, *Subjects of Slavery,
Agents of Change* (1992), on the textual relationships between American slave narratives and gothic
novels; and Audrey Fisch's *American Slaves in Victorian England: Abolitionist Politics in Popular Literature
and Culture* (2000).

Gilroy's more recent comments in *Postcolonial Melancholia* on the continuing impact Britain's

imperial past has upon its present social and political issues, and the necessity for remembering,

reencountering, and rethinking the historical and cultural moments of the empire's

development. It is in the context of these contemporary ideas that I place my project examining

the formation of popularized British identity while the Victorian empire was at its height, and

my particular interest in the ways in which black authors of the period responded to the

literature that attempted to restrict and define their national identities, and whether they

adopted a particular national identity or sought, as Gilroy put it, "a position between camps" of

hard-and-fast national affiliation (*Against Race* 84). While transatlantic theory provides my

primary approach, I will also be drawing substantially on approaches developed by African

American literary theorists and critics, as well as some elements of postcolonial theory,

particularly the concepts of hybridity and rewriting.[5]

British Nationalism and Race in the Nineteenth Century

The abolition of slavery and the extension of the British Empire during the nineteenth

century contributed to a growing anxiety about exactly what it meant to be British. The

consequent debates about the nature of Britishness, of English character, and related values

(debates that are still raging today) are reflected in the novels of the period, particularly

adventure novels because they provide a visible, dramatic encounter between the Englishman

and the Other. It is impossible to describe the development of a British national character

without a discussion of difference, or Otherness. More than just a convenient foil, the Other

"was a constitutive element in the invention of Britishness" (Gikandi xviii). Though many groups

filled the role of Other during the evolution of British nationalism from the late eighteenth

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[5] Ashcroft, Griffiths, Tiffin *The Empire Writes Back* (2002); Homi Bhabha *The Location of Culture* (2004); John Cullen Gruesser *Confluences: Postcolonialism, African American Literary Studies and the Black Atlantic* (2005).

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century through the end of the nineteenth century, the Other became increasingly and primarily identified as colonial and visibly of a different race (Gikandi 69). For that reason, discussions of the development of the social and legal definitions of British national identity are always inherently discussions of Britain's relationship with its colonial Others.

As Reiko Karatani writes, the subject of legal British citizenship is a complex one to research: "unlike other Western democratic countries, Britain has never completely established a national citizenship, that is, a citizenship based on nationhood, with rights and obligations granted only to its holders" (1). However, the British people have long possessed a sense of collective national identity, though the terms defining that identity were in a constant state of evolution. For centuries, "British subject" was a blanket term applied by the government to inhabitants of the empire, though "the access to the rights and obligations attached to that status" were unevenly enforced by individual colonial governments (Karatani 29). During the period of the empire, the government regarded its inhabitants as having an "imperial type of citizenship" which existed "regardless of their local identity." Karatani goes on to explain that "this seemingly benevolent attitude is based on the idea of imperial superiority, under which those peoples on the peripheries, who do not belong to the ruling group, are regarded as equal only in a sense that they are all inferior" (24). Karatani draws a distinction between imperial citizenship, which "[tolerates] various local identities on the basis of imperial superiority" and national citizenship; in the case of national citizenship, "expressions of difference by the holders, whether they are on matters of culture, language or religion, therefore become unacceptable" (24, 27).

In this project, I am less concerned with the technical legalities of citizenship and subjecthood than Karatani and other historians of immigration and citizenship law. My examination focuses on the imaginative and emotional aspects of national identity as defined

and perpetuated in popular fiction of the nineteenth century. For the purposes of this project, I am defining national identity as a notion of collective belonging based on shared ideals and beliefs as well as living within the boundaries of a defined territory ruled by a single government. This definition shares some characteristics of national citizenship as defined by Karatani: it is more intentional and exclusive than imperial citizenship, and focuses on willing and eager participation by those who claim the identity. However, my definition is intentionally looser than Karatani's because during the nineteenth century the definitions of Britishness and of the nation were constantly evolving based on the expanding boundaries of the empire and the demands made by its multi-racial populations, some of whom fought for inclusion into the national body, while others resisted self-imposed British national identity and government-imposed imperial identity in favor of alternative definitions. Additionally, I will be examining national identity in a transatlantic sense, looking at how the modes of national identity creation employed in British popular fiction transcended national boundaries and were reconfigured for the use of African Americans.

During the period that this dissertation is concerned with, the concept of British national identity was in a state of change and development that had started in the eighteenth century.[6] This nascent nationalism contained two basic strands of thought which can be broadly defined by Anthony Smith's terms "civic" nationalism and "ethnic" nationalism. In his book *National Identity*, Smith defines civic nationalism as "a predominantly spatial or territorial conception" (9). The Western civic nation is a community formed by "Historic territory, legal-political community, legal-political equality of members, and common civic culture and ideology" it also includes "a common public, mass culture" ensured by "the public system of education and the mass media" (11). Although this model of nationalism contains an element of

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[6] As Benedict Anderson notes in his groundbreaking work *Imagined Communities*, the eighteenth century is generally agreed upon as the beginning of the development of modern nationalism in the West.

common culture, it does not restrict its members explicitly according to birth. As Michael

Ignatieff describes it, "civic nationalism maintains that the nation should be composed of all

those – regardless of race, colour, creed, gender, language or ethnicity – who subscribe to the

nation's political creed" (*Blood and Belonging* 3-4). The ethnic model, which is commonly

opposed to the civic one, is notable, according to Smith, for "its emphasis on a community of

birth and native culture" (*National Identity* 11). He goes on to describe this type of national

community "as a fictive 'super-family' [that] boasts pedigrees and genealogies to back up its

claims" (12). As Smith and others have noted, these two strands of nationalism are almost

always combined in actual practice. Both approaches to nationalism depend on definitions of

similarity and difference, with the distinction being how easily the different can be made to

become similar. Or, in other words, how possible it is for the "Other" to transform into the

"Citizen" of the nation. Both of these strands of nationalism, with their approaches to similarity

and difference, can be seen at work in the debates over citizenship and law in the nineteenth

century.

Many theorists, among them Paul Gilroy, David Cesarani, Reiko Karatani, and Ian

Baucom have elaborated on the chaotic and contingent nature of British citizenship laws.[7] The

oldest tradition seemed to be one of *ius soli* (right of the soil), which meant that anyone born on

British soil had a claim to British citizenship. As Baucom explains in his analysis of contemporary

immigration laws in his book *Out of Place*, this formulation had always been open to

"equivocation." "The British government had determined that slaves born in the American

colonies were not covered by the *ius soli*, thus excluding most of the preemancipation black

inhabitants of the New World from British subjecthood" (11). We can presume that this

exclusion stemmed from two reasons. One, that the categories of slave and subject were

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[7] Paul Gilroy *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack* (1987), David Cesarani "The Changing Character of Citizenship and Nationality in Britain" (1996), Ian Baucom *Out of Place* (1999).

mutually exclusive, and even the potential to move from one to the other, with the ensuing

privilege of "legal-political equality" necessary for the subject, could be dangerous to the

slaveholding power. Two, that the enslaved Africans and their descendants were perceived as

lacking the "common civic culture" or political interests necessary to join the British civic

community. At the base of this assumption, of course, lurks the concept of ethnic nationalism

that marked them as Other and therefore permanently disqualified from joining the ostensibly

civic nation. Nevertheless, the strong presence of evangelical Christianity and its message of

spiritual equality and personal uplift in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, as

well as the efforts of the abolitionists, kept open the idea that emancipated Africans could

become respectable members of the nation.[8]

The idea that British citizenship depended on learned civic skills and commonalities,

rather than race, had several bases. One, which Peter Mandler points out in his book *The English

National Character: The History of an Idea from Edmund Burke to Tony Blair* (2006), is the link

between British citizenship and evangelical Protestantism, which focuses on education, moral

worth, and spiritual development as paths to reward.[9] Another he relates to certain theories of

British history, like those espoused by Henry Hallam. In his book *The View of the State of Europe

During the Middle Ages* (1818), Hallam wrote that "the character of the bravest and most

virtuous among nations has not depended on the accidents of race or climate, but has been

gradually wrought by the plastic influence of civil rights, transmitted as a prescriptive

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[8] See Lorimer *Colour, Class, and the Victorians*. The narrative of Olaudah Equiano is a good example of the evangelical model of an emancipated slave becoming a citizen through the combined efforts of spiritual commitment and economic self-help. His life, however, also shows the barriers that faced even an Anglicized and Christianized free black man at the end of the eighteenth century.

[9] Linda Colley also locates Protestantism as a central element in British identity in her book *Britons: Forging a Nation*, though with a different focus.

inheritance through a long course of generations" (qtd. in Mandler 37).[10] This belief had some

impact on British colonial policy, as can be seen in Thomas Macaulay's "Minute on Indian

Education" from 1835, in which he successfully encourages the British government to sanction

the teaching of English to Indians. His goal is to create "a class of persons, Indian in blood and

colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect" (237) who will gradually bring

their culture into line with that of Western Europe. As an example of the transformative power

of English literature, he describes the case of Russia, which "has gradually emerged from the

ignorance in which it was sunk, and has taken its place among civilized communities" due to its

engagement with the languages and learning of Western Europe (232).

The civilizational ideas expressed by Macaulay reflect the complex nature of the colonial

relationship during the first half of the nineteenth century. His assertion that Indians can

become "quite competent to discuss political or scientific questions with fluency and precision

in the English language" (par. 28) is at once an affirmation of their common humanity and a

strike against it. Indians, according to Macaulay, have the potential to become culturally English

by rejecting the texts of their own history and embracing texts of Englishness. At the same time,

the fact that there is something that must be rejected highlights the ruthless presence of

difference that relegates Macaulay's ideal Indians to the status of "mimic men" (Gikandi 40) in

an English world. The civilizational model becomes even more complex in the case of the

emancipated West Indian slaves who, unlike the Indians, are not embedded in a textual culture

of their own, or even a country of their own. Anthony Trollope articulates this perceived

isolation in terms of a civilizational limbo:

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[10] Laura Doyle, in *Freedom's Empire*, argues that the abstract political values embraced by people like
Hallam, or the founding fathers of America, were always inherently raced because of their foundation on
Anglo-Saxon tradition, though that foundation was not explicitly brought out until later in the nineteenth
century.

> "They have no country of their own, yet have they not hitherto any country of their adoption; for, whether as slaves in Cuba, or as free labourers in the British isles, they are in each case a servile people in a foreign land. They have no language of their own, nor have they as yet any language of their adoption . . . They have no idea of country, and no pride of race . . ." (*The West Indies and the Spanish Main* 55)

His subsequent comments reflect the common stereotypes of the period, also referring to mimicry as their primary mode of existence, with the implication that the black inhabitants of the West Indies can achieve no more than a comic mockery of English habits, taste, or thought. This condition of being in limbo, he claims, is the same whether they live in a condition of slavery (Cuba) or freedom. Like Thomas Carlyle, Trollope argues that liberty, allegedly the foundational element of British character, operates differently (or does not operate at all) upon a non-white English population. Of course the concept of liberty, as used by Hallam, was specifically described in terms of duration: it took generations for liberty to achieve the effect of Victorian Englishness. This time frame is collapsed by Carlyle, Trollope, and their supporters, while the ethnic distinction of the Anglo-Saxons is accentuated in order to suggest that racial difference is responsible for the failure of liberty rather than a lack of adequate time. This discourse of liberty, which is posited as both a universal value and a native birthright, shows how, in Gikandi's words, "colonial culture was premised on a universal identity that, nevertheless, was predicated on systematic modes of exclusion" (9)

Trollope's text, written in 1859, reflects the shifting perceptions of the racial nature of British identity during the middle part of the nineteenth century. At the beginning of the century, as Mandler writes, "English thinking about human nature remained much more firmly fixed within a civilizational context, and this was nearly as true of popular and democratic thought as of the elite" (28). However, by the middle of the century, a definite shift towards racialist thought had taken place, although scholars date it to different times and ascribe it to

different reasons. According to Mandler, the "civilizational" perception of British identity

remained primary until increasing dissent in the 1820s and 1830s prompted "a national debate

about who were 'the people' and what were their rights in the polity" (28).[11] Douglas Lorimer

attributes increasing racialism to the gradual reification of the British class structure in the 1850s

and 60s and the waning influence of the evangelicals who spearheaded the abolitionist

movement (122). Others point to the continued economic decline of the West Indies after

emancipation as a factor in the rise of racialist depictions of unpatriotic black indolence. An

additional factor was the rise of British anthropological and scientific societies that focused

increasingly on identifying and classifying difference, especially in various human societies. Their

theories and conclusions helped propagate an understanding of human civilization as

progressive and England as being at the front (if not the peak) of that progression.[12] The events

following the Morant Bay rebellion[13] and the eventual vindication of Governor Eyre highlight

"the extent to which the cultural racism of the 1830s with its liberal and progressive

attachments, had been displaced by a more aggressive biological racism, rooted in the

assumption that blacks were not brothers and sisters but a different species, born to be

mastered" (Hall 242). By the 1870s, the popular belief was that British national identity was an

ethnic construction, and that while colonial others could be educated and civilized to some

extent, they lacked the inherent ethnic qualities that would fit them for British citizenship.

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[11] Mandler focuses his argument on class movements, like Chartism, rather than abolition, but it is hard to believe that the imminent emancipation of the slave population had no impact on a renewed concern about who had the right to become British citizens during the 1830s.

[12] Gikandi, Street

[13] The Morant Bay Rebellion of Jamaica began in October of 1865 when a group of militia fired into a group of black protestors in front of the Morant Bay court house. Several people were killed in the subsequent riot, which touched off a month of violent reprisals against the black community ordered by the governor, Edward Eyre. "Despite the absence of organised resistance, troops under British command executed 439 people, flogged more than 600 men and women, and burnt more than 1,000 homes. A mixed-race member of the Jamaican House of Assembly, George William Gordon, was hanged" (Hall 23).

Obviously, there were outlying exceptions to this belief both on the side of extreme racism and absolute equality. But generally speaking, in Lorimer's words, "a middle of the road position materialized which accepted the black man's humanity but assumed he would remain the perpetual ward of his superior white guardians" (205). This position harmonized a modified version of the Protestant ethic of work and self-help with the demands of the imperial project, and remained in place through the end of the century, though increasingly plagued by doubts and anxieties, such as those that appear in the "gothic" adventure novels of H. Rider Haggard, as I discuss in chapter four of this project.

Throughout the century, the written word – newspapers, encyclopedias, scientific texts, missionary tracts, popular stories, travel narratives – provided the arena for these ongoing debates on the nature of British citizenship, class, and race. One of the signal textual moments of the Victorian discourse on race and Britishness is the Carlyle-Mill debate over what Carlyle eventually termed "The Nigger Question." The main texts of the debate are Carlyle's essay "Occasional Discourse on the Negro Question" (1849), John Stuart Mill's response "The Negro Question" (1850), and Carlyle's 1853 expanded and revised pamphlet of his original essay "Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question." The obvious exchange of "Negro" for "Nigger" in Carlyle's titles reflects, as Gikandi points out, the intensified racism that developed mid-century. Although theirs were not the sole voices in the ongoing national conversation on the national status of Britain's subjects of African descent, their texts highlight some of the central concerns of that conversation (economics, culture, loyalty) as well as the transatlantic and transnational framework in which they saw this conversation taking place.

The written debate between Thomas Carlyle and John Stuart Mill over "The Negro Question" in the West Indies began with Carlyle's 1849 essay "Occasional Discourse on the

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Negro Question," which was published in *Fraser's Magazine* and later reprinted in several places in America.[14] Briefly, Carlyle's argument is that every man, black and white, should work up to the "ability the gods have given him" and in the service of the state and its interests (531). The interests of the state, according to Carlyle, lie in the production of luxury items like sugar and spice which will lead the state to the "commerces, arts, politics, and social developments" that are the goal of Western civilization (532). As these quotes show, Carlyle links labor, patriotic duty, and civilizational progress together into a specific kind of national masculine identity. However, this overarching identity has a hierarchical structure. Throughout the article, Carlyle implies that the black man's "ability" to do hard agricultural labor is far greater than the white man's, and thus the burden of spice production should fall upon him, whether or not he himself wants or needs those spices. In fact, "Not a square inch of soil in those fruitful isles, purchased by British blood, shall any black man hold to grow pumpkins for him, except on terms that are fair toward Britain" (535). By placing the administrative labor of colonization above the actual labor of production, Carlyle creates a racial hierarchy of labor that places the white colonizer closer to the nation and national ideal than the black laborer. Carlyle bolsters this hierarchy using the arguments of scientific racism. He informs the black population of the West Indies that "decidedly you will have to be servants to those that are born *wiser* than you, that are born lords of you -- servants to the whites, if they *are* (as what mortal can doubt they are?) born wiser than you" (536). This appeal to natural law, as Gikandi argues, appeals to "the most emotive force in the canon of Englishness" (65), and links Carlyle's argument to one of the central concepts of British identity: that it is founded on an evolved understanding of "natural" laws that have become Britain's legal tradition].

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[14] A list appears on the website *The Carlyle-Mill "Negro Question" Debate*
http://cepa.newschool.edu/het/texts/carlyle/negroquest.htm

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Carlyle's opinions in this piece were not unusual ones. James Millette notes that to many people, particularly businessmen and government officials, the independence manifested by the freed people "was regarded as an unwelcome and unintended consequence of emancipation, a development to be undermined in every way possible" (60). The government, with Carlyle, agreed that the plantation owners had a "right to cheap labour" (Millette, 61). The solution was to import additional indentured laborers from India in order to increase competition for land and resources in the islands and tip the wage-labor balance back in favor of the plantation owners. By providing indentured workers to the plantation owners of the West Indies rather than supporting a fair wage structure, the government continued the impression that low-wage plantation labor was necessary for the national good, and that attempts of black men (and women) to create and maintain their own homes and businesses were anti-national. In this way, the doctrines of self-help through labor, and a man's right to secure a living for his family (building-blocks of Victorian masculine identity) are denied to black men in the colonies as being against national interest..

Carlyle's arguments for a feudal West Indian society were rebutted by John Stuart Mill in an 1850 letter to *Fraser's Magazine* entitled "Negro Question." In that letter, Mill questions Carlyle's priorities, asking "Is what supports life inferior in dignity to what merely gratifies the sense of taste?" (467). He goes on to argue of the "commerces, arts, polities, and social developments" described by Carlyle that "When they must be produced by slaves, the 'polities and social developments' they lead to are such as the world, I hope, will not choose to be cursed with much longer" (467). Mill questions Carlyle's assertion that black men have no right to claim open land in Jamaica, since it was their blood and labor that built England's empire there. He also takes the time to remark that "the earliest known civilization was, we have the strongest reason to believe, a negro civilization" (468). However, he does not fall back onto that

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argument, but instead finally claims that "were the whites born ever so superior in intelligence to the blacks, and competent by nature to instruct and advise them, it would not be the less monstrous to assert that they had therefore a right either to subdue them by force, or circumvent them by superior skill; to throw upon them the toils and hardships of life, reserving for themselves, under the misapplied name of work, its agreeable excitements" (468). Slavery and serfdom, according to Mill, are neither economically profitable nor morally allowable. In fact, Carlyle's argument notwithstanding, they go against the basic tenets of English law.

Although they differ in their conclusions, both essays share the same terms of discourse. As Gikandi notes, both authors assume "that identities can be defined only in a rhetoric that foregrounds alterity and difference." As he goes on to say, "Neither Carlyle nor Mill can conceptualize empire without its black subjects, but they differ widely on where these subjects are to be positioned: Carlyle accommodates differences by appealing to natural hierarchy, Mill domesticates them by subordinating blackness to the demands of a cultural, moral, and constitutional standard exemplified by England" (68). Broadly speaking, Carlyle is an ethnic nationalist, while Mill represents the civilizational point of view. Both recognize that the emancipated slave requires some kind of place within the British national structure, but differ as to whether that place is permanent or contingent upon mental, physical, or spiritual effort and uplift. Both men agree that British identity is founded upon the elements of labor, law, and duty, but disagree as to the extent to which black labor, specifically, can fulfill the conditions of British identity.

The final paragraph of Mill's letter is especially interesting in the context of my argument because it points to the international implications and associations of the British

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national debate over identity. In it, Mill stresses the inherent transatlantic nature of debates

over race, rights, and citizenship:

> There is, however, another place where that tyranny still flourishes, but now
> for the first time finds itself seriously in danger. At this crisis of American
> slavery, when the decisive conflict between right and iniquity seems about to
> commence, your contributor steps in, and flings this missile, loaded with the
> weight of his reputation, into the abolitionist camp. The words of English
> writers of celebrity are words of power on the other side of the ocean; and
> the owners of human flesh, who probably thought they had not an honest
> man on their side between the Atlantic and the Vistula, will welcome such an
> auxiliary. Circulated as his dissertation will probably be, by those whose
> interests 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 in the *Inquirer* justly calls "a
> true work of the devil." (469)

As Mill notes in this paragraph, the British and the Americans took a lively interest in each

other's approaches to the "Negro Question." Though Carlyle may not have had America in mind

when he wrote his article, it was swiftly reprinted and discussed in that country, as was Mill's.

For the Americans and for the British, thinking about their racial issues in terms of the other

country came naturally, and the proximity of the United States, the Bahamas, and the British

West Indies made that exchange all the more necessary.

The connections made by Carlyle and Mill between masculine labor, spheres of

masculine action, and the core ideals of British national identity were commonplace in the

Victorian period. Most Victorians perceived that, in the words of Joanne Nagel, "the national

state is essentially a masculine institution." As she goes on to explain, "the culture of

nationalism is constructed to emphasize and resonate with masculine cultural themes. Terms

like honour, patriotism, cowardice, bravery and duty are hard to distinguish as either

nationalistic or masculinist, since they seem so thoroughly tied both to the nation and to

manliness" (251-252). The national colonial frontier is where these ideals of masculine identity

were able to be transformed into action, and thus the adventure novel, with its focus on the

action-oriented, nationally-affirmative "labor" of colonization and empire, became the primary

literary vehicle representing this masculine British identity. As Joseph Bristow argues in his book

Empire Boys, the masculine ideal embodied in these books was impossible to achieve in reality

due to the contradictory nature of some of the values, such as "moral restraint" and "intrepid

exploration." As he writes, "It was within the compulsions of these boys' own narratives that all

the problematic elements of male identity could, momentarily, cohere" and present the British

reader with a model of ideal imperial identity (226).

Bristow's description of the necessary nature of the nationalistic adventure novel and

Gikandi's argument that the colonies were "indispensable" spaces for the British when it came

to constructing British identity, especially in the realm of text (Gikandi 8), are why I think it is

imperative to include the adventure novel in a discussion of race and national identity in the

nineteenth century. Adventure novels provided an imaginative space where authors could posit

and answer key questions: Can the Other become like the Self? Does the Other *want* to become

like the Self? How far apart are they really? Although these questions underpin the many non-

fiction works on the subject of race in the Victorian period, like the essays produced by Carlyle

and Mill, it is only in the adventure novel genre that they can be fully explored. Adventure

authors, by dramatizing encounters between black and white, colonizer and colonized, could

construct and critique different relationships between those groups. In the realm of fiction, an

author could explore the process of an Other becoming a subject (if not a citizen) of Britain

without threatening the status quo, and even challenge the barriers placed between the

self/citizen and the Other. As Richard Phillips writes, "Adventure stories constructed a concrete

(rather than purely abstract) cultural space that … mapped a social totality in a manner that was imaginatively accessible and appealing to the people" (12). That social totality was often a representation of Britain as the ideal empire reigning over a hierarchy of races. However, within the stories themselves, we can see authors experimenting with plots and characters that could (and sometimes do) threaten that social totality. By examining the plot structure and characterization of adventure novels, we can discover how these Victorian authors constructed an idealized image of British identity by imaginatively reconstructing British locations of colonization or adventure and peopling them with Others who threatened or reinforced that identity. The boundary lines drawn around the colonized figures in these texts by the authors expose their real concerns about the extent to which the composite elements of a British identity could be appropriated and enacted by them, threatening the important imaginative foundations of British national identity.

The adventure genre holds an additional interest because it is a "traveling genre," defined by Margaret Cohen in her article of that title as a genre that both narrates national and international spaces and transgresses them as the genre travels from author to author across national boundaries. As Gikandi, Catherine Hall, Paul Gilroy, and numerous others have argued, the construction of British national identity was not a unilateral process. Tracing the travels of the adventure genre as it crossed national and racial boundaries exposes how even within the textual realm of imagination, the British Empire and British identity were shaped by a dialogic process and inextricably bound to ideas of Afro-Caribbean identity, African American identity, and the definition of the nation itself.

The Adventure Genre

The type of story known as the adventure has been around since the epics of ancient

Greece. John Cawelti, in his 1976 study *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance: Formula Stories as*

Art and Popular Culture names it as "the simplest and perhaps the oldest and widest in appeal of

all story types" (40). According to Cawelti, "The central fantasy of the adventure story is that of

the hero – individual or group – overcoming obstacles and dangers and accomplishing some

important and moral mission. Often, though not always, the hero's trials are the result of

machinations of a villain, and, in addition, the hero frequently receives, as a kind of side benefit,

the favors of one or more attractive young ladies" (39-40). The focus in adventure novels, as

Jean-Yves Tadié writes in his book *Le Roman D'aventures* (1982), is on exteriority and action,

rather than interiority. In the adventure novel, "Quelque chose arrive à quelqu'un: telle est la

nature de l'événement; raconté, il devient roman, mais de sorte que << qulequ'un >> dépende

de << quelque chose >>, et non l'inverse, qui méne qu roman psychologique" (5). He also notes

that the adventure novel tends to include a sense of certainty, though the true solution to the

problem may not appear until the end. [15]

These characteristics are some of the reasons that the adventure genre became popular

among writers and readers of the British Empire. Graham Dawson, in *Soldier Heroes: British*

Adventure, Empire and the Imagining of Masculinities, writes that "..during the growth of

popular imperialism in the mid-to-late nineteenth century, heroic masculinity became fused in

an especially potent configuration with representations of British imperial identity" (1). The

adventure hero, encountering and overcoming obstacles to gain an ultimate reward, easily

became a representation of the British man going out to the colonies and fighting to maintain

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[15] "Dans l'ordre du roman d'aventures, en effet, il n'y a pas de question sans réponse, pas e problème
sans solution, pas d'attente sans événement" (Tadié 8).

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and expand the empire, with a peaceful retirement to green England as his reward.

1. Illustration captioned "Into the Unknown" from H. Rider Haggard's African adventure novel *Allan Quatermain*, p. 104a.

The action-oriented exteriority of the adventure genre matched the outward-looking nature of the empire, as opposed to the interiority associated with famous psychological British novels, like *Great Expectations*, *Middlemarch*, or *Wuthering Heights*. The focus on travel in the adventure genre, dating back to epics like the *Odyssey*, meant that it developed easily into an international genre, and while Victorian adventures could take place within one nation, the stories most often dealt with international themes, featuring the British characters in conflict with other European or non-European figures.[16] In his 1997 examination of adventure stories from the perspective of a geographer, Richard Phillips makes the point that adventure novels, while imaginative, are spatially very concrete (12). In the adventure story, space becomes an

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[16] In the novels of Scott, the international tension stems from the English/Scottish divide. However, in mainstream British adventure fiction after that, Scottish (and Irish) characters are united with English characters in the cause of Britain, as in W.H.G. Kingston's novel *The Three Midshipmen*.

organizing factor. Britishness is partially defined by space: some characters have access to British spaces while others do not.[17] Moving from one space to another, whether it is from the metropole to the colonies or from colony to colony, is also a British prerogative in these stories, and many adventures center on British characters attempting to restrict the mobility of others, be they the French, pirates, or African tribes.

The adventure genre's focus on carefully defined spaces, as well as spaces that define those within them, differentiates it from the Gothic genre that was also popular in the nineteenth century. Spaces in Gothic literature tend to be blurred between the past and the present, and natural and supernatural. Many scholars have written about the relationship between Gothic literature and race, focusing on themes of desire, repression, abuse, unstable identities, and hidden origins.[18] The Gothic genre occasionally overlaps with the adventure, most especially in novels about race. Brantlinger coined the term "Imperial Gothic" to describe certain late-century adventure novels, like those by H. Rider Haggard, that dealt with atavism and the fear of imperial decay or devolution. While many of the novels that I am examining contain Gothic elements, such as madness or hidden origins, but these elements are framed within non-Gothic adventure plots. They represent the fractures and instabilities that occur within the certain world of the adventure genre when the author attempts to define or control

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[17] The terms "space" and "place" have received a lot of scholarly attention. For an overview of the major texts and critical debates on the subject, see *Key Thinkers on Space and Place* ed. Phil Hubbard, Rob Kitchin and Gill Valentine (2003). I am using the term "space" here in the broad sense of physical space that may be claimed or controlled by a nation, like Britain. I will not be using the term "place" (which is often used to denote a personal or intimate space that corresponds to "home") in this study because it tends to have anti-political or a-political overtones that conflict with the explicitly or implicitly political nature of all spaces within adventure novels, whether they are domestic, colonial, or foreign.

[18] See Winter *Subjects of Slavery, Agents of Change: Women and Power in Gothic Novels and Slave Narratives, 1790-1865*; Edwards *Gothic Passages: Racial Ambiguity and the American Gothic*; Malchow *Gothic Images of Race in Nineteenth-Century England*.

unruly characters that refuse to accept their racial or national classification, or their assigned space in the world.

The fissures within the adventure genre, especially once it has been appropriated by black authors, represent the reciprocal and interactive relationship between literature and culture, the book and the reader. As Phillips points out in his text, "once in cultural circulation… maps may have unintended consequences." Some of these consequences, he argues, are apparent in the uneasy relationships between the supposedly-absolute spaces of "home" and "away" or "domestic" and "foreign" in certain adventure novels, as well as their potential to resist as well as construct imperial ideology (13). These tensions between the absolute definitions within a story and the infinite possibilities of a story once it is put into circulation are one of the problems I want to look at in my study, especially in the cases where a basic generic plot is being retold by many different authors, as in the "tragic octoroon" narratives I discuss in chapter two.

Classification and control are very important to adventure stories, dating back to Robinson Crusoe's obsessive organization of his island kingdom. The Victorian fascination with scientific classification, combined with upper and middle-class concerns about providing instructive juvenile/ popular reading material, led to adventure novels that digressed into long passages of botanical or zoological description.[19] Likewise, the classification of people plays a large role in adventure narratives. British characters, of course, are manly, upright, forthright, moral, brave, fair, and natural leaders. This positive stereotype of the British national is opposed by negative (to varying degrees) stereotypes of foreigners. As Orwell remarked in his essay "Boys' Weeklies":

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[19] The novels of Mayne Reid showcase this especially well.

"it occasionally happens that, when a setting of a story is in a foreign
country, some attempt is made to describe the natives as individual human
beings, but as a rule it is assumed that foreigners of any one race are all alike
and will conform more or less exactly to the following patterns:

Frenchman: Excitable, wears beard, gesticulates wildly.
Spaniard, Mexican etc: sinister, treacherous.
Arab, Afghan etc.: sinister, treacherous.
Chinese: sinister, treacherous, wears pigtail.
Italian: excitable, grinds barrel-organ or carries stiletto.
Swede, Dane etc.: kind-hearted, stupid.
Negro: comic, very faithful"
(Orwell, qtd. in Street 56).

I would add to Orwell's list "African: savage, warlike, cannibal" as adventure novels, particularly

in the mid-to-late Victorian period, tended to distinguish between enslaved or formerly

enslaved Africans ("Negros") and the independent African tribes of the "dark continent." By

making this distinction, the British could maintain the moral high ground they had taken on the

question of slavery while pursuing increasingly active imperial schemes in Africa itself. This

stereotyping of races in the adventure novel is due to both the narrative need for quick one-

dimensional characterization and the increasing interest in creating a progressive hierarchy of

the races of the world that would support and reflect the development of the racially-

determined British national identity that I described earlier in this section.

The other popular genre that I will be considering within this study in relationship to the

adventure novel is the domestic romance. Cawelti identifies this genre as one in which the

"organizing action is the development of a love relationship, usually between a man and a

woman" (41).[20] Obviously, such a description covers a wide range of texts and sub-genres. I am

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[20] This specific use of the word "romance" is different than the more generalized definition of "romance"
as any "fictitious narrative in prose of which the scene and incidents are very remote from those of
ordinary life" (*OED*). According to the terms of that definition, most (if not all) Victorian adventure novels
are "romances," and indeed critics often refer to them as such, a practice that masks their cultural and
historic specificity.

using the phrase "domestic romance" to describe a genre of books that are centered on a heroine (rather than a hero) in a domestic (rather than adventurous) situation, and follow a conventional marriage plot. This definition of the romance covers both sensational works centered on the home and marriage and more tame novels of manners. Like the adventure novel, the domestic romance also dealt with racial issues, though within a different framework. I have described the adventure novel as a fundamentally imperialist genre concerned with national distinction, stereotyping, spatial control, action-oriented goals and certain outcomes. The domestic romance in this period also could have imperialist overtones.[21] However, the plot of the story focuses on the constitution of the family and takes place within an established nation, rather than focusing on the constitution of the state in the context of international relationships. The adventure novel and domestic romance may be intertwined to some degree, as in many of the books I am considering. For example, Mary Elizabeth Braddon's sensational romance *The Octoroon; or, the Lily of Louisiana* follows a fundamentally domestic plot; however, it takes place in "exotic" America, contains an international plot that includes the California gold rush, South American maritime trade, and piracy, and reinforces the superiority of the British nation by drawing on the conventions of the adventure genre rather than the conventions of romance.

Since this book is about the adventure novel genre and those novels that are hybrids of the adventure and the domestic romance, the authors I will be examining are not those who have become famous as examples of great Victorian prose. Martin Green, pondering the ephemeral nature of Victorian adventure novels, writes that "serious fiction writers in England were warned away from the adventurous tale, and toward the domestic novel, even though, during this period of 1700 to 1900, the adventure material bore much more directly upon the serious history of England" (*Dreams of Adventure* 58). The general critical consensus seems to be that the great stylistic writers of the nineteenth century, with the exceptions (according to

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[21] Edward Said in *Culture and Imperialism* demonstrated the impact imperialism had on works traditionally viewed as purely domestic, such as Austen's *Mansfield Park*.

Tadié) of Stevenson and Conrad, focused their talents on the domestic romance plot. This apparent preference for the domestic plot on the part of "serious writers" over the imperial plot accounts for the absence of the most well-known Victorian novelists from my book. For many of the great Victorian social novelists, race relations in the empire seemed to be an incidental concern for fiction. Thackeray occasionally made use of comic black stereotypes in his work, while Dickens is most famous for his assertion in *Bleak House* that Africans and African colonies are external distractions from serious internal British problems.

Dickens did make one attempt at the imperialist adventure: the 1857 serial story "The Perils of Certain English Prisoners," which he co-wrote with Wilkie Collins. The story, though it takes place in South America, is acknowledged to be primarily a response to the Indian Mutiny.[22] The central native character, Christian George King, apes British habits and customs, but is revealed to be treacherous when he betrays the small English settlement to a mongrel crowd of pirates. Neither he nor any of the other native characters have any redeeming features, and the entire story, aside from one Dickensian stab at pompous bureaucratic authority, is a celebration of English pluck in the face of foreign evil. The one-dimensional nature of this story only highlights the type of complexity and attention that Dickens granted to domestic social problems and withheld from the empire. Though his books, like those of Jane Austen, Thackeray, Charlotte Bronte, and other major authors, can be connected to empire and its impacts on the metropolitan space, a critic interested in an actual description of racial interactions in an imperial context must look to less well-known authors, like Frederick Marryat and Mayne Reid, for material.

Black Authors and the Adventure Genre

Although much recent critical attention has been paid to the ways that white British authors of adventure novels described and influenced the white British experience of living in a

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[22] Lillian Nayder "Class consciousness and the Indian mutiny in Dickens's `The Perils of Certain English Prisoners.'"; Laura Callanan *Deciphering Race: White Anxiety, Racial Conflict, and the Turn to Fiction in Mid-Victorian English Prose*.

multi-racial empire, little critical attention has been paid to the ways that black writers in the

Anglo-Atlantic world were influenced by or responded to the adventure genre. This is not

because popular literary modes were irrelevant to African American or Afro-Caribbean writers.

The general importance of fiction and fictional forms for African American writers has been

widely recognized. In *To Tell a Free Story*, William L. Andrews describes the process of the

"novelization" of African American prose from autobiography to fiction and the discursive

power that these dialogized forms of storytelling gave to their authors. African diaspora authors

during the nineteenth century realized, as Pauline Hopkins writes in the preface to her 1900

novel *Contending Forces*, that:

> "Fiction is of great value to any people as a preserver of manners and
> customs - religious, political, and social. It is a record of growth and
> development from generation to generation. *No one will do this for us; we
> must ourselves develop the men and women who will faithfully portray the
> inmost thoughts and feelings of the Negro with all the fire and romance
> which lie dormant in our history*." (italics in original)

Hopkins went on to display her commitment to fiction by writing three serialized novels in a

variety of popular genres that were meant to bring her message to the broadest possible

audience. Hopkins's investment in popular genre fiction was not frivolous. According to Susanne

Dietzel in her essay "The African American Novel and Popular Culture" (2004), popular fiction

has the potential to provide "powerful critiques of dominant ideologies [and] sites on which

cultural and social conflicts are played out" (157). This is certainly true of the nineteenth

century, and writers of African descent in this period turned to popular genres of fiction, like the

domestic romance and the adventure, in order to reconfigure popular stereotypes and

appropriate and critique the mainstream identities imagined and maintained within popular

fiction.

Adventurous constructions of black identity can be traced back to the slave narrative genre, with its fundamental structure of imprisonment and escape.[23] These stories conform to the basic adventure as Cawelti describes it, with the hero "overcoming obstacles" in order to achieve a personal goal. However, the tightly-controlled publishing environment in which slave narratives were produced, particularly in America, conventionalized the kinds of adventures they explored and therefore their potential connection to the literature of empire. The importance of the heroic aspect of slave narratives is underlined in *To Tell a Free Story*, with particular reference to the *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*. "As epitomized in Douglass's *Narrative*, the heroic fugitive is the rugged individual whose struggle against repression culminates in his successful escape from it. The heroic fugitive is he who severs the links that chain him to the past and lives instead for the future" (143). Douglass's individualism and aggressiveness in pursuit of his goal, and his orientation towards the future are all characteristics valued in the heroes of adventure. These same characteristics allow him to achieve liberty and the identity of "man" rather than "slave." These qualities mark his first narrative as an important precursor to his single fictional work, a novella entitled "The Heroic Slave" published in 1853. Douglass's two other book-length projects, *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855) and *The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* (1881), turn away from this heroic popular vein towards the developing conventions of literary realism, a process analyzed extensively by Andrews in his book. However, Douglass' brief foray into the world of popular genre fiction, which I will discuss in Chapter 1, provides an illuminating perspective on his construction of personal and national identity, and the issues raised by their relationship to a slave society.

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[23] Elements of the heroic adventure genre are easily found in many slave narratives: for instance, Equiano's experiences at sea, Moses Roper's violent picaresque plot, and Henry Box Brown's daring escape all fit the parameters of the adventure genre.

The domestic romance also played a large role in the narrative origins of African

American fiction.[24] In most historical studies of the African American novel, "romance" and

"melodrama" are the key terms used to describe the texts that appeared in the antebellum

period. In his 1989 work *The African American Novel and its Tradition*, Bernard Bell describes

four major novels of the antebellum period (*Clotel* by William Wells Brown, *The Garies and Their*

Friends by Frank Webb, *Blake* by Martin Delany, and *Our Nig* by Harriet Wilson) in this way:

> ". . . the structure and movement of all four narratives are in the tradition of
> the slave narratives and sentimental romance. Families and lovers are
> separated and reunited; anecdotes about the evils of slavery and race
> prejudice are sensationally cataloged; tales of seduction of octoroons are
> sentimentally related; and the villain receives his just retribution while the
> hero marries the heroine and lives happily ever after . . ." (55)

Although he does go on to note that *Our Nig* and *Blake* end differently, Bell does not fully

explore the distinctions between the heroic mode of "romance" and its domestic forms, though

in the case of *Blake*, such a distinction is necessary for an understanding of the text's political

message, as I argue in chapter three.

A similar vocabulary appears in historical studies of Anglophone Caribbean fiction of the

nineteenth century. Leah Rosenberg, in her book *Nationalism and Caribbean Literature*,

identifies "bildungsroman and romance" (26) as the two generic categories within which

nineteenth century Anglo-Caribbean literature developed. These genres are direct inheritances

of British metropolitan culture, which permeated the West Indian colonies in the nineteenth

century, as Kenneth Ramchand points out in the introduction to his book *The West Indian Novel*

and its Background. As in the critical scholarship on early African American fiction, early Afro-

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[24] See Hazel Carby *Reconstructing Womanhood* and Claudia Tate *Domestic Allegories of Political Desire*.
The most intriguing example is Harriet Jacobs's narrative *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, which for
many years was assumed to be a fictional work by the editor, Lydia Maria Child rather than the
autobiography of Jacobs herself, due to its narrative similarity to sentimental women's fiction.

Caribbean fiction is often read and interpreted in terms of its relationship to realism, rather than in an attempt to distinguish the different types of "romance" or generic form at play within the texts or an attempt to locate them in the context of other colonial and imperial popular genres. William Cain, in his introduction to *Emmanuel Appadocca*, suggests the novel's connections to the world of popular adventure fiction, and its important place as part of a transatlantic, transnational fictional exchange, but focuses mainly on its connections to the genre of domestic romance (as exemplified by *Uncle Tom's Cabin*) and the American Renaissance. However, novels like *Emmanuel Appadocca* do belong in a discussion of both African American and British nationalist fiction. As John Stuart Mill made clear in his response to Carlyle's diatribe against the freedmen in the West Indies, the social, cultural, and political events of Britain's West Indian colonies impacted both England and the United States.

Like the works of Frederick Douglass and Martin Delany, the works of Philip and other male West Indian authors could benefit from a reading that places them within the context of nineteenth century popular fiction, rather than one that places them in opposition to more "authentic" works of literary realism. The goal of this book is to place works like "The Heroic Slave," *Emmanuel Appadocca*, *Clotel*, *Blake*, and *Of One Blood* within the context of the popular fictions that contributed so much to their character and structure. It's larger goal is to demonstrate the important role the adventure genre played in constructing and representing discourses of masculinity, race, and nationality in the nineteenth century Anglo-Atlantic world.

Thus far, Black Atlantic scholarship has overlooked the fictionalized discourse of national identity that dominated popular culture in the nineteenth century on both sides of the Atlantic, turning instead to non-fictional discourses of individual liberty founded upon the rhetoric of the

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American Revolution: "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness".[25] That critical focus reflects the rhetoric found in slave narratives, the primary texts of Black Atlantic scholarship . Slave narratives were presented by white abolitionists as personal stories of individual achievement. The ultimate goal of the hero's actions is *personal* freedom in the North or English/British territories, while the *political* goal of abolition is tightly linked to the white ghostwriters, editors, and sponsors that surrounded the text with authenticating documents. Slave narrators are given the agency of the trickster figure, but not the agency of a national representative, and often physical citizenship in a free country is played down, while spiritual freedom is highlighted. Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness in these narratives are framed as individual goals, divorced from their original nationalistic context. Even the seafaring narrative of Olaudah Equiano is presented as a journey from physical and spiritual bondage to physical and spiritual freedom, not a journey from slavery to British citizenship.

This pattern runs counter to the imperial adventure, in which the hero is always closely identified with a fixed national identity that determines and directs his actions, which are for a national as well as a personal good. This difference is highlighted by a comparison of classic slave narratives, such as William Wells Brown's or Moses Roper's, with aggressively nation- and group-oriented works like Frederick Douglass's novella "The Heroic Slave" (about a slave ship mutiny), Maxwell Philip's pirate novel *Emmanuel Appadocca*, and Martin Delany's serial novel *Blake, or the Huts of America*, which details the organization of a black revolution in the Caribbean and the American South. Looking at the development of black masculine fiction in the nineteenth century within the context of the fiction of adventure and empire, as well as the domestic romance, provides us with a new understanding of what these authors were doing.

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[25] Sale *The Slumbering Volcano: American Slave Ship Revolts and the Production of Rebellious Masculinity*, Levine *Martin Delany, Frederick Douglass, and the Politics of Representation*, Wallace *Constructing the Black Masculine: Identity and Ideality in African American Men's Literature and Culture, 1775-1995*.

Examining the gradual insertion of these kinds of adventure stories with specific ties to national identity formation and the international stage (dominated by the British Empire) into African American and Afro-Caribbean texts is crucial if we are to understand nineteenth century imaginative constructions of the black self as a national self.

This book will cover three different types of adventure story, each focused on a different space (the sea, the plantation, and Africa) and a related key figure (the black pirate, the runaway slave, and the long-lost prince). I begin with an analysis of the competing discourses of piracy and patriotism in sea adventure novels, including *Mr. Midshipman Easy* (1836) and *Percival Keene* (1842) by Frederick Marryat, *The Heroic Slave* (1853) by Frederick Douglass, and *Emmanuel Appadocca* (1854) by Maxwell Philip. I combine readings of these novels with historical documents relating to the case of the slave ship *Creole* in order to show how the figure of the pirate was used to destabilize and reconstruct traditional ideas of citizenship in the partially emancipated space of the Atlantic world.

My second chapter is focused on hybrid narratives of adventure and domesticity in white British plantation fictions of the 1850s and 1860s. These land-based adventures attempt to contain and control definitions of national identity by mapping the boundaries between "savage" and "civilized" territory. However, as novels like *The Octoroon* (1859) by Mary Elizabeth Braddon and *The Maroon* (1862) by Mayne Reid suggest, the model of citizenship generated by participation in an adventure is not easily limited to white characters in these plantation settings. In fact, domesticity is introduced into these novels because it places limits on the actions of non-white characters that the adventure genre alone cannot supply (for example, transforming a threatening runaway slave into a contented household servant).

I analyze a similar generic interplay in the third chapter, using the African American

novels *Clotel* (1853) by William Wells Brown and *Blake; or The Huts of America* (1861) by Martin

Delany, and the anonymous Trinidadian novel *Adolphus, a Tale* (1854). In each of these novels,

all three of which respond to the popular plantation form examined in chapter two, African

American and Afro-Caribbean authors differently manipulate the conventions of the adventure

and domestic genres in order to construct a variety of alternative identities, including an African

American identity, an Afro-Caribbean identity, and a pan-African identity. These identities

incorporate characteristics celebrated in white British adventures (like assertiveness and

leadership), but refocus them in various ways in order to create a more multi-cultural vision of

their existing nation, to create a new nation, or to discard the idea of nation altogether in favor

of a broader ethnically-based coalition of African-descended peoples.

My fourth and final chapter addresses the literal and imaginative role that Africa played

in adventure novels of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Though Africa factored

into many adventure fictions throughout the century, it took on new meanings at the end of the

century due to Europe's rapacity for colonial wealth and the strengthening of pan-African ideas

in America and the Caribbean. In this chapter, I examine H. Rider Haggard's late-century African

adventure novels *King Solomon's Mines* (1885), *She* (1887) and *Allan Quartermain* (1887), and

their impact on the pan-Africanist fictions *Of One Blood* (1902-1903) by African-American author

Pauline Hopkins, and *Imperium in Imperio* and *Unfettered* by African-American author Sutton

Griggs. I also examine the relationship between these fictions and the autobiographical

narrative of the African-American missionary William Sheppard, who explored the Congo region

in the early 1890s. Although his work is not fiction, Sheppard intentionally adopted the persona

of a missionary-adventurer (in the mold of David Livingstone) and the rhetorical aspects of the

adventure genre as a form of resistance to the virulent racism of post-Reconstruction America,

and his narrative shows the impact that popular adventure fiction had on real constructions of

identity in this period. In all of these texts, we can see how the motifs of the African adventure,

particularly those of the long-lost prince and the hidden kingdom (which are common in these

books), spoke to struggles within African American and Afro-Caribbean communities at the turn

of the century, such as the fight for civil rights and government participation, and debates over

the proper relationship between members of the African diaspora and the nations of Africa

threatened by colonial rule.

I conclude by discussing *Rupert Gray: a Study in Black and White* (1907) by the Afro-

Trinidadian author Stephen Cobham. I chose *Rupert Gray* because it is a transitional text that

looks both backward and forward, not only at the history of race relations in the British empire

and their current status, but also at the fictional forms that generated and perpetuated those

relationships. Writing six years after the death of Queen Victoria, Cobham critiques the Victorian

adventure genre by engaging with and then discarding some of its key elements. Instead of

pirates, runaway slaves, or long-lost African princes, Cobham presents his readers with an

articulate, multi-racial cast of characters inhabiting a modern, urban world. Cobham's conscious

choice to discard the conventions of the adventure genre (along with certain conventions of the

domestic romance which I also discuss) reflects a profound shift that was taking place in

understandings of national identity at the turn of the century, fueled by the solidification of

national boundaries, the disappearance of "unexplored" (by white people) frontiers, and

changing economic demands. Through his novel, Cobham urges the development of new forms

of popular fiction that will represent a new, more equitable vision of national citizenship for the

modern world.

Chapter 1: Patriots and Pirates

Pirates are not a new popular phenomenon. Since the early eighteenth century, tales of pirates and piracy have fired readers' imaginations, fueled by books like *A General History of the Robberies and Murders of the Most Notorious Pyrates* (1724) and *The Life, Adventures, and Pyracies, of the Famous Captain Singleton* by Daniel Defoe (1720). By the time the nautical adventure novel genre took off in Britain in the nineteenth century, pirates were familiar fictional figures, though their real-life counterparts in the Atlantic had begun to vanish.[26] However, shifting attitudes towards the colonies in Britain, new ideas of nationalism, and new competition for Atlantic domination in the nineteenth century, changed the figure of the pirate as he appeared in popular tales of adventure. In particular, anxiety caused by the abolition of slavery in the West Indies and the subsequent tensions that arose between Britain, her colonies, and the slave-holding United States, shaped the genre of the nautical adventure novel and the figure of the pirate within it.

In this chapter, I argue that the British abolition of slavery in 1834 (effective 1838)

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[26] The golden age of Caribbean piracy lasted from the early seventeenth century to the middle of the eighteenth century. By the nineteenth century, piracy in the Caribbean had been, to all intents and purposes, stamped out, though it still flourished in the East Indies. This fact has perhaps led to the confusion over the time setting of Maxwell Philip's novel *Emmanuel Appadocca*, which Smith claims is "the seventeenth-century period of the buccaneers" (170), despite plot elements that necessitate a post-abolition setting. For more information about the "golden age" of pirates in the eighteenth century see Rediker *Villains of All Nations*. The other major center of pirate activity during this period was the north coast of Africa where the Barbary pirates operated. Although the enslavement of whites by Barbary pirates is certainly a topic related to racial discourse in sea adventure novels of the period, it is a subject too large to be discussed within the confines of this paper. For information on Barbary pirates see Colley and Brezina.

caused an upswing of anxiety in both Britain and America over the role of the free black man in the nation which was reflected in the popular sea adventures of the time, particularly in the emergence of the figure of the black pirate.[27] It is my argument that in the 1840s and 1850s, white authors of popular sea fiction attempted to define and control the indeterminate, mobile, and (often) multi-ethnic space of ships in the Atlantic world by recreating shipboard life as a source of assertive, adventurous, *white*, masculine national identity. However, I also will show that African American and Afro-Caribbean authors were not blind to the role fictions of the sea played in racializing popular conceptions of national identity in the first half of the nineteenth century. Their works resist the limits placed by white authors on black agency at sea, recapturing the Atlantic as a site where the barriers surrounding national identity become fluid and black characters can pass in and through them at will. To demonstrate this, I will examine four texts from the period between 1834 and 1855: *Mr. Midshipman Easy* (1836) and *Percival Keene* (1842) by Frederick Marryat, *The Heroic Slave* (1853) by Frederick Douglass, and *Emmanuel Appadocca* (1854) by Maxwell Philip. A comparative reading of these texts shows how the figure of the black pirate was used to confirm and challenge notions of racially-coded fixed national identity in both Britain and America.

Ships, sailors, and even pirates have formed the backbone of many transatlantic

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[27] "Black" in Britain, when applied to persons (and especially sailors), could mean any dark-skinned person from territories as far apart as Africa and Malaysia. "Black" in America most often meant persons of African descent. In the British West Indies, distinctions were made between the terms "black" and "coloured," with "black" representing those who appeared to be of pure African descent (usually slaves), and "coloured" representing those who were of visibly mixed blood (often freed people, though not always). Throughout this essay, I will be using the term "black" to refer to people of African descent, a choice that reflects somewhat the cultural milieu that I am writing about, though certainly not the historical and cultural complexity surrounding the term and the people to whom it referred.

studies.[28] As Paul Gilroy writes in his book *The Black Atlantic* (1993), "ships were the living

means by which the points within the Atlantic world were joined. They were mobile elements

that stood for the shifting spaces in between the fixed places that they connected" (16-17).

Most studies have focused on the period beginning shortly before the American Revolution and

extending until roughly 1830. During this period, scholars argue, sailors were at the center of the

revolutionary storm and their experiences played a key role in defining liberty, human rights,

and the national identities that emerged from the conflicts. However, their experiences were

anything but straightforward. In *Liberty on the Waterfront* (2004), Paul Gilje examines the

"ambiguous" loyalties of many sailors during the revolutionary period that stemmed from a

complicated set of circumstances, not the least of which was the uncertain nature of their

employment, which could leave them literally adrift in a neutral or foreign sea (106-111).

Although the national identity of sailors in the Revolutionary Period was often

ambiguous or in a state of flux, in the post-revolutionary period (the late 1820s through the

1840s) perceptions of those earlier sailors changed. In his book, Gilje analyzes the process by

which the ambiguously American sailor was transformed into a national icon in the

autobiographical and fictional works of the 1820s and 1830s. As he describes it, these

retrospective works valorized the sailor's role in America's early conflicts "as if the whole ordeal

from 1775 to 1815 had become one story" (242). A similar process occurred in Britain, where

naval tales of the Napoleonic Wars not only cemented the place of the "courageous, rollicking

British tar" in the public consciousness, but also built the foundation of the Victorian adventure

novel tradition (Brantlinger 50). Early British sea adventures, like those by Captain Frederick

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[28] See, for example, Rediker *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*; Bolster *Black Jacks*; Rediker and Linebaugh *The Many-Headed Hydra*; Gilje *Liberty on the Waterfront*. Of these books, Bolster's is the only one that discusses the period between 1835 and 1865.

Marryat, sought to transform the unstable and contingent space of the ship (naval or merchant) into an intensely national space that would construct, rather than deconstruct, a firm and unshakeable national identity.

Frederick Marryat

The central importance of the sea to Britain was reinforced at the beginning of the nineteenth century by the sound defeat of the French in the Napoleonic Wars, and specifically the much-lionized accomplishments of Nelson at Trafalgar. As Bernhard Klein points out in his introduction to *Fictions of the Sea*, the sea was not only the site of Nelson's individual victory, but also "the foundational site of a vast and evolving political space – the British Empire – that was, to all intents and purposes, an empire of the seas" (2). The rise of the sea novel in the post-Napoleonic War period of the 1830s represents a popular engagement with this "evolving political space" which stretched the boundaries of Britain and the boundaries of what was commonly recognized as British identity. Although these novels are often painted as escapist fictions, they are actually, as John Peck explains in his study *Maritime Fiction: Sailors and the Sea in British and American Novels, 1719-1917*, "works that reflect the ideology of their time" (14). The nineteenth century development of the sea adventure began soon after the decisive Battle of Trafalgar in 1805. In his article "Romanticizing the Empire: The Naval Heroes of Southey, Coleridge, Austen, and Marryat" Tim Fulford describes the impact that heroic biographies of Lord Nelson like that by Robert Southey had on the genre of what he calls the "naval romance" (161). According to Fulford, the purpose of these stories was to promote "the chivalry of the ocean when the chivalry of the land was in doubt" due to the scandalous conduct of the aristocracy during the Regency period (162). Authors like Marryat used the sea novel to

present "chivalric virtues . . . such as patriotism, self-reliance, courage, paternalism, and, above all, attentiveness to duty" (162). Although chivalry can be found in many places, and Marryat did occasionally attribute honor to foreign officers, the brand of chivalry developed in Marryat's novels became specifically identified with British identity. The expansion of this chivalric ideal into other popular novels and popular songs resulted in "a definition of Britishness in which all seemed to share the chivalric virtues that the navy represented: courage, attentiveness to duty, resolute self-command" (164). That definition then traveled to non-nautical adventure tales as the core ideal of British imperial identity analyzed by scholars like Graham Dawson and Joseph Bristow.

Fulford's analysis of the origins of the nautical adventure portrays the genre as one intimately tied to the social and political context in which it was produced. Those social and political ties did not disappear as the genre gained momentum in the 1830s. Indeed, though sea novelists like Marryat often set their books in the eighteenth century or during the Napoleonic Wars, they remained as engaged with contemporary concerns as ever. Nowhere is this more apparent than in their portrayals of black characters. The abolition of slavery, which occurred at the same time when sea adventure stories became popular, raised serious questions about the role of the emancipated slaves in this newly-imagined British nation. Did the former slaves have a territorial, cultural, and legal claim to a British identity? What was the relationship between the civil polity of England and the West Indian colonies? These important contemporary questions were explored in the historical sea fiction of the period.

Frederick Marryat, a captain in the navy and veteran of the Napoleonic Wars, was the author who widely popularized the sea adventure form. John Sutherland, in *The Stanford Companion to Victorian Fiction*, calls him "the undisputed star of the genre" and notes that he is

"among the most reprinted of Victorian novelists" (456, 414). His novels are often cited as textbook examples of the sea adventure, filled with episodes that would later be recognized as standard elements of that genre, summarized by Joseph Conrad as "saving people from sinking ships, cutting away masts in a hurricane, swimming through a surf with a line ... [confronting] savages on tropical shores, [quelling] mutinies on the high seas" and otherwise acting as "an example of devotion to duty" (*Lord Jim* 6). Although there were other popular writers in the sea adventure genre in the nineteenth century, like Michael Scott (1789-1835), Frederick Chamier (1796-1870), W. H. G. Kingston (1814-1880), and R. M. Ballantyne (1825–1894), Marryat had the most lasting impact on the genre due to his prolific output and skilled storytelling, and his influence and recognition extended into 20th century.[29] His novels, written between 1829 and 1848, reflect the political and social upheaval of that period, which contained both the first Reform Act (1832), and the abolition of slavery (1834), and engage ideologically with many of the issues raised during that period. One of the most prominent issues he engaged with in his novels was the problem of emancipation.

Marryat was, as Louis J. Parascandola demonstrates, a believer in "conservative reform" that "allows for change in the social hierarchy but without destroying the rule of the aristocracy" (13). Marryat's conservative, yet flexible outlook reflects the cautious combination of what Anthony Smith termed "civic" and "ethnic" nationalism that, according to Peter Mandler, was prevalent in the 1830s.[30] Marryat's reactions to the American "national character" in his 1839 travelogue *A Diary in America* reflect a combination of these civilizational and the ethnic ideas: "Now, all this [American] energy and activity is of English origin; and were England expanded

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[29] See Joseph Conrad *Notes on Life and Letters*, Virginia Woolf "The Captain's Death Bed", and the nautical adventure novels of C. S. Forester and Patrick O'Brian.

[30] For more on these definitions of nationalism, see the introduction to this project.

into America, the same results would be produced. . . . since we have become so closely packed,

so crowded, that there is hardly room for the population, our activity has been proportionably

cramped and subdued" (12). In this passage, Marryat not only displays his belief in the

developmental (as well as the ethnic) foundations of national character, but also highlights two

key concepts – activity and space – that are crucial to the adventurous model of national

identity he constructs in his novels.

In Marryat's novels, the ship is not an indeterminate or ambiguous space, but an

intensely national scene of action. Although on board ship the hero might be physically

cramped, he is able to expand imaginatively his identity from an individual one into a national

one by participating in the nationalized activities of war and commerce in the greater space of

the globe, thereby finding his place in the working hierarchy of the British nation. But could this

transformative possibility of the ship extend to black sailors? Marryat considers that question in

one of his most famous novels, *Mr. Midshipman Easy*, published between the abolition act of

1834 and its final implementation in 1838. The novel features Mesty, an escaped slave who is

promoted from a ship's cook into a ship's corporal, and who also functions as an important

sidekick to the novel's hero, Jack.

It was not unusual for American or British ships at this time to be manned by multi-racial

crews.[31] This fact allowed Marryat to present his readers with an entirely believable scenario in

which the ship functions as "a mini-state" (Peck 5) that he can use to interrogate the place of

the freed African in British society. Although the Napoleonic Wars provide the context of the

book (which appears to be set sometime between 1807 and 1812), the central threat of the

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[31] Nelson's ship at the Battle of Trafalgar contained several African and West Indian sailors ("The Black Heroes of Trafalgar", HMS Victory website). For more on black sailors in the nineteenth century see Alan Gregor Cobley, "Black West Indian Seamen in the British Merchant Marine in the Mid Nineteenth Century."

book is not the French or Spanish navy, but the philosophical threat of human "equality" which Marryat translates into a kind of anarchy. Marryat uses debates over the concept of equality throughout the text to deal with specific issues of international relations, race, and citizenship and develop a coherent vision of British national identity for the imperial, post-emancipation period in which it was published. The treatment of Mesty in this novel highlights the complications inherent in the process of abolishing slavery in a society that is ideologically still committed to the kind of hierarchy embodied by the institution.

The philosophy of equality, as Marryat describes it in the text, is both dangerous and absurd. It is first expounded in the novel by Jack's father, Nicodemus Easy, a wealthy landowner who nevertheless believes that all men are equal and have an equal claim to the property around them. From the beginning, Marryat pokes fun at both the philosophy and Jack's practice of it. Jack himself admits that his philosophy leads to the conclusion that in a world where there is no private property "the strong will take advantage of the weak, which is very natural" (27). Marryat also shows that Jack's father's philosophy has not altered Jack's fundamental classism, as, for example, when Jack exclaims to two gamekeepers that "I could prove that you are a set of base slaves, who have just as much right to this property as your master or I have" (28). By the end of the novel, Mr. Easy's much-ridiculed philosophical practices have almost destroyed the value of his estate, blurred the distinction between criminals and servants, and incited the local laborers to riot. Finally, Jack is required to return home to restore social order and avert a revolutionary crisis.

Jack is able to repair the damage caused by his father's philosophy because of his experience in the royal navy, which educates him about the value of hierarchy and his duty to king and country. Jack initially goes to sea in order to pursue his father's philosophy of equality.

According him, "the waters at least are the property of all. No man claims his share of the sea—every one may there plough as he pleases, without being taken up for a trespasser. Even war makes no difference; every one may go on as he pleases, and if they meet, it is nothing but a neutral ground on which the parties contend" (38-39). What Jack discovers is that, while no man claims a share of the sea, nations are constantly struggling over it, and it is nations, rather than individuals, who meet and contend on its neutral ground. Jack's experiences at sea transform his sense of identity from an individual one into a nationalized one, with the ship standing in the place of the nation. As Captain Wilson, the captain of Jack's ship the *Harpy* states, "where discipline was required, it was impossible, when duty was carried on, that more than one could command; and that that one was the captain, who represented the king in person, who represented the country" (48). This hierarchical chain of command is portrayed by Marryat as a necessary component for success at sea. When Jack fails to apply this principle during his first independent command, the result is a miserable failure that is only remedied by violence, an event that begins Jack's conversion from a philosophy of equality to a philosophy of hierarchy.

Jack's later exploits, although they do not entirely fall under strict naval regulations, do show Jack's increasing sense of the benefits of the hierarchical structure of naval society in regulating life within the potentially-anarchic space of the ocean. Jack eventually translates this belief (as in Captain Wilson's analogy) to a larger belief in the necessity of hierarchy in national government in order for the nation to be successful. That belief enables him to return home and reestablish hierarchy on his estate and take his place within the British political system. Jack's ability to solve his domestic problems using the tactics he learned in the navy (such as the exaction of absolute obedience through force, if necessary) proves that in Marryat's novels "the order that prevails on a ship stands as a model of discipline for society as a whole" (Peck 53). By the end of the novel, Jack's experiences in the navy have transformed him into the picture of the

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traditional British gentleman who "invited all within twenty miles of home to balls and dinners; became a great favourite, kept a pack of hounds, rode with the foremost, received a deputation to stand for the county on the conservative interest, was elected without much expense ... and took his seat in parliament" (337).

As this brief description shows, the trajectory of the novel is essentially conservative, with a heavy emphasis on the young man counteracting the dangerous republicanism of his father's revolutionary generation and returning to traditional British values and beliefs. However, Marryat's conservative vision in this novel does take into account the changing nature of the British empire, including the reconfigurations of national identity that will be necessary as soon as the abolition of slavery becomes final. And so, into this story about hierarchy, legitimate command, and the limitations of equality, Marryat inserts Mesty, a freed slave who becomes one of the central figures of the book.

Jack's relationship with Mesty, the African cook onboard the *Harpy,* plays an important role in his personal transformation from a young individual into a mature member of the nation. In the novel, Jack's comical philosophy of equality is counterbalanced by Mesty's real experience of enslavement and racial oppression and consequent desire for freedom and equality. Mesty is an "Ashantee" who was kidnapped and sold into slavery in America, taken by his master to New York, and from there escaped to freedom on an English boat. A prince in his own country, Mesty is now a cook, finding that England granted him "his liberty, but not his equality; his colour had prevented the latter" (66).[32] As Parascandola notes, "Jack Easy's relationship with Mesty is essential to the novel's theme of equality; Mesty is Jack's teacher and trusted companion... Easy

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[32] Black cooks were stock characters in many sea adventure novels (as in *True Blue* by Kingston, for example). Paul Gilje notes of America that "by the 1840s and 1850s many of the blacks still in the merchant marine were riven from the forecastle and worked as ship's cooks" due to increasing color prejudice (26).

befriends Mesty and the Black helps Jack in several dangerous situations; in turn, Mesty learns Christian forgiveness from Jack." Yet, Parascandola goes on to point out, "their relationship is unequal. Though Mesty is proud, he knows his "place" and addresses everyone on the ship as "massa" (107).

Mesty's ambivalent relationship to the idea of equality reflects Marryat's ambivalence about the proper status for blacks in a free British empire. Marryat is clearly in favor of abolition in this text; Mesty's right to liberty is never in question. However, as in the case of Mr. Easy's philosophy, "equality" is a term that Marryat carefully weighs and considers and ultimately rejects. Marryat tells us that Mesty's desire for equality is a new one "for when he was in his own country before his captivity, he had no ideas of equality; no one has who is in power" (65). This comment has the effect of making Mesty's pleas for equality seem self-serving and limited. That satiric comment remains in the reader's mind and qualifies the rhetorical nobility of Mesty's later statement about the inequality of his current situation when he and Jack are stranded on a boat full of mutinous sailors:

> "Look, Massa Easy, you wish take a cruise, and I wish the same ting: now because mutiny you want to go back—but, by all de powers, you tink that I, a prince in my own country, feel wish to go back and boil kettle for de young gentlemen. No, Massa Easy, gib me mutiny—gib me anyting—but—once I was prince," (108)

Mesty's desire for equality, which is born out of adversity, is not mocked the way that Mr. Easy's philosophy is, but it is limited by his obvious favor of a class system. Marryat continues to focus on class in his portrayal of Mesty. His talent for strategy and his management of the unruly sailors (attributed to his royal African background) prove that he is far overqualified for the position of ship's cook. Jack strikes his only real blow for "equality" when he convinces Mr. Sawbridge, the first lieutenant, to promote Mesty from cook to ship's corporal as recognition for

his abilities. This promotion seems to place him on an even level with any common British seaman who "can raise his social position, but only to a limited extent" (107). Mesty's acceptance of a promotion is paired with his loss of interest in radical equality. Earlier in the text he claims that all men are equal, but "Now dat I ship's corporal and hab cane, I tink so no longer" (229). Marryat thus transforms an ex-slave's cry for equality into a working-man's desire to raise his class status and gain power over others. Through this negotiation of Mesty's status, Marryat recognizes the role that "legal equality" (Smith 10) plays in civic nationalism while drawing careful boundaries around it to distinguish it from the kind of radical equality found in the French Revolution and the formation of Haiti.

By reinscribing Mesty into the role and class of common seaman, Marryat seems to have diffused the danger posed by his demands for equality. However, Marryat does not allow Mesty to remain in the naval service. When Jack returns to England to claim his inheritance, he claims that Mesty "is of little use to the service." Consequently, since Jack "cannot bear the idea of parting with him," Mesty ought to be discharged and become Jack's personal servant (292). Mesty accepts the transition from ship's corporal to personal servant without question, and the reason that he is "of little use" to a service that was constantly short of manpower during that period (the issue of impressment is briefly raised at the end of the novel) is left for the reader to infer. Instead, the reader is informed that "Mesty's delight at leaving the service, and going home with his patron, was indescribable" (299). In this way, Marryat both avers that Mesty deserves more than slavery, but also places this African prince firmly in the category of professional servant. By stressing Mesty's personal devotion to Jack, Marryat invokes an element of the "happy darky" stereotype in order to allay any fears that Mesty's penchant for upward mobility would urge him to go farther than Jack, his patron, would allow. Mesty becomes part of the support structure that enables Jack to function as a British landowner, and

Mesty's aggressive masculinity, which so often saved Jack's life while they were in the navy, becomes subdued by his domestic role.

The gradual domestication of Mesty's character into that of an ordinary servant is a complicated process, in which Marryat negotiates contemporary scientific theories of race, stereotypes, and the preexisting make-up of the British Empire in order to create a space for Mesty and those like him. Marryat's description of Mesty focuses on two things, Mesty's facial features and his language. Mesty's language, which we are told is English filtered through Irish and Yankee influences, links him to the complicated ex-colonial and colonial situations of America and Ireland respectively. This mixture of speech is made clear at his introduction, when, upon being asked to give Jack some tea, he replies "Is it tay you mane, sir?—I guess, to make tay, in the first place I must ab water, and in the next must ab room in the galley to put the kettle on" (59. Marryat's combination of Irish dialect ("tay" for "tea") with Afro-English dialect ("ab" for "have") combines the problem of African integration with the more familiar problem of Irish integration into the British empire, made more pressing by the Act of Union in 1800. Conflations of Irish and African identity in Victorian England were not uncommon, and the stereotypes of each group were often applied to the other in a way that made conditions difficult for both.[33] By giving Mesty marks of Irishness, Marryat familiarizes the problem of his place in English hierarchy, but does not solve it.

Mesty's looks are as ambiguous as his national affiliation. According to Marryat, Mesty had "a face by no means common with his race. His head was long and narrow, high cheek-bones, from whence his face descended down to almost a point at the chin; his nose was very small, but it was straight and almost Roman; his mouth also was unusually small; and his lips

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[33] For a close study of Irish stereotyping in England in this period, see Lebow *White Britain and Black Ireland*.

thin for an African; his teeth very white, and filed to sharp points" (53). This description sets

Mesty apart from "his race" and from normative (white) standards of appearance in a way that

provokes the reader to pass judgment on him. Both Parascandola and Michael Philip identify

Mesty as "demonic," a designation upheld by his name (Mephistopheles), his pointed, savage

features, and his association with the heathen splendors of Africa. However, although Marryat

makes a point of describing Mesty's filed teeth and twice mentions his "savage look" (278, 294),

I would argue that Marryat, through the text, suggests that we are not supposed to take Mesty's

color or his facial features as a statement of his character and worth. In fact, in the case of the

character of Mr. Joliffe, he explicitly denies a relationship between looks and character. Early in

the book Marryat explains the immediate dislike Jack felt for Mr. Joliffe, the master's mate on

board his ship, upon seeing his one-eyed, pockmarked face, but then explains that "here Jack fell

into the common error of judging by appearances, as will be proved hereafter" when he

discovers Mr. Joliffe's many excellent qualities and they become friends (52). Marryat furthers

his point when he describes how the first lieutenant of the ship agrees to promote Mesty to the

position of ship's corporal on the principle that "it was an office of trust, and provided that he

could find a man fit for it, he was very indifferent about his colour" (127). All of these points

taken together suggest that Marryat rejected the scientific theories of the time that posited a

direct correlation between physical appearance and moral and mental character. According to

his representation, a British sailor is one who can assimilate into the position, rather than one

who looks the part.

Marryat's most sustained critique of the idea that features display the worth of one's

character appears at the end of the book, when he describes the literal collapse of the elder Mr.

Easy's phrenological fantasies. Phrenology,[34] had reached the status of popular science by the

time of Marryat's novel, largely through the publication of George Combe's work *The*

Constitution of Man (1828). The science was adopted by Jack's father as a means to promote the

moral equality of man via physical changes using a machine of his own construction that can

"flatten" or "raise" certain areas of the brain. The primary example is a murderer in whom Mr.

Easy claims to have "flattened down murder to nothing" (296). These beliefs are equally

ridiculed by Jack and Marryat-as-narrator who describes signs of "incipient insanity" in Mr.

Easy's behavior (295). The project comes to a halt when Mr. Easy effectively hangs himself in his

own machine when the structure built to support the chair underneath it collapses.

Marryat's rejections of phrenology and the material nature of moral character suggest

that whatever it is that defines a virtuous Briton, it is not physical characteristics. Instead,

Marryat seems to agree with the historian Henry Hallam that "the character of the bravest and

most virtuous among nations has not depended on the accidents of race or climate, but has

been gradually wrought by the plastic influence of civil rights, transmitted as a prescriptive

inheritance through a long course of generations" (qtd. in Mandler 37). The stress on

inheritance and transmission in this quote reflects the process of the novel, where the navy, in

the paternal guise of Captain Wilson, functions as the transmitter of proper notions of civil rights

and inherited social structure that Jack's father attempts to deny to him. It also suggests that

non-Britons, like Mesty, may eventually be able to adopt the characteristics of British civilization

and identity to some extent if they are properly educated.

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[34] "The theory that the mental powers or characteristics of an individual consist of separate faculties, each of which has its location in an organ found in a definite region of the surface of the brain, the size or development of which is commensurate with the development of the particular faculty" (*Oxford English Dictionary*).

Mesty's transition from sailor to servant and his consequent removal from the space of the ship to English land reflects some anxiety on Marryat's part about the impact a free, black, British seaman might have on the naval service. One of Marryat's primary goals in the novel is to imagine the sea as a locus of British national identity and naval service as the means of identity consolidation. Through his story, he transforms the ship from a private, individual space dominated by the captain into a public, nationalized space dominated by a chain of command that extends back to the government ashore. It is this publicized national space that allows Jack to become an ideal citizen. In a sense, the navy acts the same way for Mesty as it does for Jack because he too can participate in the actions that enable national virtues like duty, patriotism, courage, etc. The sea is constructed as a transitional space where the black body can become a British body. However, the fact that Mesty cannot remain at sea but must disappear into the domestic heart of the British nation, suggests that Marryat fears that a continual presence of blackness on board the ship will threaten its viability as a (white) British national space. In order for Mesty to be safely domesticated as a citizen, he must be literally domesticated on shore within the stronghold of traditional British values, not at large in the laboring population or in the strategic, yet tenuous, space of the sea.[35]

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[35] Marryat's overarching theme of the domestication and Anglicization of certain foreign subjects is further reflected in the case of Jack's love life. While in the Mediterranean, Jack meets and falls in love with Agnes, the daughter of Don Rebiera, a Catholic Sicilian nobleman. The domestic relationship between the families that is cemented by Agnes and Jack's marriage may perhaps be a reflection of Marryat's imaginative framework of the Napoleonic Wars and Britain and Sicily's shared alliance against France. The marital alliance, in which Agnes "conformed at once to the religion of her husband, proved an excellent and affectionate wife, and eventually the mother of four children, three boys and a girl" (337), mirrors the kind of British-led Europe that Marryat would have likely seen as the perfect antidote to the excesses of the Napoleonic period. The simplicity of Agnes's assimilation serves to highlight the complexities of Mesty's situation. As a man, and as a non-European, becoming a domestic servant is as close as he can come to being absorbed and naturalized into Jack's household while still maintaining the male privilege of actively working for a living.

Mr. Midshipman Easy presents a picture of the ideal assimilation of freed slaves into the hierarchy of British society, with their upward mobility safely limited by their own desires and goals. By causing Mesty's loyalties to be personal, rather than national, Marryat reduces him to a subordinate. Mesty's progression – from slave, to sailor, to servant – tells us a great deal about Marryat's thoughts on the newly-emancipated Afro-British population. He clearly questions their ability to actively and accurately perform British national identity, especially in the precarious space of the ocean. Although Mesty is allowed access to a British identity, it is a limited and domestic, rather than adventurous one, and he is permitted it only within the safely circumscribed limits of the English isle. This, of course, was a romanticized solution to a very real and pressing issue, a fact that Marryat seems to recognize in his later novel, *Percival Keene*. In that novel, published in 1842, Marryat approaches the issue of multi-ethnic national identity in a more complex and more troubling way. He addresses the problem of freed slaves who would not accept a position of servitude using the character of James Vincent, a black American pirate captain who holds the hero Percival captive, as his example. Through the figure of the black pirate, Marryat expresses his anxieties about black masculinity uncontrolled by the hierarchy imposed by slavery.

The word "pirate" may bring to mind famous buccaneers like Henry Morgan or Blackbeard who sailed the Atlantic in the eighteenth century, the "golden age" of piracy. However, by the nineteenth century Atlantic piracy's golden age was over and the word "pirate" was receiving a new definition that was founded upon the changing discourses of race and abolition in Britain and America. In 1807 the British parliament passed "An Act for the Abolition of the Slave Trade" which prohibited any British ship or captain from engaging in the trade. An additional Act was passed by parliament in 1824 that was meant to give teeth to the previous

one. This act specified that offences against the 1807 law could be tried under the existing

British laws against piracy and punished by death (Thomas 597). Britain's choice to redefine

slave trading as a form of piracy followed America's example, where slave trading was outlawed

in 1808 and defined as piracy in 1820.[36]

The revolts aboard the slave ships *Amistad* (1839) and *Creole* (1841) brought the

instability of these new definitions of piracy into focus. Though slave trading was piracy, Maggie

Montesinos Sale notes in her book *The Slumbering Volcano: American Slave Ship Revolts and the

Production of Rebellious Masculinity* that the rebellious slaves from the *Amistad* and the *Creole*

were also referred to by some newspapers as "pirates" as well as "murderers" (120).

Additionally, the *New Orleans Courier* refers to the abolitionists on both sides of the Atlantic

who became involved in the incident as "piratical" (qtd. in "Domestic Slave Trade"). Piracy is

defined by the OED as "The action of committing robbery, kidnap, or violence at sea or from the

sea without lawful authority." By defining slave trading as piracy, both Britain and the United

States asserted that native Africans had the right to remain where they were, although whether

they were fundamentally persons (the object of kidnap) or property (the object of robbery)

could remain a gray area. The same gray area applied when the *New Orleans Courier* accused

abolitionists of being "piratical" in their goal of emancipating the slaves. However, labeling an

erstwhile slave as a pirate held much more disturbing implications than applying that label to an

abolitionist. Piracy is, fundamentally, an action, something that requires commitment.

Committed action is specifically limited to humans (and, in the period we're discussing,

specifically men). An ex-slave who is a pirate is clearly a person rather than property, and must

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[36] *The Public Statutes at Large of the United States of America from the Organization of the Government in 1789 to March 3, 1845,* Vol. III. Richard Peters, Editor. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1856. 601.

be dealt with as such.[37] The problem that these revolts posed to American slaveholders, the

British government, and the public at large, is that the rebels acted as people who had been

kidnapped, rather than property that was either being legally traded or illegally stolen. The

additional problem was that the *Creole* slaves, unlike those on the *Amistad*, were not

immediately from Africa and did not have a nation there to which they could be returned.

Instead they were American, which forced the government and the public to consider whether

these people were slaves, freemen, citizens, pirates, or some combination thereof.

These instabilities surrounding the new, racialized definition of piracy are apparent in

Percival Keene through the figure of Vincent, a rebellious slave-turned-pirate who is the captain

of an all-black crew. While it is impossible to know for certain if Marryat was aware of the

Amistad and *Creole* revolts, both of them were reported on in numerous British newspapers,

including the *Times*, and the case of the *Creole* developed into a highly publicized bone of

contention between the British and American governments since the rebels took refuge in the

British territory of the Bahamas. It is also possible that the label of piracy that was strategically

given to and withheld from the rebellious slaves in the press[38] may have influenced his thoughts

on the subject of Vincent.

Vincent is an African American man who rebelled against his master and turned to

piracy. As a pirate, Vincent rejects all national affiliations and reduces the world to a racial

binary. It is his practice to murder all of the white people he captures, either by throwing them

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[37] This kind of semantic tangle is reflected in the *Amistad* case when the Spanish minister to the United States wrote a letter demanding the return of the ship and the slaves. As Sale notes, "This reference suggests simultaneously and paradoxically that the *Amistad* was driven into port by pirates and that the "blacks" should be returned to the Spaniards as property stolen by pirates. In this schema, the "blacks" are both thieves and stolen property" (98-99).
[38] See Sale 120.

overboard, or, if they are slave traders, roasting them alive. Percival, Marryat's young hero, is

the only white person he has ever spared. Vincent's actions are presented to the reader as

atrocious. However, they are not as lawless as they first appear. The slave traders he killed were,

according to the law, pirates who could be put to death for their crime. By punishing them,

Vincent is playing an active role in the enforcement of British (and American) law, not breaking

it. In fact, as he explains to Percival, his entire life has been a search for the legal equality due to

him as a free man in the putatively civic nation of America. Vincent's extreme adherence to the

anti-piracy law, and his single-minded pursuit of his rights as a man make him a more multi-

dimensional character than he first appears.

Several parallels can be drawn between the character of Vincent and the

leaders of the *Amistad* and *Creole* slave revolts. In her book, Maggie Montesinos Sale describes

how the leaders of each revolt – Joseph Cinqué and Madison Washington - were set apart from

other slaves as exceptional leaders in a way that diffused the more general threat of slave

rebellion. Marryat also makes his pirate exceptional. Vincent is a freeborn northern man who is

forced into slavery, rather than a man who was born into it. Marryat describes him as a man

who picked up education easily as a youth, although his brothers "could not learn" despite being

given (we presume) the same opportunity by their father (130). Vincent's exceptional education,

and his freeborn status (like that of Joseph Cinqué), becomes his excuse for violent

repercussions against those who enslaved him.

To Percival, Vincent seems to have the characteristics of heroic manliness that Marryat

prizes, such as courage, initiative, and a sense of justice that causes him to resent his unjust

enslavement. After hearing his story, Percival comments that "I could not help feeling my blood

boil, and a conviction that, had I been so treated, I should probably have been equally under the

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influence of revenge. It is the world, and the treatment we receive from it, which makes us

chiefly what we are" (134). Vincent's ongoing quest for revenge on white people, then, is

partially validated by Percival's argument that nurture, not nature, is responsible for his actions.

However, Marryat counteracts this argument almost immediately by portraying Vincent as a

mass of negative black stereotypes. Early in their association, Percival learns that Vincent is a

man prone to savage rages, a trait that suggests underlying irrationality in his character at odds

with the ideals of Western 'civilization.' Marryat further complicates his portrayal of Vincent by

repeatedly describing how his irrational rages transform him from a man into "a tiger" (130,

138, 142), a tactic that echoes other animalistic or savage stereotypes of black men.[39] When

describing Vincent's escape from slavery, Marryat dwells on the savagery of Vincent's revenge:

> "I set fire to the plantation house—struck the scoundrel who had made me a slave
> senseless as he attempted to escape, and threw his body into the flames; I then made
> the door fast, and fled. I was met by one of the overseers, who was armed, and who
> would have stopped me: I beat his brains out with his own musket, and then gained the
> woods. You see that I am powerful; you hardly know how much so." (131-132)

The way Marryat fixates on Vincent's physical power (he earlier describes him as "gigantic in

stature, and limbed like the Farnesian Hercules" (121)) almost erases the sense of an educated

and unjustly-oppressed man that Marryat is at first careful to give us. This description is

distinctly at odds with the one scene containing Vincent that is illustrated, which shows him as

nearly helpless (see illustration on next page).

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[39] David Brion Davis writes that "planters tended to view Africans as strange and bestial savages" (133)
and that during the Haitian revolution French and English writers described blacks as "savage, tigerlike
men or ferocious beasts gorged with blood" (160).

THREE LARGE BLOODHOUNDS SPRANG AT HIM.
—Marryat, Vol XIII., p. 265.
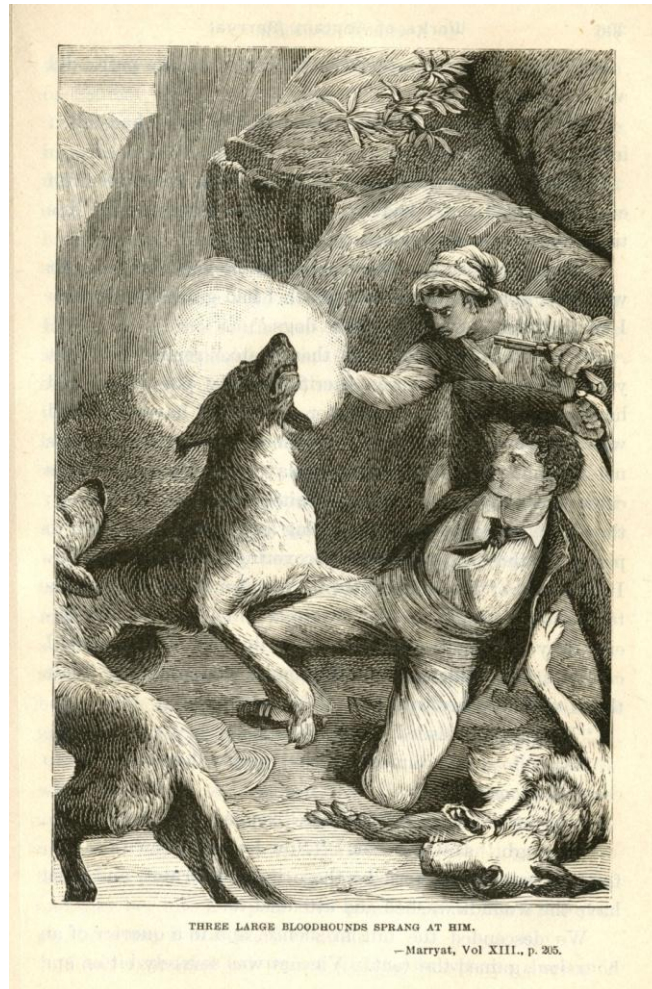
> 2. Illustration of Percival defending Vincent from bloodhounds. As far as I know, there are no illustrations of Vincent that show him in a commanding pose.

Marryat also constructs an essential link between piracy and blackness. Vincent says to

Percival:

> "Who should be pirates if the blacks are not?" … "Have they not the curse of Cain? Are they not branded? Ought not their hands to be against every one but their own race? … Black is the colour for pirates. Even the white pirates feel the truth of this, or why do they hoist the *black* flag?" (141)

Whites, we are left to assume, lack that hereditary curse and are not naturally piratical, though

some of them may choose to become pirates for commercial reasons. This Manichean approach

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to racial difference de-politicizes Vincent's choices and reduces them to nature, a nature not based on outer blackness (Percival's skin is "black" at this point) but on an inner "curse" or "brand." The reader's final view, through Percival's eyes, of Vincent and his crew as they fought off a British attack confirms the stereotypes Marryat has implied throughout this section:

> The English schooner had borne down upon us, and the action now commenced at pistol-shot. Never shall I forget what took place for nearly three-quarters of an hour; the negroes, most of them intoxicated, fought with rage and fury indescribable—their shouts—their screams—their cursing and blasphemy, mingled with the loud report of the guns, the crashing of the spars and bulwarks, the occasional cry of the wounded, and the powerful voice of Vincent. […] Every two seconds, I heard the men come aft, toss off the can of liquor, and throw it on the deck, then they went to resume their labour at their guns. (147)

that is the last image of blackness represented in the novel.

By linking blackness to piracy and anarchy, Marryat suggests that black men are unfit for full European or American citizenship. His black pirates represent the chaos that erupts once white national affiliations go unrecognized and white national hierarchies become subverted by men who are naturally incapable of national virtue. Vincent's aggressive action, Marryat seems to argue, leads to race warfare that has the potential to destroy indiscriminately the "civilized" nations of the world. The self-destructive nature of Vincent's life as represented by Marryat serves to naturalize a modified version of ethnic national identity rather than undermine it. Percival's failed attempts to persuade Vincent to follow a more civil – and civic – path in life only highlight the intrinsic differences between the well-born British youth and the physically-intimidating "black" captain. The solution to this race warfare is not the rehabilitation of Vincent, but his extermination by the British navy, with its rigid hierarchy of class and race. The violent end to Vincent's life and project in *Percival Keene* disrupts the happy conclusions of *Mr. Midshipman Easy* and signals tensions of the period and the resistance of conservative British

national identity to incorporating assertive black masculinity. In fact, the final description of

Vincent and his crew, which I quoted above, both homogenizes and dehumanizes the ship's

crew in a way that suggests that not only national identity is at stake here, but also claims to

humanity: a disturbing trend that grew stronger as the century wore on.

Percival's narrative arc, like that of most of Marryat's young heroes, is a progression

from individuality and selfishness to nationality and patriotism. Although he literally changes his

skin during the piracy episode by having the crew dye him black, his attempt to "pass," which is

described by Marryat in the terms of minstrelsy, is comic rather than serious. Though Percival

finds himself drawn to Vincent's plight as an ex-slave, he readily betrays him to the British in the

end, and the entire episode ultimately highlights the invulnerability of his Britishness instead of

destabilizing it. The ambiguity of a captured sailor's national identity during the Napoleonic

Period (when the book takes place) that Gilje pinpoints in *Liberty on the Waterfront* is thus

erased from this fictional story through a mimicry of transgression.

However, such narrative attempts to create certainty out of the instability of life at sea

were not uniformly effective. Although adventure authors like Marryat attempted to construct

what geographer Richard Phillips has called a "concrete . . . cultural space" out of the ocean "in

a manner that was imaginatively accessible and appealing to the people," their fictions soon

raced beyond their control. As Phillips points out, "once in cultural circulation… maps may have

unintended consequences" including a potential to resist as well as construct imperial ideology

(12-13). Marryat's novels, though they helped introduce a more ethnic interpretation of British

identity, also participated largely in the systems that Anthony Smith noted as key for the

development of a civic nation: "the public system of education and the mass media" (11).

Marryat's works, which were best-sellers at the time of their publication, had reached canonical

status in Britain by the end of the century. The public popularity of his format, and the

transatlantic distribution of his novels, did have "unintended consequences" of the kind that

Phillips describes, most especially in their influence on works by African American and Afro-

Caribbean authors.

Frederick Douglass

While Marryat demonizes his rebellious African-American sailor, Frederick Douglass's

novella *The Heroic Slave* (1853) provides a different perspective on the slave revolt aboard the

Creole and the discourse of piracy that surrounded it. In his fictional retelling of the *Creole*

revolt, Douglass negotiates the distinctions between "pirate" and "patriot" in a way that

dismisses Marryat's specters of race warfare by invoking both American and British national law

and national identity. Although his work is set firmly within the American abolitionist discourse

of its time, Douglass takes advantage of the oceanic and international dimensions of the *Creole*

revolt to invoke the rhetoric of the sea adventure, especially the sea as a space where the hero

transforms from an individual into a national being. In his text, Douglass combines American

abolitionist rhetoric with the heroic rhetoric of Marryat's novels in order to construct Madison

Washington as both a free individual and as a man who can lay claim to the attributes that,

according to popular fiction, make a man into a citizen. At the same time, Douglass also

represents the British colonies (Bahama) as unequivocally British national spaces within which

an independent black man can disappear into the body politic, a representation that Marryat

resisted in his novels.

Douglass's choice to make Madison Washington's rebellion the subject of a work of

fiction was a matter of necessity, as William L. Andrews discusses in his article "The Novelization

of Voice in Early African American Narrative." Little was known about Washington's life either

before or after the rebellion on the *Creole*. Rather than abandon his story because of its lack of verifiable fact (an essential part of mainstream abolitionist discourse of the time), Douglass chose to reintroduce him into the discourse through the medium of historical fiction. By doing this, and drawing attention to the lack of records that made it a necessity, Douglass made the point that: "To historicize, to *realize* this son of Virginia in history, it is necessary to fictionalize him. The entire narrative enterprise of *The Heroic Slave* rests on the reader's accepting the paradoxical necessity of the fictiveness of Washington's history" (Andrews 28). By choosing to write a fiction, Douglass was able to bring Washington's story to life, and also to give that life a shape and direction that could be tailored to Douglass's concerns in a way that unwieldy fact could not.

As Andrews notes, Douglass's fictionalization of Washington's life reads "in some ways like a historical novel pared down to the basic plot of the slave narrative, the quest for freedom" (27). The story is written in four parts. Part I introduces Madison Washington through the eyes of Mr. Listwell, a white man visiting Virginia who is converted to abolitionism after hearing Washington soliloquize about his enslavement. This section establishes Washington's affiliation with American democratic ideals through his patriotic name, and through exclamations like "*Liberty* I will have, or die in the attempt to gain it" (178). Part II takes place five years later at Mr. Listwell's home in Ohio, where Washington, now a runaway, coincidentally seeks shelter. Listwell aids his flight to Canada, but Washington vows to someday return to Virginia to free his wife. Part III returns to Virginia where, a year later, Listwell sees Washington chained in a coffle of slaves bound for New Orleans. Listwell speaks to him and discovers that Washington returned south for his wife. She was killed during their escape attempt and Washington was recaptured. Unable to buy him, Listwell slips Washington some files before the slaves board the ship so that he has a hope of escape. The last part takes place in a coffee-house in Richmond some time

later, and consists of a conversation between two sailors, one of whom was on board the *Creole* when Washington led the rebellion. That sailor describes, for the other's benefit, the exact series of events that led to the supposedly-impossible revolt.

The first three parts of the story establish Washington's character as that of an exceptional man, steeped in the revolutionary rhetoric of freedom that is implied by his names. Douglass's project is clearly to highlight the discrepancy between the ideals of the American Revolution and the reality of slavery. Through Washington's speeches, Douglass emphasizes the tension between the rights expressed in the Declaration of Independence and the laws enacted in the Constitution, and calls for a rehabilitation of America's legal system (Wilson 461).[40] Douglass takes advantage of the international dimensions of Washington's story to drive this point home. As Wilson notes in his article "On Native Ground: Transnationalism, Frederick Douglass, and "The Heroic Slave," Douglass "inverts the assumed symbols of freedom and liberty" (457) when he has Washington write to Listwell from Canada "I nestle in the mane of the British lion, protected by his mighty paw from the talons and the beak of the American eagle" (205). The conclusion of the story, when Washington finds freedom and peace in the Bahamas, further stresses this inversion of national characteristics and serves to "underscore Britain as an example for the United States to follow" (Wilson 453). With the United States out of alignment with its own ideals, Douglass suggests, a true patriot like Washington can only find satisfaction in exile.

Douglass's choice to present Washington's story as one of national and international struggle, rather than personal struggle, reflects the tropes of adventure more than it does the

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[40] Some scholars find Douglass's reliance on America's national rhetoric of liberty problematic. See Walter "Trappings of Nationalism in Frederick Douglass's *The Heroic Slave*."

tropes of the slave narrative. This presentation is complemented by the actual news coverage of

the *Creole* event, which transformed the slave mutiny into an international incident between the

United States and Britain (Sale 129-133). The *New Orleans Advertiser* labeled the liberation of

the slaves at Nassau "the cap-sheaf of British aggression upon American rights" and threatened

war as the probable consequence of such interference (qtd. in *Liberator* 12/31/41). The

transference of responsibility from the slaves to the British reflects the reluctance of the

Americans, particularly in the South, to give agency to enslaved people (Sale). The event was

necessarily reported as mutiny and the nineteen men responsible labeled as murderers, labels

that categorized them as people rather than property. However, that categorization was

mitigated as much as possible by the various descriptions of the events. The "Protest," a

notarized narration of the events by the white men who survived the revolt that was initially

published in the New Orleans Advertiser, went to great lengths to distinguish the mutineers from

the slaves who took no part in the rebellion. A paragraph explained how the mutineers kept

themselves separate from the other slaves, "drank liquor in the cabin, and invited the whites to

join them, but not the other negroes" who were "kept under as much as the whites were"

(*Liberator*). The rest of the slaves are given no part in the action and no expressed desire besides

a desire to return to New Orleans, which the British deny to them (*Liberator*). Britain's eventual

release of the nineteen without trial facilitated their disappearance from the scene of what had

become an international political incident.

Douglass's use of the British/American tensions ignited by the *Creole* affair, however,

moves a step beyond newspaper bluster. His fictional retelling of the story manipulates the

national discourse surrounding the event in order to craft a narrative about personal and

national identity. Sale notes in her book that the international aspect of the rebellion meant that

"the logic of nation-states denied to the *Creole* rebels their own declaration of war" and denied

them "the authorization of any nation" (135). Once their acts appeared on an international

stage, those acts took on national implications, but their "nation" was co-opted by American

slaveholders who set themselves up in opposition to Britain. The rebels were no longer

perceived as ones declaring war on the slaveholders. Instead it was Britain waging war on

American property. While the involvement of Britain provided the slaves with their freedom, it

also removed them from the nation that they might have belonged to and gave the slaveholders

an excuse to speak as though from a unified America.

Douglass reverses this trend by insisting throughout his text that Madison Washington is

an American, with American hopes, ideals, and dreams. His flight to Nassau, like his flight to

Canada, is exile more than escape. Nevertheless, Douglass adopts aspects of the British sea

adventure genre to tell Washington's story. Much as Britain provided a physical safe space for

fugitive slaves like Washington and Douglass, British literature provided a narrative model that

gave Douglass a measure of liberation from tightly-controlled American abolitionist genres. By

using elements from the sea adventure, Douglass is able to combine Washington's spiritual

affinity for an American identity with a concrete performance of that identity.

Ivy Wilson notes how Douglass's appeal to a heroic type of masculine identity differs

from other re-tellers of Washington's story: "It is revealing that, while the *Liberator*, Brown, and

Child all sensationalized the plot of a reunited family – so fundamental to the ends of

sentimental discourse and exploited by abolitionists and (primarily) white Christian feminists –

Douglass essentially reduces the presence of the wife to accentuate Washington's heroism."

(460) Like the true adventure hero, Washington's love life is a secondary concern that applies

motive force to his actions and then disappears. The anti-romantic nature of Douglass's plot,

particularly in the final segment of the story, allows Douglass to align the story and his character

more closely to the issues of national identity and belonging than a sentimental plot, with an end goal of happiness in a domestic space, would have allowed him to do. Rather than allowing Washington to be foreclosed into a domestic existence (the existence granted by Marryat to Mesty), Douglass pushes him into British national space as a free agent, perhaps suggesting that he will test the theoretical liberty granted by British abolition.

Douglass's characterization of Washington also resembles that of a heroic character. His depiction follows some of the newspaper discourse of the case, by arguing Washington's exceptionalism, in the voice of Grant: "Mr. Williams speaks of 'ignorant negroes,' and, as a general rule, they are ignorant; but had he been on board the *Creole* as I was, he would have seen cause to admit that there are exceptions to this general rule" (232). Another way in which Washington is exceptional is in his size and strength. Douglass is clearly aware of the stereotypical potential of this description. The "Protest" published by the *New Orleans Advertiser* portrayed Washington as a "very large and strong" man who fought off two white men at once and threatened to kill any slave who refused to aid the rebels (*Liberator*). However, this description, which is reminiscent of Marryat's description of Vincent and his rages, is reworked by Douglass into a representation of positive masculinity: "His whole appearance betokened Herculean strength; yet there was nothing savage or forbidding in his aspect" (179). As Wilson points out in his article, "the size and strength of the protagonist are detailed but rarely exposed in action, as though to figure a violent black masculinity only to contain it by the man's higher, cerebral nature" (465). In Washington, Douglass constructs an assertive, heroic masculine hero, the antithesis of Uncle Tom, but one who incorporates the rationality and restraint of the Enlightenment gentleman at sea, much like Marryat's naval officers.

Washington's heroic nature comes out the strongest in the final section of the story. This

section takes place after the rebellion and relates, in the words of one of the sailors, the events

that happened on board the *Creole*. This section of the story is where Douglass most clearly

embraces the international genre of the sea adventure. The sailor, Grant, when ridiculed by his

companion for allowing the slaves to take over the ship, focuses on the sea as a medium that

acts differently from the land in such cases. Williams, the companion, asserts that "a nigger's a

nigger, on sea or land; and is a coward" (228). However, Grant argues that such is not the case:

> "It is quite easy to talk of flogging niggers here on land, where you have the sympathy of
> the community, and the whole physical force of the government, State and national, at
> your command; and where, if a negro shall lift his hand against a white man, the whole
> community, with one accord, are ready to unite in shooting him down. I say, in such
> circumstances, it's easy to talk of flogging negroes and of negro cowardice; but, sir, I
> deny that the negro is, naturally, a coward, or that your theory of managing slaves will
> stand the test of *salt* water" (227-228).

In this passage, Douglass, through Grant, is arguing for the potential freedom to be found in the

nebulous space of the ocean. The law of countries, though it may be carried out to sea by the

ships of various nations, does not have the same hold that it has on land. Grant's contention that

"It is one thing to manage a company of slaves on a Virginia plantation, and quite another thing

to quell an insurrection on the lonely billows of the Atlantic, where every breeze speaks of

courage and liberty" reflects the liberating potential that Douglass saw in the sea (228). Clearly,

the sea and the actions that can take place upon it, gave him much more scope for the

construction of a heroic black masculine identity than did the land-based rhetoric of American

sentimental novels.

Douglass's characterization of the sea as a space where the individual can seize

opportunity and transform himself into a heroic individual who acts on behalf of his nation

echoes the rhetoric of British adventure novels like those by Frederick Marryat. Douglass may

have been aware of this connection; according to Wilson, "...it is notable that many of his

references to Washington were made while he toured the United Kingdom (e.g., in Cork and Paisley, Ireland; Edinburgh, Scotland; and London, England)" (454). Although Washington's national affiliation is unshakably American, Douglass suggests that Washington (and the reader) must look to Britain for practical models of integrated national belonging rather than simply appealing to the rhetoric of the Declaration of Independence. As Paul Giles writes, "nationalism for Douglass thus came to involve not so much a positive or universal ideal but, rather, a set of fluctuating contrary terms" (*Virtual Americas* 23). It is not that Douglass is advocating the British model of imperial national identity for Americans. Rather, he employs that available heroic stereotype in order to question American foundations of national identity and push for a redefinition of those foundations that would allow men like Washington access to the body politic.

Douglass uses one specific incident in his story to connect Washington to the model of British nautical heroism. Shortly after the rebellion, Douglass writes that the *Creole* runs into a storm that threatens the safety of the ship and the men on her. Washington's behavior during the storm reflects the "chivalric virtues" of the nautical hero (Fulford), and is used as proof of his right to freedom and a heroic national identity.

> "During all the storm, Madison stood firmly at the helm,--his keen eye fixed upon the binnacle. He was not indifferent to the dreadful hurricane; yet he met it with the equanimity of an old sailor. He was silent but not agitated. The first words he uttered after the storm had slightly subsided, were characteristic of the man. 'Mr. mate, you cannot write the bloody laws of slavery on those restless billows. The ocean, if not the land, is free.' I confess, gentlemen, I felt myself in the presence of a superior man; one who, had he been a white man, I would have followed willingly and gladly in any honorable enterprise. Our difference of color was the only ground for difference of action. It was not that his principles were wrong in the abstract; for they are the principles of 1776. But I could not bring myself to recognize their application to one whom I deemed my inferior." (237-238)

In this passage, Douglass takes the heroic, adventurous construction of masculinity, and the

rhetoric that conflated natural and national happenings and uses them to argue for

Washington's right to freedom, and his right to the principles of the American Revolution. Like

Marryat, Douglass uses the ship as a microcosm of the nation, only his ship represents America

as it goes through a transformation from slave-holding to free. By choosing to reenact a

perfected version of American identity in the ambiguous space of the ocean, Washington

demonstrates his right to belong to that nation. However, in Washington's case, the laws of the

land make it impossible for him to follow through on his right to belong.

Washington's situation is not unlike that of Marryat's pirate, Vincent, who also deserved

more from his country than he received and was forced to rebel against that injustice. But, unlike

Vincent, Washington doesn't take advantage of the sea's national nebulousness to turn pirate.

Instead of inciting chaos on the ocean, as Vincent did, Washington enacts the classic American

ideals of freedom. In Douglass's hands, the Atlantic becomes more American than America itself.

However, Douglass makes it clear that the ocean is merely a symbolic national space. As Ivy

Wilson writes in his article on the story, "the ocean turns out to be no more free than Virginian

soil, since the freedom of Washington and his company is not secured until they are within the

pale of the British empire" (464). In order to find a permanent national home, Washington must

again exile himself to British territory, in this case the Bahamas. Recognizing the ultimate

importance of landedness, Douglass does not exploit the ocean's free aspects, but rather its legal

conditions that lead him to a secure landing place. The deliberate choice on Douglass's part to

end the story, not with Washington's individual declaration of freedom, but the authoritative

collective voice of Nassau's black soldiers who "did not recognize *persons* as *property*," maintains

the legal discourse of rights that he has stressed throughout the novella (238). Douglass makes it

clear that his goal, and Washington's, is legal emancipation on a national scale, not individual

freedom attained through permanent removal from the national sphere. And, although Douglass

does not characterize it in this way, his goal is distinctly anti-piratical.

Although Douglass never mentions the word 'pirate' in his novella, the debates over the line between rebellion and piracy that surrounded the story of the *Creole* revolt clearly influenced his work. In *Percival Keene*, Vincent's acts of rebellious violence, which are originally geared towards attaining his freedom, naturally lead him from rebellion to an ongoing life of piracy against all European countries. As an *African*-American, Marryat suggests, Vincent has no strong national bond with America or any other recognized nation, and is therefore a natural candidate for piracy. Douglass's challenge is to represent Washington as both a rebel against slaveholders *and* an American citizen, and to suggest that rejecting the authority of one group does not automatically mean rejecting the authority of the nation. According to Douglass, Washington's actions are neither mutiny nor piracy, both of which imply a rebellion against legitimate authority. Instead, he is cast as a revolutionary hero who is defending national ideals against subversive elements. In fact, if those men who were operating the *Creole* were engaging in the slave trade (a technical point that was debated exhaustively by diplomats and the popular press), then Washington was taking the place of the heroic naval authority fighting against piracy, a role reinforced by his admirable calm in the face of the later storm.

By casting Washington in these recognizable roles of revolutionary hero and naval commander, Douglass appeals to the existing stereotypes of popular imagination in order to generate sympathy for his cause. Britain remains for Washington what it was for Douglass, a useful place of exile, not an alternative national identity or a path back to Africa. Like Marryat, Douglass uses the sea as a national medium, a place of "liberty" (228) that is an extension of American ideals, where a citizen can learn to actively perform his national identity rather than lose it the way slaves undergoing the Middle Passage were supposed to do. While in Marryat's

novel the hero's experiences at sea are meant to show how a black identity is naturally incompatible with a national identity, in Douglass's story the sea breaks that assumption so that Washington can be both black *and* an American and citizen/patriot in the tradition of the founding fathers. Like Marryat, Douglass uses the ever-threatening potential of piracy to heighten the level of national commitment shown by the choices of Washington. However, there is another kind of potential in piracy that neither Marryat nor Douglass explores, a potential that can be described as trans-national, or a-national rather than anti-national. In order to explore this second option, I will turn to the Caribbean author Maxwell Philip, and his novel *Emmanuel Appadocca, or, the Blighted Life, a Tale of the Boucaneers*.

Maxwell Philip

In *Emmanuel Appadocca* (1854), Maxwell Philip addresses the question of the racial foundations of national identity in the Victorian world by employing a pirate as the hero of his novel, and by shifting the terms of the debate from the legality of piracy to the legality of national laws governing the ocean and overseas colonies. Maxwell Philip, a well-educated mixed-race Trinidadian, had just completed his study of the law in London when he published his first and only novel, *Emmanuel Appadocca, or, the Blighted Life, a Tale of the Boucaneers*. The novel, published in 1854, is a combination of sensational melodrama, nautical adventure, and sophisticated legal and philosophical discourse that has the potential to confuse readers and critics alike who try to place it into any one generic context. However, the generic confusion (if we can call it that) of *Emmanuel Appadocca* is an accurate reflection of its engagement in social issues of the time. By adopting the conventions of the nautical adventure, Philip is able to engage with Britain's racial politics on a popular level and relate his mixed-race hero to the national narrative through action as well as through philosophical debate. In his novel, Philip

seizes upon Marryat's reconstruction of the sea as national space, the construction of active

masculinity, and the discourse surrounding piracy to develop his story of one man's attempt to

reconcile his natural, national, and individual identity in the colonial world.

The introduction of the recent scholarly edition of Philip's novel, written by William

Cain, recognizes the book's importance in the pattern of transatlantic nineteenth-century

fiction. The novel is, as Cain states, "a multicultural, polyphonic 'Atlantic' book that challenges,

even as it capitalizes upon, traditional notions of what a 'national' literature is and includes"

(xix). Positioned imaginatively in Trinidad, a corner of a triangle formed by the Caribbean, the

United States, and England, Philip challenges American slavery and British racism by invoking

both American abolitionist works and the highly nationalistic adventure literature that flooded

the Victorian market. Philip's novel embodies the transatlantic nature of racial issues and racial

debates, gesturing on one hand to the current state of affairs in America, particularly "the cruel

manner in which the slave holders of America deal with their slave-children" (preface), and on

the other hand to the plight of emancipated Africans in England's West Indian colonies. Philip

draws these two issues together in a way that insists that the reader view racism and racial

issues in an international light, and as problems inextricably linked to colonialism and imperial

practices.

The connections between Philip's novel and American abolitionist works are explored by

Cain in his introduction to the text. Cain ultimately places Stowe's novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* at

the center of his analysis and argues that "it is her text that Philip must resist and reimagine to

make way for his own" (xlii). While it is true that Philip's novel centers on issues of familial

justice, retribution, and resistance that match Stowe's novel and other abolitionist texts of the

period, its central concerns belong to the post-slavery reality experienced by the black

inhabitants of the British West Indies. Philip makes it clear that the novel is set after "the time of slavery" (218) in Trinidad, and the plot does not include escaped slaves, slave revolts, or any suggestion of organized racial rebellion. Nor does the text make an explicit issue of Appadocca's race, though we are told that his appearance "showed a mixture of blood, and proclaimed that the man was connected with some dark race, and in the infinity of grades in the population of Spanish America, he may have been said to be of that which is commonly designated Quadroon" (23). Appadocca's target in the book is not slavery, but the unequal exploitation of colonial labor that promotes and is promoted by racism (113), symbolized for him by the advantage Mr. Willmington took of his mother. Justice, rather than freedom, is his goal, as it was in reality for Maxwell Philip, and other Caribbean men of African descent.

Philip's novel has many philosophical ties to the essays by Thomas Carlyle and John Stuart Mill that I discussed in the introduction. Philip's preface, dedicating his work to African American families torn apart by slavery, highlights the connections between Afro-Caribbean rights and the freedom of slaves in America, which Mill points out at the end of his essay. Appadocca's narrative of his philosophical objections to slavery and colonialism in general also echo Mill. While Carlyle abused the freedmen for not pursuing the cultivation of cash crops, Appadocca decries the planters who, "instead of exerting their intellect to the utmost stretch, and expanding their heart to its greatest width, for the wise and virtuous government, and for the development of the happiness of those who are subjected to their rule, wasting their time in the pursuit of the most shadowy geegaws" (114). Like Mill, Appadocca references the theory that Africa was the cradle of civilization by describing the slaves as "those whose ancestors gave philosophy, religion, and government to the world" (114). He goes on to claim that the entire model of Western civilization and its definitions of progress based on accumulation of wealth

and speed ("steam engines and money") are false and bankrupt. True progress, he says, comes

from contemplative silence.

> "It was in such silence that among a race, which is now despised and oppressed,
> speculation took wing, and the mind burst forth, and, scorning things of the earth,
> scaled the heavens, read the stars, and elaborated systems of philosophy, religion, and
> government: while the other parts of the world were either enveloped in darkness, or
> following in eager and uncontemplative haste the luring genii of riches" (116).

While the novel has a definite bias towards the upper classes (Appadocca is a polished, well-

educated university man), Philip agrees with Mill that access to jobs and other opportunities

must be determined by some means other than skin color and racial classification. Choice –

whether it is giving an educated black man a choice to join a profession, like the law, or giving a

common sailor the opportunity to exchange the discipline of a merchant ship for the life of a

pirate – is important to Philip, and he believes that all deserve that right.

Philip's philosophical goal of racial justice, as Selwyn Cudjoe notes in his afterward,

places him in the tradition of "the continued struggle of African American peoples against

colonialism and imperialism" (266). It should be unsurprising, then, that Philip chose the

seafaring adventure novel form popularized by Marryat as the generic model for his text. The

plot of adventure novels at the time frequently invoked just violence against oppression as a

central tenet of life, while the form imagines active mobility (as opposed to domesticity) that is

permanent – not fleeing or fleeting, but organized. At the same time, the genre was a popular

instrument of Britain's growing imperial power. Marryat's novels, from his defense of idealized

paternalistic slavery in *Newton Forster* (1832), to *Mr. Midshipman Easy*'s portrayal of the free

and domesticated savage and *Percival Keene*'s specter of lawless black masculinity, modeled a

way to use the sea – a crucial, defining, necessary element of Caribbean life – to discuss the problem of race in terms of British national identity, activity, and belonging.

Philip takes Marryat's model and adapts it to his own ends. Appadocca's relationship to the sea represents the nexus of personal and national identity that Philip makes one of the central concerns of his novel. The sea is the central medium of the book. The sea expresses Appadocca's rootlessness, his fluid connections to multiple places, and it is on sea that he achieves his potential for greatness that is stifled on land. Although Appadocca's fight for the right to belong to the social and economic structure symbolized by the British family propels the action of the novel, his choice to turn pirate should not be overlooked, or written off as a melodramatic appendage to an essentially domestic abolitionist novel. In order to fully understand Philip's strategic use of piracy and classic adventure plotting, as well as Appadocca's anti-colonial (rather than anti-slavery) philosophy, it is necessary to read the novel in the context of the works of Marryat and other British adventure novelists who shaped the seafaring adventure novel into a vehicle of national racial theory.

The formal conventions of Philip's book demand closer attention because they are instrumental in carrying out his thematic intentions. Cain notes the text's similarities to British adventure romances by authors like Defoe, Marryat, and Scott, as well as a host of other authors and genres. According to Cain, "This network of intertextual reference, allusion, and explicit and implicit thematic connections is, in part, a means for Philip to achieve 'authentication,' to demonstrate his command of literary materials known to and valued by his readers, and to confirm his own authority to speak and write within the culture" (xxxix). The textual allusions certainly contribute to the literary pretensions of the novel. However, the shape of the novel, which so strongly echoes the sea adventures of Frederick Marryat, W. H. G.

Kingston, and numerous other popular authors of the mid-nineteenth-century, functions as more than a textual allusion or authenticating device. Rather, Philip manipulates traditional adventure plots in order to foreground their importance in the discourse of race at that time. Philip's manipulation of the sea adventure genre functions as a formal challenge to national literature because of the way that he rewrites, echoes, and refigures the conventions of a genre that was so firmly entrenched within British popular culture that its role in shaping that culture became almost invisible.

Appadocca's story is at once a mirror and an inversion of the seafaring adventure story. The elements of the story are intentionally derivative. The novel features brash young midshipmen, swooning damsels, tell-tale birthmarks, descents into madness, daring escapes, and epic natural disasters. However, each of these elements locate the text within a tradition of popular fiction in a way that highlights the social and political implications of such fiction. Philip does this by placing the mixed-race Appadocca at the center of a genre that, almost by definition, resisted his presence in that role. Appadocca is the man in search of a father; Appadocca is the bosom friend of the stalwart young naval hero Charles; Appadocca prevents a young mother from committing her dreadful act; Appadocca bears the tell-tale birthmark that proves his parentage; Appadocca has the potential to fall in love with a beautiful stranger. Appadocca's race is barely touched on in the novel, but it is the fact that presented the contemporary reader with a kind of logical impossibility that renders the ridiculously conventional story most unridiculously daring and noteworthy.

Appadocca, like Percival Keene, and many other of Marryat's young heroes, is in search of a parent and family legitimacy. The son of Mr. Willmington, an English planter, and an (apparently) well-born mulatto woman, he is raised by his mother, who sends him to university

in Paris, where he becomes known for his intellectual brilliance. It is there that he meets Charles

Hamilton, the son of a British naval officer who becomes Appadocca's friend. The death of

Appadocca's mother and his subsequent lack of funds ends his studies prematurely, and he

moves to England to try to make a living through writing. Destitute, he writes to his father for

help, but the letter is ignored. An encounter with a starving woman, abandoned by her wealthy

lover, who planned to end her life and that of her baby by jumping into the Thames causes him

to meditate on the social system that allows such crimes to be committed without punishment,

or with punishment deferred until "an imaginary period" (105). He concludes, based on

examples drawn from nature,[41] that since man's social system violates apparent natural law, he

is justified in abandoning social systems and resorting to *lex talonis*, the law of equivalent

retribution.[42] He determines at that moment that: "the man from whose hands I demanded not

existence, but who has given me life, and abandoned me in my misery, ought likewise to feel

some part of the sufferings which I undergo" and vows to bring retribution down upon his father

(106). Appadocca's reliance on natural law rather than national law makes him an interesting

counterpoint to Douglass's Madison Washington. Although Douglass portrays Washington

within nature, as in his first soliloquy, nature is, as Wilson writes, "reduced to a stage, a kind of

organic state forum" (457). Nature, for Douglass, is a backdrop to national concerns, but for

Appadocca it provides another kind of legitimacy outside of national law.

Appadocca's notion of retribution and the extended philosophical argument he uses to

back up his choice mark a salient departure of the novel from the adventure genre While

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[41] The passage reads: "Thus, the browsing sheep that forgets its instinct, and feeds on poisonous herbs, dies. The scorpion, that turns his sting upon itself, also dies. The antelope, if it throws itself down on a rock must necessarily be dashed to pieces. In all these things you see law, and its safeguard – retribution" (105).

[42] See Cain's introduction for a discussion of *lex talonis* and its relationship to both Philip's legal training and American abolitionist texts of the period, xlv-xlvii.

Percival's eventual acknowledgement by his noble family is a foregone conclusion, Appadocca's recognition by his father is not because of his status as a racial outsider. By connecting his father's refusal to acknowledge him with flaws in the social system (rather than the moral lapse of either his father or his mother as individuals), Appadocca articulates the intimate connection between family and state that was expressed and enforced by many and diverse writers and thinkers beginning in the eighteenth century and extending throughout the Victorian period. Appadocca's exclusion from the family unit, and the role his race plays in that exclusion, places him in a nebulous position within the state, a fact that Percival, the dutiful naval officer, never has to admit.

Appadocca's linkage of family and state problems is enhanced by the parallels Philip draws with the young suicidal mother whose life Appadocca saves. By using that trope, a common sign of urban destitution and breakdown of the social system in British fiction,[43] Philip links the English social problem of urban destitution and intra-national responsibility with the imperial social problem of race and integration. According to the most patronizing imperialists, like Bryan Edwards, familial responsibility (paternalism and gratitude) should be the model of the empire. However, this is a two-way responsibility. As Appadocca notes, the responsibility has to start with the parent doing right by the child for the child feel any compulsion to do right by the parent. Philip sets Appadocca apart from characters like Percival by having him assert his position as someone with the right to be active, rather than passive, when he has been rejected by his father, and implicitly by his father's country. Appadocca's recognition of the system that is restricting him, as of his father's role as its agent, sets up the rest of the narrative, which is a two-fold story of retribution against both the family and the state that have abandoned those

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[43]For a fictional example see Charles Dickens *The Chimes*. A scholarly study on the subject is *Victorian Suicide: Mad Crimes and Sad Histories* by Barbara Gates (1988).

for whom they have responsibility.

Appadocca's acknowledgement of the state's fault, which leads him to embrace a life of piracy, is the turning point of his life from a stereotypical adventurer to the inversion of that type. Philip makes this clear by maintaining elements of the uninverted story around him. One such element is the love plot that develops between Appadocca's right-hand man, Lorenzo, and the beautiful daughter of a planter who is captured by the pirates (named, perhaps in homage to Marryat, Agnes). Agnes, like the Agnes in Marryat's *Mr. Midshipman Easy*, is treated well by her captors and restored to her family, but remembers Lorenzo fondly and immediately agrees to a marriage when he reappears at the end of the book and is revealed to be French nobility. In comparison, Appadocca's emotional life is atypical, marked by his involvement with Feliciana, whose madness upon his death is a trope that comes straight from the anti-romance of gothic fiction.[44]

Charles Hamilton, Appadocca's university friend who is an officer on the British naval ship that captures Appadocca, provides another uninverted element of the traditional adventure tale as told by Marryat and others. Charles and his father reflect the nobility, patriotism, and sense of honor and duty that form the central tenets of the nationalistic adventure tale. Their ship, and the actions that take place on and around it, could figure in a classic adventure tale. When the pirates, under the command of Lorenzo, attempt to rescue Appadocca, they kidnap a midshipman from the naval vessel to give them information. This midshipman is a character cut straight out of Marryat. When asked by Lorenzo about Appadocca's health and whereabouts, he scornfully responds, "What? do you imagine... I am going to tell to a pirate what takes place on board a vessel in which I have the honour to serve?

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[44] The connections between gothic fiction and narratives about race in the 19th century have been well-documented elsewhere. See introduction note 17.

By Jove, no! -it is hard enough to be kidnapped by a set of rascals without being asked to play traitor and spy, to boot" (154). Later, the narrator comments that his associates had given the midshipman "an extravagant idea of his own importance, which, among other things, could not admit of accepting terms from the officer of any nation that was lower than his own, and, least of all, from a villainous pirate" (155). While this attitude would be admired in one of Marryat's novels, here it is ridiculed as illogical and impractical. The illogic of the midshipman's position reflects the limitations of the adventure novel in certain real situations. Even admirable characters, like Charles, can have only a limited understanding of Appadocca and his feelings. Philip symbolically detaches his narrative from the tradition of adventure at the end when the last we hear of Charles's ship is "the reports of the man-of-war's distress guns" from the midst of the hurricane that eventually destroys Appadocca's ship (240). Charles's fate is left for someone like Marryat to construct, while Philip concerns himself with the tragic conclusion of his own story.

One other way that Philip echoes the sensational adventure stories of British popular fiction is his use of a tell-tale birthmark that proves Appadocca's claim that he is Willmington's son. Challenged by Willmington's legitimate son after abducting Willmington from his plantation house, Appadocca opens his fingers to reveal "a peculiar mark" (212). The sight of this mark renders young Willmington speechless and the duel that he fights afterwards with Appadocca to redeem his father's life is half-hearted. Although family marks and resemblances that bring to light long-lost heirs were a stock element in popular fiction, Philip's use of that element in this context carries a more pointed meaning. Appadocca's birthmark provides, for Willmington, an irrefutable proof that Appadocca is a member of the family, to the point where he

unhesitatingly calls him "brother" later, despite his mother's objections (234).[45] Appadocca's

blood relationship to the Willmington family, thus placed beyond doubt, means that he speaks

in the novel as both an outsider (by choice) and an insider (by blood). His blood relationship to

the British nation gives his anti-national piratical stance much more rhetorical weight. His

acknowledgment by a member of his British family, combined with his intellectual

achievements, means that the reader is forced to recognize the rationality of his choice to follow

piracy. Appadocca and his piracy cannot be written off the way Marryat writes off Vincent as a

fundamentally illogical savage without a country.

Appadocca's proof of kinship with the Willmington family, if it can be accepted as proof

of greater British kinship (which I think it can), forces the reader to intellectually consider

Appadocca's anti-national stance as a pirate. As the subtitle tells us, this novel is "A Tale of the

Boucaneers," and piracy is central to Philip's critique of British nationalism and racially-formed

identity. Philip begins by radically redefining what piracy meant to the nineteenth-century

reader in the course of a conversation between Appadocca and Charles Hamilton. Appadocca

first breaks down the conventional definitions of what is lawfully permitted and what isn't by

pointing out to Charles that "the whole of the civilized world turns, exists, and grows enormous

on the licensed system of robbing and thieving, which you seem to criminate so much..." (113).

According to Appadocca, "licensed" robbery, of the land, wealth, and labor of weaker people by

stronger people is fundamentally no different from actual robbery, just as the actions of a

licensed privateer differ from piracy only because one is nationally sanctioned and the other is

not. As Sale reminds the readers of her book on the slave ship revolts, "Pirates are outlaws not

only, and perhaps not even primarily, because they attack and plunder ships, but because they

do not recognize a (single) national affiliation" (99). The difference between robbery and

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[45] For more information on birthmarks and their role in adventure fiction, see chapter four of this project.

colonialism, or piracy and privateering, is a distinction made by national law, not natural law or

natural skin color. To Appadocca and his men, who have disassociated themselves from any

national affiliation, piracy is not robbery. Instead, "they looked upon it more like adventures, in

which men of spirit could engage with as much honour, as in fighting under the banners of

stranger kings, for the purpose of conquering distant and unoffending peoples" (57).

By focusing on the fragile nature of the definition of piracy and its relationship to the

variability of national law, Philip calls into question the absolute nature of national identity that

is embraced by both Marryat and Douglass in their works. Unlike Washington, or even Vincent,

Appadocca never acts as an agent of the nation by suppressing piracy in any form. Nor does he

explicitly discuss the slave trade, which was the focus of anti-piracy activities at the time.

Instead of focusing on the issue of slavery through piracy, Philip uses piracy to direct his readers

to the injustices of the British colonial system as a whole and the effect it had upon free men

like Appadocca (and himself). In his approach to piracy, Appadocca is, perhaps, more extra-

national than anti-national, choosing to create an independent social system to replace that of

the nation he has given up. Like Marryat and Douglass, Philip uses the sea as a space where

national identity and national justice can be perfected. However, while Marryat used the sea to

reify British identity and Douglass used the sea to perfect America's imperfect rendering of

democracy, Philip uses it to erect a new form of law and a new kind of nation based on purely

civic, rather than ethnic, ideas. His ability to do this in the space of the ocean challenges

Marryat's representation of the Atlantic as a British territory where the British can give and

withhold national identity at will.

Philip's intentional placement of Appadocca in a rational realm outside of the nation-

state echoes a state of being that Paul Gilroy, in his book *Against Race* describes as being

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"between camps." According to Gilroy:

> "Deliberately adopting a position between camps of this sort is not a sign of indecision or equivocation. It is a timely choice. It can [...] be a positive orientation against the patterns of authority, government, and conflict that characterize modernity's geometry of power. It can also promote a rich theoretical understanding of culture as a mutable and traveling phenomenon." (84)

The piracy chosen by Appadocca in Philip's novel functions in many ways as a dramatic representation of the "position between camps" that Gilroy describes. Appadocca at some point exists within various camps. He is a central figure in the French university, attempts to join English life and letters, is expelled from them by the actions of his father, and then chooses the political and imaginative autonomy of piracy as a lifestyle from which to pursue (not escape) the "camp" that expelled him. While the literal and imaginative geography of the nineteenth century is much different from that of the post-war twentieth that Gilroy is discussing in his text, I feel that the comparison is a just reflection of what Philip, a Caribbean man educated in England who spent his life striving for recognition of his talents, meant to imply in his novel. A deliberate removal from national affiliation is the logical consequence of apparently arbitrary and unnatural practices of authority for men, like Appadocca, who are willing and capable of thinking outside of the national box. However, by removing himself from the English and/or French nation, Appadocca does not detach himself from its intellectual culture. This contrasts to Marryat's approach, who acknowledges some of the injustices of slavery perpetuated by so-called enlightened individuals, but distracts the reader from its atrocities by focusing on Vincent's choice to roast slave-dealers alive. Instead of thus avoiding the issue, Phillip attempts to separate the ideals of the Enlightenment from the material realities of slavery and colonization and the atrocities that made them possible. Appadocca remains, if possible, more entrenched in Western Enlightenment thought than any other character in the book,. Likewise,

British class values are not questioned in the novel. However, access to those values by people

of other races, and the economic privileges that go with them, are questions that are at stake.

Appadocca's pirate ship, with its multi-ethnic crew and highly-organized set of rules that

regulate work, set property rights, and mete out justice, functions as a nation with the signal

exception that it had no territory to call its own. The crew of the ship are a miscellaneous group

of men who have chosen to band together under Appadocca and obey his laws, and see that

justice is done when those laws are broken. Neither coercion nor ethnicity play a part in this

confederacy. That is not to say that the ship is democratic. Class certainly plays a role in Philip's

construction of this ideal society. Appadocca's intellectual and personal achievements,

stemming from his birth and education, persuade his original companions to elect him captain

of the ship. As captain, he keeps his crew "under an iron discipline" and separates himself from

them with status symbols like servants and a richly-furnished cabin.

At the other end of this class spectrum is Jack Jimmy, a black man who is kidnapped by

the pirates and chooses to stay with them when he recognizes Appadocca as the "young massa"

he served many years ago (50). Philip's uncomplimentary description of Jimmy resembles the

black caricatures of minstrel shows, or the racist depictions of black menials in white British

adventure novels. This depiction has led critics to charge Philip with elitism, if not racism, and a

pride in his "mastery of European culture" that came at the expense of the disadvantaged black

population of Trinidad (Rosenberg 24).[46] Alternatively, Selwyn Cudjoe, in his afterward to the

book, notes that Jack Jimmy's language patterns reflect a "distinctive Afro-Trinidadian voice"

rather than a generalized caricature of black speech. According to Cudjoe, this fact, combined

with Jimmy's choice to remain with Appadocca as a pirate and his moments of dignity, for

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[46] Also see Smith and James for criticisms of Philip's European values and his portrayal of Jack Jimmy.

example his actions after Appadocca's death, "undercut any attempt to interpret him as merely a racist caricature" (268). Philip's depiction of the relationship between Jimmy and Appadocca is uncomfortably accurate in its reflection of the intra-racial relationships that existed in nineteenth-century Trinidad. Yet, Appadocca's anti-colonial and anti-slavery position, when combined with his assertion that philosophy, religion, and government were born on the continent of Africa, suggests that he does not believe in the inherent inferiority of African people. While the hierarchy of Appadocca's ship-nation is visibly racialized in the relationship between Appadocca and Jimmy, we are never led to believe that Jimmy has fewer legal rights aboard ship than any other sailor. Although the Appadocca-Jimmy relationship is akin to that between Jack and Mesty in Marryat's novel, through Appadocca's biracial identity Philip holds out the possibility of another order where intellect and education win status, regardless of color.

Ultimately, it is Appadocca's threat to the British nation through his piracy and visions of an alternative society, rather than his abduction and attempted murder of Willmington, that moves the plot of the book. When Appadocca is arrested by the navy on St. Thomas, it is as a pirate, rather than as an attempted murderer. The naval officer who arrests him makes it very clear that "disagreeable" family matters should not be his concern, but piracy, which is a crime against the state, is. Appadocca's alternative community and its premise that on the sea the captain's law and nature's law are worth more than any nation are the most formidable threats to British sovereignty in the Caribbean. This, again, sets him apart from Vincent who operated against the law rather than within a set of alternative laws. Appadocca's unique role as a black man who is a threat to national, rather than personal or racial, security, brings the terms of the debate over race and national identity to a new level. As neither a servant nor a savage, Appadocca challenges popular conceptions of black masculinity and black masculine action.

While Marryat and other nationalist adventure writers restrict to white men the right to

positive national activity, Appadocca claims independent extra-national activity and organized,

disciplined command for himself.

Appadocca's extraordinary vision of a civic nation is only partially realized in the novel.

Appadocca's plan is to lead his crew to "some remote spot" on the South American continent

where he could "build them a city" that would give them a terrestrial home (236). However,

Appadocca never realizes the territorial aspirations of his shipboard nation. Instead, the

schooner is caught in a hurricane that destroys it and Appadocca commits suicide after

explaining to his first mate, Lorenzo, that the schooner's destruction was symbolic: a message

to him that he was overstepping his own destiny (243). The fate of the British navy ship that was

chasing the pirate schooner into the storm is unknown, and the British characters are absent

from the rest of the story, which follows Lorenzo and Jack Jimmy, who retire to a domestic life

away from national action and interaction. The tragic ending of Appadocca's life is hard to read

as a positive step forward. However, if we read Appadocca's death as a waste of a brilliant life

(as Charles suggests when he urges Appadocca to forgo a renewal of his vow to take revenge on

his father), then the book retains a poignant meaning. Rejected by white society, the

intellectual Appadocca chose to go outside society instead of to the bottom of it.

In his novel, Philip mobilizes the popular generic conventions of the adventure novel

and the figure of the pirate to question Britain's marginalization of those who claim an African,

as well as British, identity. Although nowhere in the book does he call for an independent

Trinidad, Philip's commitment to Afro-Caribbean participation in the government of their own

islands suggests that he embraced the idea of a Caribbean, rather than British identity.[47] His

assertion that Africa was the birthplace of Western ideas of philosophy, government, and

religion also connects him to the nascent pan-African movement and diasporic ideas of identity.

Perhaps, in Appadocca's vision of an ideal nation, we can see Philip's vision of a Trinidad left to

reorganize its government to a less repressive system that would incorporate multiple strands

of identity. It is hard to determine whether this was Philip's true goal. His call to action in this

text is philosophical rather than practical, and his attitudes seem, to contemporary scholars,

hopelessly limited by his commitment to British values and Enlightenment ideology. As an

author, Philip appears caught, perhaps unconsciously, between the way things are and the way

things ought to be. Nevertheless, Appadocca's attempt to perfect the civic nation under the

aegis of the observable laws of nature rather than the law of any country represents a unique

and powerful critique of both British and American systems of labor, the project of colonialism,

and the ethnic, rather than intellectual, foundations of those systems.

The sea adventure is an outward-looking genre that retreats only at the ends of its

novels to the protected insularity of its imaginary England. Because it is a genre of contact with

Other people and places, it was a natural vehicle for debates over national boundaries, the

limits of national belonging, the traveling national body, and the potential for the Other

becoming a citizen/subject. However, another hallmark of the sea adventure was its

temporality. As the American John Pendleton Kennedy asks provocatively in *Swallow Barn*, his

novel of plantation slavery, "How many years may a ship sail at sea without stopping?" (267)

The eventual return of the active black man to land and the problem of what he will do once he

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[47] According to Philip's obituary in the Trinidadian paper *Public Opinion* (July 3, 1888) he "had long ago espoused the cause of the sons of the soil. He believes that Trinidadians, and the natives of the West Indies generally, are as well able to fill Government offices as Englishmen." He was also a proponent of Constitutional Government (qtd. in Cudjoe 16, 17).

is there are the subjects of chapters two and three. My discussion will focus on novels built on the foundation of the "tragic mulatto" plot, and that take place on and around plantations in America and the West Indies. The next chapter focuses on white British examples of plantation adventure. Using the works of Mayne Reid, Mary Elizabeth Braddon, and Marcella Fanny Noy Wilkins, I will examine how the adventure novel traveled to the "semi-civilized" plantation setting and how those authors introduced the genre of domestic romance into their novels in order to create a hybrid genre that both enabled and limited adventurous action in an attempt to police the racial lines of national identity.

Chapter 2: Plantation Slavery and the Adventure Novel

I ended my previous chapter with the question asked by the character Lucy in *Swallow Barn* "How many years may a ship sail at sea without stopping?" Implied in this question is a deeper one: What happens when the ship does stop, and the adventurous black man must find a home on land? Is there an answer beyond Marryat's cursory dismissal of Mesty to the butler's role at the end of *Mr. Midshipman Easy*? To begin to answer this question, I turn in this chapter and the next one to novels set in and around plantation society. In this chapter, I will be tackling the question from the perspective of three white British authors, Mayne Reid, Mary Elizabeth Braddon, and Marcella Fanny Noy Wilkins, using their books to trace the relationship between adventure novels and plantation novels. I will be specifically focusing on their depictions of plantation geography, their representations of how adventurous characters (both black and white) negotiate that geography, and the way that those representations construct the personal and national identities of those characters.

It is my argument that the slave plantation, though defined as a domestic space and therefore the traditional site of romance and melodrama, is also an adventurous, contested space due to the violent power dynamics inherent in the slave system. Because of this fact, these plantation novels are at best generic hybrids, displaying the tensions inherent in the slave system in the tensions between the genres of adventure and romance as they appear in the texts. It is tempting as a reader to ignore the hybridity of these novels and assign a single label

to them, as many scholars have done.[48] However, to do so is to sell these novels short. The

adventure novel, as I argue in my introduction, played a very specific role in British culture and

the construction of national masculinity, and these novels are a part of that discourse. For, while

the plantation novels do incorporate elements of the domestic romance, they also participate in

the map-making role of adventure novels which, as Richard Phillips describes it, is to "naturalise

the geographies they represent, and normalise the constructions of race, gender, class and

empire those geographies inscribe" (15). Although the plantation may appear as a domestic

British space, it is, in reality, a colonial space that requires mapping to reinforce its boundaries

and the dominant role of the British within them. The tensions between romantic melodrama

and adventure in these novels reflect the tensions within Britain at this time over the issue of

slavery and, more importantly, the role emancipated slaves (particularly men) should have in

the colonies and the nation as a whole.

    While the slave plantation was clearly a contested space since the moment of its

inception, the books I will discuss were published during the veritable explosion of the

plantation genre during the 1850s and 1860s in America and (to a lesser extent) in Britain. I

would argue that in all of the novels I discuss in this chapter, with the exception of Mayne Reid's

text *The Quadroon*, the romantic plot triumphs at the end, while the adventure genre

disappears. Why is this so? And if this is so, why include the adventure in the first place? Why

bother describing slavery as a site of adventure at all? The answers to these questions lie in

Britain's complicated relationship to slavery and abolition. With the abolition of the slave trade

in 1807 and the abolition of outright slavery in 1834, Britain as a nation had formally admitted

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[48] Joan Steele, in her study of Reid's works, identifies both *The Quadroon* and *The Maroon* as having a
base structure of melodrama (83, 85, 86). Jennifer Carnell and Kimberly Harrison both focus on *The
Octoroon*'s relationship to sensation fiction and stage melodrama in their essays. Lise Wiener and the
other editors of *The Slave Son* relate it to early-nineteenth-century Gothic texts as well as melodrama.

that slavery was morally wrong, though individuals, of course, retained their own views on the subject. The abolitionist rhetoric used in England regarding the cause of American slavery in the period between Britain's abolition and the American Civil War depended largely on representations of Britons as the moral champions of freedom in the face of the hypocrisy of American "liberty."[49] Whether people embraced that rhetoric, as Braddon and Wilkins did, or felt equivocally about it, as did Reid, the fact remained that slavery and Englishness had been officially declared incompatible and slavery depicted as a threat to the very core of English nature and tradition. At the same time, the question of what to do with the emancipated slaves was a very real problem during the 1850s and 1860s, and one that the rhetoric of liberation did not cover. The hybrid plots of these novels about slavery exist to both respond to the threat that the presence of slavery (in the past and the present) poses to the integrity of popularly-conceived English national identity, and to contain the unruly presence/present of emancipated slaves.

My discussion will be based on a detailed examination of four white British plantation novels: *The Quadroon* by Mayne Reid, *The Octoroon* by Mary Elizabeth Braddon (both set in contemporary Louisiana), *The Slave Son* by Marcella Fanny Noy Wilkins and *The Maroon* by Reid (set respectively in Trinidad and Jamaica during slavery). Although it is impossible to forge explicit links among the authors of these works, their texts themselves share a common set of themes and concerns. On a surface level, they all make use of (to greater or lesser extents) the "tragic mulatta" plot device, which was common in plantation fiction of the nineteenth

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[49] For more on British antislavery as a moral position see Howard Temperley, *British Antislavery 1833-1870* p. 46, 194. Marryat, Dickens, and others remarked upon American hypocrisy regarding slavery in their travel writings.

century.[50] On a thematic level, they are all concerned not just with a domestic situation, but a national one, specifically the role that free black men can or should play in the nation. This theme is expressed through the medium of the adventure genre, which intrudes into these British versions of what, in America, was primarily a domestic genre. The way that elements of the adventure genre – wild landscape, violent conflict, and heroic male characters associated with adventurous action – emerge and are repressed within these texts show that these novels share the concerns of books that are more often labeled as adventures.

In this chapter, I will discuss the development of the British plantation genre, and the way that these novelists construct the geography of the plantation as an adventurous space that enables the heroic British male characters to assert and prove their national identity. I will then examine how that depiction of the plantation as adventurous territory also enabled roles for heroic black male characters who assert their right to an autonomous (though not explicitly national) identity. It is at this point, I argue, that the domestic genre is brought into play in these novels to neutralize and domesticate the heroic black male characters, and ultimately to make them disappear from the novels' conclusions.

The proliferation of British plantation fictions set in America as well as in the British West Indies can be attributed to several sources. It is possible that these British depictions of American plantations were imagined as responses to the frequent representations of Britain made by African American authors between 1836 and the Civil War. Portrayals of Britain were frequent and emphatic in black American abolitionist works. As early as 1829, the African

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[50] The "tragic mulatta" plot has been the subject of extensive scholarship. For detailed examinations of it, see Zanger, "The Tragic Octoroon in Pre-Civil War Fiction," Berzon *Neither White Nor Black: The Mulatto Character in American Fiction*, Sollors *Neither Black Nor White, Yet Both: Thematic Explorations of Interracial Literature*, and Raimon *The "Tragic Mulatta" Revisited: Race and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Antislavery Fiction*.

American writer David Walker urged the readers of his *Appeal* to consider England over Africa as

a destination for emigrants: "If any of us see fit to go away, go to those who have been for many

years, and are now our greatest earthly friends and benefactors--the English" (62). After the

Fugitive Slave Act was passed in 1850, England, as well as Canada, gained rhetorical weight as

truly "a geopolitical mecca" (Dickerson 9), and was frequently used in abolitionist works by both

white and black Americans as a symbolic opposite of contaminated American soil. In addition to

that rhetoric, Elise Tamarkin in her article "Black Anglophilia; or, The Sociability of Antislavery"

points out a further discourse of Englishness by black abolitionist authors who not only

positioned England as a present refuge, but claimed its cultural past as their own. As she

explains it, "A celebration of England's radicalism seems to make room for a cult of England's

past" (444). Using the works of Frederick Douglass, Samuel Ringgold Ward, and William Wells

Brown as her examples, Tamarkin describes how England became represented as "a whole

fantasized realm within which a cosmopolitan universalism gets realized." For these authors,

England represented a cosmopolitan place where they could write about subjects beyond

slavery and abolition, and they celebrated this supposed cosmopolitanism through invocations

of British castles, British rural landscapes, aristocratic civility, and the epics of Sir Walter Scott

(458). Faced with examples of black American authors adopting and adapting England's present

and England's past in order to make their own case for an end to racial distinction, it is possible

that British writers felt a need to assert control over their own nation's identity and their

nation's relationship with enslaved and formerly-enslaved people.

A more immediate cause of the upswing in British plantation fiction in the 1850s and

1860s was the success of Harriet Beecher Stowe's 1852 novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which

appeared in pirated editions throughout England shortly after its American release (Fisch 12). As

Audrey Fisch explains, when *Uncle Tom* crossed the Atlantic, it was transformed from a strictly

American politicized text into a Victorian cultural phenomenon (14). She writes that *Uncle Tom's Cabin* "served as the ground on which a range of issues within mid-Victorian England were argued and debated: questions about culture, gender, class, and national identity" (7). Conservative outlets, such as *The Times*, decried *Uncle Tom*'s popularity because they claimed that it presented indirect arguments for working-class rights, which made it a potentially dangerous text in the hands of working-class Britons (Fisch 17). Fears that agitation for black American rights would shape the rights of working-class Britons turned out to be somewhat justified, as Christine Bolt demonstrates in her book *Victorian Attitudes Towards Race*: "The *Saturday Review* noted in 1867 that, as 'Mr. Bright and his followers sometimes complain, the negro in the United States may possibly obtain the franchise before the English workman', and indeed the Lancashire statesman constantly argued from the American example during Reconstruction, using the black vote as a precedent for manhood suffrage in Britain" (62).

The possibility that America would enfranchise its emancipated black population also emerged as a point of anxiety for British politicians and intellectuals concerned about the political situation in the West Indies. Carlyle's 1849 attack on the West Indian freedmen, as Mill noted, could easily be interpreted as a cautionary tale for America meant to restrict the spread of emancipation and racial equality. Similarly, in the months following the Morant Bay rebellion of 1865, *The Times* "went on to stress repeatedly that the United States Government should take note of events in Jamaica and frame a policy for its own freedmen which would avoid the pitfalls into which the British had fallen" (qtd. in Bolt 87). These warnings stemmed from the anxieties that emancipation in the West Indies had spawned about the white British losing political control over the islands, particularly Jamaica, due to an influx of black voters.

As Thomas Holt demonstrates, in Jamaica the actual black voter turn-out "never even

remotely approached its potential nor even posed a viable threat" though they did have some

impact on the assembly (216). Nevertheless, the specter of a black voting block was the "great

fear [that] shaped discussions of colonial political affairs during the second decade following the

abolition of slavery" (217). This fear would ultimately lead to the abolition of the Jamaica

assembly after 1865 and the institution of Crown Colony rule, which was meant to cement

"imperial control in the region" (Benn 31).[51] Between disenfranchised lower class men arguing

for the vote in England and continuing unrest over voting rights and representation in the West

Indies, it is unsurprising that conservative British intellectuals took a dim view of works like

Uncle Tom's Cabin.   Abolitionist literature – especially literature that applauded England as the

home of equal rights – could be seen as adding fuel to an already unstable situation.

Appropriately, the insubstantial and partially-imaginary "great fear" of black and

working-class power was given shape in the imaginative world of British plantation novels in the

1850s and 60s. While it is certainly true that white British authors of popular fiction wrote

plantation novels because of their immense selling power, I argue that these novels are

interesting as more than just artifacts of popular culture. They are also important because such

nostalgic reconstructions of the slave past acted as a foundation for contemporary arguments

about the connection between race and British national identity. In these novels, the strong

rhetorical ties between British emancipation, British working-class issues, and American

abolitionism are represented through manipulations of the stereotypical plantation novel plot

elements (runaway slaves, beautiful mixed-race women, honorable aristocratic heroes, and

lecherous villains). By invoking the genres of adventure and domestic romance together, the

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[51] Crown colony rule had been first developed in 1831 in response to the political situation in Trinidad, which, when Britain gained control of it, "contained a cosmopolitan population comprising not only French and British planters, but also a free colored group who constituted a majority of the free population" (Benn 32).

novelists produce idealized representations of white British identity that are meant to respond to the anxieties about racial and class-based unrest that I discussed above. However, as I will go on to demonstrate, the hybrid narrative style created by that combination of adventure and domestic romance does not succeed in fully separating heroic white British identity from black identity. Throughout these novels we can trace the presence of strong black male characters who participate in the narrative elements of the adventure and domestic genres that are meant to represent white identity and power.

Though two of the British novels I am discussing are set in the historical period of pre-emancipation Jamaica and Trinidad and two are set the contemporary world of American slavery, I argue that they approach these settings in much the same way. Indeed, Wilkins writes in the introduction to *The Slave Son* that she was greatly influenced by Stowe's example and that "I might equally well have transferred [the story] to any other slave country, and to any more recent period, for the same causes are ever followed by like effects" (99). In their Caribbean fictions, both Wilkins and Reid self-consciously make connections between British and American experiences by using historical fiction to elide the differences between freedom and slavery (the present and the past). While Maxwell Philip was specific about the post-emancipation setting of *Emmanuel Appadocca* in order to focus his narrative on issues of racism rather than slavery, Wilkins and Reid are deliberately historical in their novels in order to focus on the dynamics of slavery at the expense of post-emancipation racial issues. Both of their novels reimagine the past in an attempt to rewrite the present. At the same time that African American authors were adopting England's past as a cultural heritage and source of power, these white authors were using the popular genres of adventure and romance to reimagine

both America's present and their own country's slave past as nostalgic spaces where hierarchies

of class, race, and nation were easily identified and maintained.[52]

Plantations as a Site of Adventure

In order to create plantation novels that would dramatize British male identity through

the easily-recognized forms of adventure, Reid, Braddon, and Wilkins had to present the

plantation as a site of adventure. As I explained in the beginning of Chapter 1, the sea was

automatically and always a site of adventure in the nineteenth century. Critics such as Martin

Green have argued, however, that land could be either adventurous territory or domestic,

settled territory. Much of Green's effort to classify adventure novels is spent making distinctions

between different permutations of the land-based adventure story. Some of those types are the

Robinsonade (named after the originating story of *Robinson Crusoe*), the western, the novel of

exploration, and the historical novel of adventure (usually taking place during a war). The key

similarity among these stories is that the land represented within them is clearly contested

space. Because these books take place on some form of borderland of the nation, the hero's

action within the novel can be read as both personal action and national action rather than just

domestic action. Most land-based adventures do not take place in the hero's home country. As

Phillips notes in his book *Mapping Men and Empire*, "while one *might* have adventures and

become . . . manly in Britain, one was more likely to do so in more exotic spaces of adventure,

overseas" (55). The fundamental necessity for this kind of adventure, as Phillips describes it, is

"a setting defined by movement and freedom" where "the hero defines himself through his

actions" (59). These adventures often focused on the action of claiming a territory either by

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[52] This nostalgia represents a transition between the early rhetoric of British abolitionism and the mid-to-late century belief in immutable racial difference based on the scientific theory of polygenesis. Nostalgic renditions of slavery in popular fiction increased in Britain during the second half of the nineteenth century, though not to the extent that they did in American fiction.

exploration and conquest (as in many of the adventure novels set in Africa or the American west) or exploration and cultivation (as in the Robinsonades). In a land-based adventure, a man proved his manliness by taking a leading part in actions of conquest, exploration, and cultivation that would benefit both himself and the nation that he represented.

A traditional example of this type of adventure would be Mayne Reid's Western novel *The Scalp Hunters*, which was based on his own experiences with a trading company in the American Southwest. The hero of the story is Harry, a young British man who has left school in order to travel on the frontier (a thinly-disguised version of Reid himself). In the course of his travels, Harry meets the scalp hunter of the title and joins his band of trappers and mountain men in an expedition to retrieve the scalp hunter's eldest daughter from the Indians who captured her years ago. Conquest is the central theme of this novel. During his journey, Harry learns to master the dangerous terrain of the American Southwest and the Indians who live there. He even woos and wins the youngest daughter of the scalp hunter in a chapter that is rife with metaphors of battle and conquest. The book contains an additional layer of conquest in the fact that by retelling the story of British Harry in the American frontier, Reid can rhetorically master and conquer the American trappers and mountain men as well by analyzing their characters and re-telling their stories. The form of the novel allows Reid to place both the Indians and the Americans under his authorial thumb and present his readers with a story that reassures them as to English superiority even in the context of the American frontier. This adventure formula becomes much more complex, however, when it is applied to allegedly "civilized" areas, as we will see in the cases of *The Quadroon*, *The Octoroon*, *The Slave Son*, and *The Maroon*.

The American and West Indian settings of these novels are not wholly the kinds of "exotic spaces" that Phillips identifies as ideal sites of Victorian adventure (as opposed to an uninhabited Pacific island or the Australian interior). The adventurous definitions of these settings relies heavily upon the authors' representations of their geography and their social dynamics, particularly in terms of slavery. Take, for example, the state of Louisiana, which is the setting for *The Quadroon* and *The Octoroon* (as well as many other plantation tales of the same pattern). During the middle of the nineteenth century, Louisiana was physically close to the frontier, yet its main city, New Orleans, had been inhabited since 1718 and was a well-developed center of agriculture and trade even before the Americans acquired it in 1803. Because of these two contrasting facts, Louisiana could be imaginatively constructed as a liminal space of half-civilization that contrasted with both the "civilized" areas of America like New York, Philadelphia, or Virginia and the "barbaric" mountains of the far west. However, there is a further element in the make-up of Louisiana that comes into play here, and that is its nature as a slaveholding state. When these stories are closely examined, it is slavery, rather than the half-foreign frontier nature of Louisiana, that provides its exotic and semi-barbaric qualities and allows it to be imagined as a theater for adventure and intrigue.

The impact slavery had upon British perceptions of America as a place can be gleaned from the letters and travelogues of white British visitors to America in the antebellum period. These writings consistently portray slavery as an exotic element that transforms a familiar ex-British colony into a foreign territory. In a letter written during his 1853 trip to America, Thackeray observes the effect that slavery had on him: "I feel as if my travels had only just begun – There was scarce any sensation of novelty until now when the slaves come on to the scene; and straightaway the country assumes an aspect of the queerest interest" (qtd. in Dickerson, 16). Thackeray's identification of slavery as the constitutive difference between

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Britain and America and the observational tone he takes about it clearly place the two countries

in a hierarchical relationship where Britain ranks above America. It is unsurprising that Britain,

which would later use the persistence of slavery as an excuse to invade and colonize Africa,

would perceive American slavery as a sign of barbarity that placed the whole nation in a position

where it could be metaphorically mapped, examined, and conquered by the more "civilized"

British. This metaphorical mapping and examination frequently occurred through the

observations and evaluations of travelers, like Thackeray, Dickens, and Marryat. However, it is

exaggerated in British plantation adventures, like *The Quadroon* by Mayne Reid.

Mayne Reid's 1856 novel *The Quadroon*, which is set in and around the city of New

Orleans, provides an excellent example of how slaveholding territories become contested

territories of the type found in adventure fiction. Reid suggests this analogy himself by

occasionally using the term "Far West" to refer to the area, a label that also appeared in one of

the book's subtitles: *Adventures in the Far West*.[53] Like the Western plains and deserts he wrote

of before, Reid views Louisiana as a site of adventure where Edward, his young British hero, can

prove himself. The exoticized landscape and cultural setting provides Edward with some of his

challenges, such as an encounter with a deadly snake, swarming rats, a journey into the swamp,

and a steamboat explosion. However, his primary quest is to gain possession of Aurore, a

beautiful slave with whom he has fallen in love. Although love is the motivating force of the plot,

this novel is the least romantic or domestic of the ones I am examining, and the most explicit

about the way that slaveholding space can be mapped as contested adventurous space. This

explicitness comes from one salient fact: Aurore, unlike the "tragic mulattas" who are often

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[53] Both *Adventures in the Far West* and *A Lover's Adventures in Louisiana* were used as subtitles for this novel, depending on the publisher.

traced back to her by scholars like Werner Sollors, has lived in slavery since her birth.[54] Though

educated and accomplished, she has never occupied a role other than that of her mistress's

maid. By falling in love with her, Edward breaks the rules of the domestic romance (he ought to

have fallen in love with Eugénie Besançon, the white plantation mistress he saved from

drowning) and challenges the laws of America. The international dimension of this challenge is

not articulated by Edward himself; his sentiments are too pro-slavery to use Britain's nationalist

abolitionist rhetoric to argue for Aurore's freedom to marry him. The position Reid takes in the

novel, articulated by Edward, is the common pro-slavery argument that "the slavery of the

Louisiana black is less degrading than that of the white pleb of England."[55] Feeling this way,

Edward approaches Aurore's liberation as a unique personal challenge, not as an abolitionist

crusade. However, the threat that Edward poses as a British subject undermining American

institutions is articulated by his rival, Dominique Gayarre, who warns him that "this is not the

country for a spy" (131).

Although Edward does not connect his particular situation to the international debate

over slavery, he is very aware that his choice to propose to Aurore has transformed the

Louisiana plantation into hostile territory where bold, adventurous action will be necessary.

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[54] Many critics (Sollors, Carnell, Steele, Zanger, etc.) trace "tragic mulatta" stories like *The Octoroon* by Boucicault and Braddon back to Reid's novel (occasionally with the added accusation of plagiarism), but leave out this salient difference. Because Aurore is never in ignorance of her enslavement and has never lived as a free woman, her character and role in the story are very different from the "tragic" figures of Zoe and Cora.

[55] Reid's position on slavery, through the voice of Edward, follows the common pro-slavery argument that patriarchal American slavery is kinder than the wage-slavery of Britain or Europe, as long as the position is not abused by an unkind master. Reid's particular grievance is against the British system of taxation: "On my soul, I hold that the slavery of the Louisiana black is less degrading than that of the white pleb of England. The poor, woolly-headed helot is the victim of conquest, and may claim to place himself in the honorable category of a prisoner of war. He has not willed his own bondage; while you, my grocer, and butcher, and baker, - aye, and you, my fine city merchant, who fondly fancy yourself a freeman – ye are voluntary in your serfdom; ye are loyal to a political juggle that annually robs ye of half your year's industry…" (39).

Like a true adventurer, Edward explicitly characterizes his quest for romance in terms of conquest: "I see not clearly the way, but a love like mine will triumph over everything. My passion nerves me with power, with courage, with energy. Obstacles must yield; opposing wills be coaxed or crushed; everything must give way that stands between myself and my love!" (119-120) After that turning point in the novel, Edward has a series of hostile encounters with the landscape and the people of Louisiana that revolve around his quest to obtain Aurore. Some of these encounters are symbolic, as when he is bitten by a poisonous snake while dreaming of her (164). Others are explicit acts of violence, as when he kidnaps Aurore from Gayarre's house, flees with her into the swamp, shoots the man-hunter and his dogs, and is almost lynched by a mob who jeers at him as "a stranger in these parts, an' a Britisher" who thinks he can get away with being a "nigger-stealer" (368).

At this key moment in the story, when the adventurous aspects of the book threaten to spiral out of control with the uncivilized murder of Edward, Reid interrupts the adventure of his story with an injection of melodramatic romance by changing the scene from the informal "court" in the woods to an urban court room presided over by a legitimate judge. This transition highlights the limitations of mapping Louisiana as an adventurous space. Whereas in a typical adventure in a truly exotic location Edward would continue to confront and attempt to solve his problems through violent action, in Louisiana he and his accusers must answer sooner or later to the institutionalized legal system that supersedes their individual rights to act.

The conclusion of Reid's novel wavers between genres. The court scene, in which Gayarre is exposed as a embezzler who has been withholding Aurore's free papers, a supposedly dead man comes back to life, and Edward's new friend Eugéne D'Hauteville is revealed to be Eugénie Besançon in drag, reads like a melodramatic romance in which domestic legal upsets

have been set to rights. However, the novel finishes firmly with the tone of an adventure. After the court discovers that Aurore is free, she vanishes from the story, while the narrative voice summarizes the fates of all of the other major and minor characters, dwelling on Eugénie's broken heart at the loss of Edward and the downfall of several con-men who had attempted to swindle Edward in a card game. In the course of that summary, we learn that our hero has traveled to Mexico, but we know nothing about the fate of Aurore once she is discovered to be free, not even if she and Edward did marry. This ending makes it very clear that the character of Aurore was not as important, in Reid's mind, as the plot that she motivated. Her most important feature as an element of the plot was her status as a slave. Without it, Edward loses his field of conflict, and the novel crashes to a halt. While, up to this point, Reid has successfully imagined Louisiana as a primitive land of adventure where Edward's Britishness is defined by his actions, this construction of Louisiana unravels in the face of the legal realities of the slave system and the civilized aspects of the state. Slavery is, at best, an unstable site of adventure because its legal realities and the civilization that supports them resist the kind of simplified, caricatured space that works best for adventure (Phillips 64).

The construction of slavery as a site of adventurous international conflict appears differently in Mary Elizabeth Braddon's 1859 serialized novel *The Octoroon; Or, The Lily of Louisiana*. Overall, Braddon's novel follows a much more conventional plot than Reid's: Cora, who is of mixed blood but raised as a free woman in England, fits the stereotypical definition of the "tragic mulatta" much more closely than Aurore. The central horror of her story is the moment when she discovers that she is a slave and is sold to the lecherous planter, Augustus Horton, to pay her father's debts. The way the story unfolds owes much more to the genre of sensational romance than to the adventure genre (it takes place mostly in urban or domestic locations and includes a secret marriage, a substitute baby, blackmail, and a stolen inheritance),

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yet slavery remains a site of conflict that is construed in terms of international adventure. This definition rests mostly on the characterization of the British hero, Gilbert Margrave. Braddon introduces him to the reader in this way: "With a complexion bronzed by exposure to Southern suns, with flashing black eyes, a firm but flexible mouth, shaded with a silky raven moustache, and thick black hair brushed carelessly back from his superb forehead, Gilbert Margrave, artist, engineer, philanthropist, poet, seemed the very type of manly energy." She goes on to associate his spirit with "wide savannahs and lofty mountain tops, distant rivers and sounding waterfalls . . . the broad bosom of the mighty Amazon" (2-3). Margrave, then, is the very definition of the ideal British man – one who draws his strength from England, but who finds fulfillment by exploring and conquering distant territories.

Gilbert is also an abolitionist, and throughout the novel Braddon makes abundant use of British abolitionist rhetoric, triumphantly declaring that "to the Briton there is no such word as slavery" (61). As Kimberly Harrison notes in her essay on the novel, "through the character of Margrave, Braddon cultivates British nationalism by building upon the anti-Americanism that was prevalent in Britain at the beginning of the Civil War, caused by events such as the passage of the Morrill tariff in February 1861 and, more explosively, by the *Trent* Affair, beginning November 8, 1861, only a few days before Braddon's first installment of *The Octoroon* appeared" (217). The natives of Louisiana clearly perceive Margrave as an antagonist in the novel from the moment he arrives in New Orleans with the plans for machinery that he hopes will replace slave labor in the South. As one man explains when he stops Gilbert from picking a fight with Augustus Horton at Cora's sale, "our folks are not over fond of your countrymen just now, and they wouldn't make much work of taking out their bowie knives" (163). So, although the plot of her novel follows a much more domestic and romantic trajectory than Reid's, Braddon is much more clear about the international dimensions of the central conflict of her

novel – Gilbert's quest to make Cora his wife – because she makes use of Britain's stance as an anti-slavery nation.

The international tensions generated by this plot are reflected by the elements of the adventure genre that appear in the story. Although Braddon's novel is primarily a domestic romance focusing on the courtship and marriage of the couples Cora and Gilbert, and Camillia Moraquitos and Paul Lisimon, elements of adventure are constantly intruding upon it. One such element is the character Bill Bowan, who is introduced as "a tall, lanky, raw-boned looking man, with long hair, which streamed in rough locks from under his fur cap. He wore a bear-skin jacket, very much the worse for bad usage, loose knickerbocker trousers, leather gaiters, and great nailed boots; his red-striped shirt was torn and ragged, and a tattered cloak hung loosely over his shoulder" (27). When Bill enters the drawing room of the dainty white heroine, Adelaide Horton, he serves as a reminder that the frontier is perilously close to New Orleans. Another such figure is the haughty Spaniard Don Juan Moraquitos, who in his past was a "pirate and adventurer" (169). Braddon is careful to inform her readers that the remnants of his career decorate his study: "Cutlasses, pistols, and carbines, of polished steel, inlaid with gold and enamel, hung in glittering array, side by side with charts of that ocean upon which, if scandalous tongues were correct, Don Juan Moraquitos had for many years been a rover" (115). Don Juan's violent past carries over into the present when, in the second major plotline of the novel, he defrauds his brother-in-law's mixed-race son, Paul, of his rightful inheritance, forbids a marriage between Paul and his daughter, Camillia, and then commits suicide with one of those pistols from his study wall when his perfidy is discovered. A third important adventurous figure is Captain Prendergills of the ship *Amazon*:

> "He was a big, broad-shouldered follow, upwards of six feet high, dressed in
> a thick pilot coat, and immense leather boots, which came above his knees. .

. . The stranger's face had once been a handsome one, but it bore upon it the traces of many a debauch, as well as the broad scar of a cutlass wound, which had left a deep welt from cheek to chin" (101).

Each of these adventurous figures plays a significant role in the unraveling of the novel's complicated domestic plots.

Adventure, in the shape of the characters I've just described, and a subplot involving the California Gold Rush, presses in upon Braddon's domestic narrative from all sides, often serving as the source and/or the solution for the problems that the characters face. In the case of Cora and Paul, whose problems stem from their mysterious mixed-race origins, adventure provides the only path towards a solution of their problems. Both conflicts are solved by a set of adventurers. Cora is freed from Augustus Horton's possession through the efforts of Gilbert Margrave and the surprise return of her father's partner from California's gold fields just in time to present evidence that invalidates her sale. Paul is freed from jail by Captain Prendergills, who also helps him rescue Camillia after she is kidnapped.

In this novel, both New Orleans and the plantations of Louisiana take on the role of an international battleground where domestic conflicts are explicitly linked to the international issue of slavery which was often a major source of political conflict between Britain and America (as the case of the *Creole*, which I discussed in the first chapter of this dissertation, shows). Fittingly, the conclusion of Gilbert and Cora's story is reminiscent of Marryat's sea adventure *Mr. Midshipman Easy*. Gilbert, the "manly" adventurer, vanquishes the lecherous Augustus Horton and returns to England with Cora, who Braddon writes is now "a happy wife in our own dear native land – happy in the society of the father she loves, secure in the devotion of her proud English husband" (210). As in Marryat's novel, the foreign aspects of the bride – in Cora's case her African blood and enslaved past – are erased through the medium of marriage to an

Englishman. Louisiana, the site of Gilbert's imperial adventure and metaphorical conquest, is left behind. Braddon makes it clear to her readers that Louisiana is still an antagonistic space for British subjects by describing the final handshake between Augustus and Gilbert as a hollow ceremony that does nothing to mask their hostile disagreement on the subject of slavery (208). By representing Louisiana as a hostile territory, Braddon, like Reid, enhances the idealized British identity of her hero. Both Edward and Gilbert are enabled to act the way they do because they are portrayed as adventurers in a hostile, somewhat barbaric territory, not as visitors to a civilized country.

In both Reid and Braddon's novels, Louisiana takes on the role of an exoticized site of adventure because of slavery, which provides the signal difference that separates it from the "civilized" space of Britain. A similar construction of slavery as a site of adventure also appears in British plantation novels set in the pre-emancipation West Indies. The difference, of course, is that the West Indies belonged to Britain, not another nation. Because of this British connection, they could not be characterized as "uncivilized" space without reflecting negatively on Britain itself. Nevertheless, like Louisiana, the islands are definitely regarded in these works as liminal space. This perception comes from their colonial status and the wilderness that existed outside of the boundaries of the plantations and towns, despite the fact that those plantations and towns themselves are more often represented as civilized spaces because of their close political, social, economic, and familial ties to the mother country.

The result of these conflicting ideas is the somewhat schizophrenic image of the West Indies, which appears in the two novels I will be discussing next, *The Slave Son* (1854) by Marcella Fanny Wilkins, and *The Maroon: or, Planter Life in Jamaica* (1862) by Mayne Reid. Trinidad and Jamaica in these novels are presented at once as domesticated but also liminal

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spaces. Wilkins explores this duality in her novel through descriptions of the landscape, which create a imaginative map of Trinidad for her readers that is emotional as well as physical. In the opening of the second chapter, she sets the scene by describing the landscape surrounding the village of Sant' Iago where the novel's action takes place:

> "The scenery was richly tropical. Plantations of colonial produce chequered the view on all sides; young groves of cinnamon on the heights, dark green fields of indigo in the hollows; pleasant slopes, here reddened with the berries of the coffee, there white with snowy flakes bursting from the nuts of the cotton, while yonder, gracefully winding round the base of the hills, might be traced the gorgeous coral-tree which shelters the tender chocolate-bush, while in the plains vast sweeps of cane, now bursting into bloom, shone in the slanting ray like sheets of waving gold shot over with silver and purple." (119-120)

Wilkins's focal point in this description is not the exotic, tropical aspect of the landscape, although that is certainly present, but rather the cultivated nature of the land. The forested mountains are merely the backdrop to the pattern of European plantations laid out beneath them in an emotionally-satisfying array of colors. This description of cultivated fertility is contrasted with the description of the poisonous lair of Fanty, the African Obiah (Obeah) man:

> "Nature, so beautiful and enchanting elsewhere on the mountains, here assumed a most repulsive aspect: dark, dismal blossoms, huge, misshapen fruits, and glossy leaves almost black with venomous sap, were mingled with thorns, long, pointed, and protruding, like spears of ugly gnomes; while a rank smell of unwholesome vegetation rendered the atmosphere around unpleasant and difficult to breathe." (203)

The duality found in the landscape of Trinidad, which is rife with both beneficial and poisonous plants, signifies the instability of the way of life Wilkins perceives on the island. Although settled by Europeans and currently under the rule of the British, Trinidad is not an entirely "civilized" space. Wilkins makes it clear that it is slavery that causes the instability of life on Trinidad when she portrays the slaveholding society of the island being threatened by the slaves' greater

knowledge of botany, which allows them to transform the poisonous plants in the landscape

into dangerous weapons that undermine plantation life.

Wilkins was not unique in her focus on botany within her novel. Botany, and other

scientific disciplines, cropped up frequently in nineteenth century adventure fiction. As Selwyn

Cudjoe writes of Trinidad, "the need to possess this new geographic space in all of its

complexities [was] a part of the project of Nationness that possessed the writers and thinkers of

the period" (*Beyond Boundaries* 144). Authors, like Reid and Wilkins, made it clear that it was

necessary to understand the scientific principles of the flora and fauna of a country, as well as its

geography, in order to truly possess it. To this end, Reid frequently includes an expert in botany

as a character in his novels (the doctor in *The Quadroon* is one example) who can educate the

hero. The fact that Edward in *The Quadroon* must rely on the botanical knowledge of an escaped

slave, Gabriel, to navigate the swamp and cure his snakebite, is a signal to the reader that

Louisiana is not yet fully civilized. Likewise, Fanty's knowledge of poisons in Wilkins's novel, and

the slaveholders' ignorance of the antidotes, highlight the dangers of Trinidad's unclaimed

spaces.[56]

As well as threatening their lives, slavery is also responsible for causing a kind of moral

devolution in the "civilized" Europeans that settle the island. Mr. Dorset, an upstanding planter

recently arrived from England, recognizes the dangers of living in a slaveholding society after

watching a French planter, St. Hilaire Cardon, whip a slave girl who was trying to protect her

father from the lash. Leaving the scene, he questions himself, "is this the amusement of

planters? are these the scenes which must in time become palatable even to me? England! my

beloved country!" (201) By moving to Trinidad and taking over a plantation, Dorset has put

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[56] See the Coda of this project for an example of shifts in this botanical interest in the first decade of the twentieth century.

himself in jeopardy of losing his "English" characteristics of humanity and justice in the aura of

casual violence that surrounds even the most aristocratic society of the island. Wilkins's point

throughout her abolitionist novel is that slavery has the power to transform a potentially-

productive British colonial territory into contested space where British identity is under attack

and may possibly disappear altogether unless the possessor takes decisive action to maintain his

primacy and property. In *The Quadroon* and *The Octoroon* this decisive action takes the form of

releasing one deserving woman from the bonds of slavery. For Wilkins, who was a committed

abolitionist, this action involves attacking the abuses at the root of the slave system.

In *The Maroon*, Reid also portrays the West Indies as liminal space that threatens the

integrity of British identity. Like Wilkins, he turns to the landscape to depict the dangers of the

West Indies, primarily in the comic scene in which the British fop Montague Smythje goes out

hunting and ends up shooting a turkey vulture and getting stuck in the hollow trunk of a tree

until he is rescued by a Maroon passing by.[57] More seriously, Reid also turns to slavery as a root

of liminality, as can be seen through the relationship between the hero, Herbert Vaughan, and

Judith Jessuron, the beautiful daughter of the book's main villain. Herbert is a young man newly-

arrived from England at the beginning of the story, come to Jamaica to visit his uncle Loftus

Vaughan. After being turned away from his uncle's plantation, Herbert encounters Jacob

Jessuron, a wealthy Jewish planter and ex-slave trader, and his daughter Judith. Jacob is aware

that Loftus's daughter, Kate, is of mixed race and cannot inherit the property without an act of

the legislature, and so plans to use Judith to ensnare Herbert, who is the next of kin, and

thereby ultimately gain control of the Mount Welcome plantation after Loftus's death. Herbert,

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[57] This is not the only novel in which Reid portrays the accidental shooting of a vulture rather than an edible bird. It also appears in his boys' book *Ran Away to Sea*, which takes place in Africa. In both cases, this accident reflects the characters' imperfect knowledge of the territory they are attempting to master.

angry at his uncle's cold welcome, is more than happy to take a job with Jacob and be courted by Judith.

Through this relationship with the manipulative and twisted Jewish family, Herbert is made aware of the dangers of the colonial space. Despite Judith's beauty, "in spirit . . . she was the child of her father – devilish as he" (30). There is no question that Reid's portrayal of the Jessurons is prejudiced in the extreme, although halfway through the book he makes a digressive attempt to claim that "Jacob Jessuron was not type of his race; nor, indeed, of any race" and that his Jewishness is incidental to his penchant for slave-dealing and cruelty (203). The fact remains that Reid chose to make the Jessurons Jewish, and highlights that fact repeatedly through Jacob's unique accent and by constantly referring to Judith as "the Jewess." Because they are not-quite white and not-quite British characters, the Jessurons (like Wilkins's French planter, Cardon) act as mediating figures between the hero and the system of slavery. By portraying the Jessurons as a racial Others steeped in the cruelties of the slave system, Reid is able to place his hero in a position where he is in danger of losing his British identity through contact with slavery and a racial Other without having to portray him in contact with any actual slaves.[58] In fact, the danger posed by the slave community in the book, primarily the poisoning of Loftus Vaughan, can be traced back to Jacob, who hires the Obeah man to carry out the work for him. This convoluted chain of responsibility allows Reid to portray Jamaica as a site of adventure, exoticized because of its remote location and involvement in slavery. And yet, he does not have to condemn slavery itself because Jacob is the root cause of Herbert's threatened British identity.

Reid's pro-slavery position (he condemns slave trading in his novels, but not plantation

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[58] Jews were often portrayed as racial others in Victorian novels and were featured in debates over British national identity in the nineteenth century. See Cesarani.

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slavery itself) complicates his representations of slavery, especially in the Caribbean. Braddon (a mild abolitionist) and Wilkins (a committed abolitionist) can both blame the slave system for the dangers their heroes face. Reid has no problem blaming the American system of slavery in a limited sense for Edward's danger. However, he cannot blame the slave system in the Caribbean for Herbert's situation without admitting that the inequalities between blacks and whites generated by slavery were a root problem that should have been eliminated with Britain's abolition of slavery. In order to blame the now-extinct slave system for Herbert's dangerous situation without arguing for the rights of the enslaved, Reid shifts the blame to the Jessurons. Slavery causes Jamaica to be a site of adventure in Reid's novel, but only because it is the vehicle that allows non-Anglo-Saxon whites, like the Jessurons, access to power and the means to do evil. The purpose of abolition, then, would be to strip them of their power, not to promote any kind of equality for the enslaved people.

Although Reid focuses on the conflict between the Anglo-Saxon characters and the Jewish characters in *The Maroon*, he also identifies the individual ethnicities of many of his black characters, a characteristic that he shares with Wilkins. The interest both Wilkins and Reid take in identifying characters in their books as "Mandingo," "Foulah," "Eboe," "Koromantyn," and so on, derives from the imperial obsession with observation and classification that was so closely linked to Victorian racism.[59] Even the abolitionist Wilkins reduces each group of captured Africans to a single stereotype: obedient, effeminate, stupid-looking, despondent, or fearless (150). Although these stereotypes are frequently degrading, the fact remains that through them these slaves are described as members of distinct and organized nations. These national labels provide these characters with some sort of identity apart from the designation "slave." Each of

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[59] The spelling of the names of these tribes varies from novel to novel. The spellings given above are those given by Wilkins in *The Slave Son*. When I am discussing the names in the context of a particular novel, I will use the spelling adopted by the author to remain consistent with the text.

these Caribbean books also includes an example of African leadership: the Koromantyn chieftain Anamoa in *The Slave Son* and the Foolah prince Cingües in *The Maroon*. These figures highlight the fact that slavery is an international act of violence. Although the national pride of these characters is often derided by the authors of these texts, their nationality remains visible and suggests to the reader an alternative, autonomous identity for these people. In the next section of this chapter, I will discuss how the elements of the domestic genre that appear in these texts work to erase these African national identities and replace them with domestic, private identities.

By examining the setting of these four novels, we can see how slavery was equated with adventure in these texts. The representation of slave plantations as adventurous spaces allowed these authors to enhance their heroes' British identities by giving them an obstacle to overcome. In each of these novels, slavery creates a dangerous, adventurous territory where acknowledged (Braddon and Wilkins) or unacknowledged (Reid) anti-slavery action is equated with a positive assertion of British identity. The important question, then, is this: What effect did the representation of slave plantations as adventurous space where anti-slavery action creates a positive British identity have upon those slaves who took anti-slavery action? Could a slave take the same actions as the white hero, and if so, would they have the same effect upon his identity? Reid, Braddon, and Wilkins confront these questions in their novels through various rebellious characters who do make a bid for their own right to an equal identity through adventurous action. However, as I will demonstrate in the next section of this chapter, their attempts are controlled and defused by the introduction of the domestic genre into the texts.

Domesticated Adventure

Both the abolitionists Wilkins and Braddon and the apologist Reid use slavery in their historical novels to place their characters in adventurous situations and territories where British identity is threatened and must be reaffirmed through decisive action. Nevertheless, none of these stories is a straight adventure in the tradition of Marryat, Ballantyne, or many of Reid's other novels. Instead, they are hybrids of the adventure genre and the genre of domestic romance. Each novel is motivated by a love plot that borrows as much from melodrama as from adventure, and the action of each novel is split between domestic spaces, such as the plantation house or the town, and the adventurous spaces that press in from all sides. This hybrid form comes from the fact that the adventure genre, while it functions very well as a narrative proving-ground for British national identity, does not fit well within semi-civilized spaces like America or, even more so, long-colonized British spaces like the West Indies. The complex dynamics of plantation slavery are hard to reduce to the formula of the adventure, and the genre of domestic romance is most often invoked in order to terminate or erase the loose ends that adventure leaves. The domestic genre is significant in each of these novels because by involving men of African descent in the domestic aspects of these plots, the authors can distance them from the results of the adventures in these novels and prevent them from appearing to access the adventurous tropes of national identity that are typically given to white men.

As I argued in my introduction, the genre of domestic romance (or romantic melodrama, as I have been calling it here in an attempt to include the perspectives of other scholars) revolves around the family and only implicitly deals with the nation, while the adventure genre revolves around a (male) individual in a hostile or strange environment and explicitly deals with the nation in an international setting. In other words, one genre focuses on making the nation from the inside out, while the other focuses on making the nation from the outside in. These

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two genres collide in these plantation novels because the plantations exist both within and outside of the nation. The adventure aspects of these three novels allow the white heroes to reaffirm their British identity. At the same time, the domestic plotline is necessary for the authors to naturalize the erstwhile space of adventure into a space in which the objects of slavery, the slaves, can become subjects of the Anglicized nation rather than people who might claim their own subjectivity and agency within slavery's contested space. While an adventurous identity is necessary to the white heroes, it is potentially subversive when applied to the black characters in the books. This is especially true for the black male characters, who only have one barrier (race) instead of two (race and gender) standing between them and the kind of fully-realized national identity experienced by the heroes. As a result, these books attempt to walk a thin line: slavery is a site of adventure for white men, but not for black men. However, because of the prevalence of black male characters in the novels and the civilized aspects of the setting, that line is difficult, if not impossible for them to maintain.

While scholars, such as Jennifer DeVere Brody, have examined the domestic role played by mixed-race women in plantation novel plots, they have not discussed the operation of the domestic plot on African American men in these stories. In the case of mixed-race women, the domestic plot focuses on their marriage with the white hero. As Brody writes of the Victorian period, "If the proper family is the building block of a strong nation, then incest, miscegenation, and hybridity threaten the family (of man), and by extension, the nation (of proper gentlemen)" (55). According to Brody, novelists defused this threat by focusing on the woman's "white" attributes (virtue, education, accomplishment, delicate sensibility) and her legal marriage to the hero, which effectively transfers her status from "black" to "white." As Brody writes: "Through controlled commerce with such a savior, she could be spared the sufferings of enslavement" (17). The control in this situation is exerted through the legal conditions of marriage in the

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Victorian period, which placed her almost completely in her husband's power. While marriage between a mixed-race heroine and white hero could "whiten" the woman and incorporate her into the national family, marriage between a man of African descent and a white woman would not have the same effect because the white partner in such a marriage would hold the legally subordinate position. Marriage into the white national family, then, was not an element that authors could use to defuse the disruptive potential of their adventurous black male characters. However, there were other aspects of the domestic genre that they could use to try to limit their black male characters' association with an adventurous identity.

Each novel takes a different approach to walking this fine line. In *The Quadroon*, Reid engages with it mainly through the character of Gabriel, a "Bambarra" slave who has assaulted his overseer and run away from Eugénie's plantation to escape the cruel assignment to "flog a fellow-slave." Edward clearly admires his motives, and compares him to the legendary Swiss freedom-fighter William Tell, claiming that "A spirit of liberty alone could have inspired him with that courage." Through Edward's eyes, Gabriel is presented at this moment as a classic heroic figure: "As the negro stood with his thick muscular fingers spread over his brawny chest, with form erect, with head thrown back, and eyes fixed in stern resolve, I was impressed, with an air of grandeur about him, and could not help thinking that in the black form before me, scantily clad in coarse cotton, there were the soul and spirit of a man!" (176, 177) Gabriel gets further recognition from Edward for his mastery of life in the swamp, and his knowledge of plants which saves Edward's life after he is bitten by a poisonous snake.

3. Illustration of Gabriel charming the snake that bit Edward (1874 Carleton, New York edition, p. 184a).

Gabriel's heroic actions and his mastery of the landscape and its plants theoretically place him in the role of an adventurous hero. He, even more than Edward, has challenged the injustice of the slave system and has asserted his own individual identity and autonomy. However, Reid defuses this potential by containing Gabriel within the close confines of the swamp and the plantation, and by domesticating him through his relationship to Edward. Like the character of Mesty, in *Mr. Midshipman Easy* by Marryat, Gabriel is placed under Edward's control as a sidekick, and then formally domesticated through his choice to return to plantation labor.

The character of the runaway hiding in the swamp was common in fictional accounts of slavery. William Tynes Cowan's book *The Slave in the Swamp: Disrupting the Plantation Narrative* examines this figure and his role in American antebellum fiction and journalistic writings. Cowan argues that "Those maroons who made a life for themselves in the heart of the South evoked a sense of African American autonomy and resistance to the peculiar institution.

They were outside the system of white control, yet their invisible presence signaled the potential for insurrection" (15). This revolutionary potential was incorporated, if not co-opted, by white writers whose works "served to reinscribe the rebel" and provide "a sense of closure" that would reaffirm the boundaries between "civilized" white space and the barbaric spaces of the woods and the swamp (13). In his work, Cowan stresses the important role that fiction, rather than eyewitness report, played in this process of containment, highlighting the same functions that made the adventure novel so popular as a tool for national identity building:

> "The fictional creation of a world . . . de-emphasizes its function as argument, replacing that with an ultimate truth provided from the eye of God (the narrator). The fictional narrative is set apart by its ability to smooth away contradictions that are highlighted by these other forms of discourse. That is, a novel *creates* a world whereas a political speech *argues for* a world." (88-89)

Reid's portrayal of Gabriel, his slave in the swamp, is certainly an important act of creation and containment. Gabriel is necessary to the narrative because he has the skills that will help Edward survive the Louisiana wilderness. However, Reid takes advantage of his authorial power and the genre he is working in to limit Gabriel's agency by inscribing him as a traditional "native sidekick" to the hero of his adventure, a relationship that imitates the aspect of Victorian marriage where one partner holds paternalistic control over the other.

Although Gabriel shows great mastery of his immediate space (the swamp) and a certain amount of control over his own destiny in the fact that he can take calculated leaves of absence from his owners, Gabriel lacks the long-range planning that would make him the permanent master of his situation. According to Edward, "He had formed no plan of escape – though some thoughts of an attempt to reach Canada or Mexico, or to get off in a ship by New Orleans, had passed through his mind" (198). Edward feels that he himself will have to step in and find a

permanent solution to Gabriel's problem, thereby implying that Gabriel is incapable of choosing his own path. Edward's action in this regard will be in the best interests of his friends, since it will remove a potentially-destructive force from the vicinity of his friends' plantations. This plan reflects Cowan's argument that the goal of most stories of slaves in the swamp is to make it clear that such a life is transitory, at best, and no permanent threat to the control white men maintained over the land of the South.[60] Reid manages the story so that Edward's plans need never come into play. Once Eugénie's plantation is restored to her benevolent control Gabriel's offense against the overseer is forgiven and "the snake-charmer still retained his brawny arms, and never afterwards had occasion to seek refuge in his tree-cavern" (377).

Gabriel's voluntary return to slavery represents Reid's fundamental "solution" for the "problems" of emancipation and racial conflict. In the world he has created, those slaves who are clearly marked with racial difference (everyone except Aurore) are happy to accept the servant's role, provided that they are well cared for, within the domestic hierarchy of the plantation. By incorporating the one "white" slave into his own family, Edward has removed the source of instability from the system and restored domestic harmony to the whole. At the end of *The Quadroon* Reid reassures the reader that Louisiana has been firmly domesticated, not only because the slaves have returned to the plantation and Edward has finally won Aurore, but also because the epilogue section of the novel gradually shifts the action from Louisiana to Mexico. By moving Edward, the adventurer, to Mexico Reid suggests that Louisiana is no longer a site where men (white or black) can engage in heroic actions that assert their national identity.

In *The Octoroon*, Braddon not only limits the possibility of adventure to certain characters, but also reroutes the rhetoric of adventure into the rhetoric of self-help through

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[60] See Cowan, page 125 and also his chapter on Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel *Dred*, which represents a powerful, yet transitory, swamp community.

intellectual pursuits. Unlike Reid, Braddon does not portray any heroic African characters. Her only two characters of pure African descent are Zara and her son Tristan, who are the slaves of Camillia Moraquitos. While the American-born slaves in the novel are stereotypically docile, the African-born slaves are exotic and almost savage. Zara has a "stony manner" while her son is portrayed as a natural jester, who is called "*le diablin noir* (the little black devil)" by Camillia's governess. Later, Braddon explains that "there was much of the savage in the character of this man" and that "his was one of those natures, burning as Africa's skies, created, sometimes, like the venomous serpents of those tropical climes, only to terrify and to destroy" (80). His individual nature, shaped, Braddon suggests, by the continent that gave him birth, is not heroic so much as it is demonic.[61]

There is a moment in the novel when Tristan exhibits feelings that approach an heroic claim to his own subjectivity. Insulted by his master, Tristan muses that "they can set their names upon our tortured flesh and mark *that* as their own; but they cannot brand our souls, slaves as we are; pitiful wretches as we may be, *those* are our own! Let them beware the hour when they come to learn the secret workings of those silent depths" (34). However, this incipient heroic sentiment, marred by the threat at the end of it, is channeled entirely into Tristan's passionate and obsessive love for Camillia. His goal is not liberty, and even when his master offers to free him and his mother and send them back to Africa, Tristan refuses so that he can remain near Camillia.

Tristan's frustrated love places him in the role of antagonist to the heroic Paul Lisimon,

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[61] Kimberly Harrison argues that Braddon complicates Tristan's character, writing that "in [Braddon's] description, her choice of the qualifier "sometimes" is telling, indicating the contextual nature of human behavior." While this moment, and the other ones that Harrison points out in the text, do represent qualifications on Braddon's part of the stereotypes that she is engaging with, in Tristan's case the conclusion of the story seems to reinscribe those stereotypes upon him even as he is evicted from the story.

who will eventually win Camillia's heart. Tristan seems to exist to call into question Paul's belief

that the slaves were people possessed of "simple but noble natures" who merely required

teaching and good leadership to blend into the American national body. During their final

confrontation, Tristan declares that the contradiction between his love for Camillia and his

enslaved status has made him mad: "Yes, I am mad. What can that slave be but mad who dares

to love his mistress? I would grovel upon the earth, and suffer her foot to trample upon my

neck. I would die a thousand deaths, but I am mad, and I love her" (203). Tristan's fixation on a

domestic relationship with Camillia cuts him off from the kind of heroic identity he could have

claimed as a runaway or rebel. Like Gabriel, Tristan chooses to opt out of an adventurous

identity he could have grasped. By having Tristan self-select a path that leads to madness,

Braddon suggests that aggressive black male characters are only a temporary danger to white

domesticity and the white nation that the domestic family represents.

By focusing on Tristan's dark skin, African heritage, and insanity, Braddon makes it easy

for the reader to forget that Paul Lisimon, the upstanding young man who wins Camillia's heart,

is also of African descent, although he is white enough to pass. The story of Paul and Camillia is

in many ways an inverted version of Cora and Gilbert's. However, although Paul is technically

another octoroon, his characterization is very different from Cora's because he is not female,

nor is he in danger of being enslaved.[62] First introduced to the story as the ward of Don Juan's

brother-in-law, Thomas Crivelli, we later discover that Paul is in fact Crivelli's son by a quadroon

woman whom he had freed and married in secret. Defrauded of his inheritance by Don Juan,

Paul must work his way up in the world. When he escapes from prison after being framed for

theft, Paul's first thought is to commit suicide. At this moment, a figure of adventure enters the

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[62] I have found only one other example of a British work where the octoroon character is a man, and that is Wilkie Collins's play *Black and White*, which was first performed in 1869 in London. The complete text of this play is available on the internet.

story in the shape of Captain Prendergills of the ship *Amazon*. This mysterious adventurer

informs Paul that he is the one who engineered his escape and offers him a job as first mate

aboard his ship as an alternative to suicide, saying that "I thought there was blood in your veins

that never yet ran in those of a coward" (102). Paul accepts, and we learn that Prendergills is "a

sailor by profession, a rover by choice, and a privateer for plunder" (103). By embarking on a

brief adventurous career with the captain, Paul is transformed from a charity case to an

independent man. It is the captain and his associates who help him save Camillia's life when she

is later kidnapped by Augustus Horton.

However, Paul's adventurous career takes place almost entirely off stage. It is a

narrative necessity in order to strengthen his character and get him out of New Orleans for

awhile, but Braddon does not allow the reader to dwell on his identity as an adventurer. Instead,

she encourages her readers to form a different impression of Paul: that of a poor man who

earns his future good fortune through hard work. She describes his diligent pursuit of

knowledge "on the stony road which leads to greatness" and the way he "revolted against a life

of dependence" and rejected idle luxury (62, 63). This self-help angle of Braddon's novel has

been explored by Kimberly Harrison in her essay "Political Persuasion in Mary Braddon's *The

Octoroon; Or, The Lily of Louisiana*." In that essay, Harrison approaches the novel in the context

of its intended audience, which was the audience of the lower-class magazine *The Halfpenny

Journal*. Like most mid-century fiction aimed at the lower class reader, Harrison argues,

Braddon's novel must be read didactically. She writes that "the novel's purpose was not only to

promote an antislavery message, but also to address domestic issues of social reform." Through

characters like Paul, "Braddon presents a message of slow and steady social and political change

that has implications for the novel's working-class readers" (213). Although Harrison does not

express her argument in terms of competing genres, it is easy to read the difference between

Braddon's work and *The Quadroon* as the difference between the adventure genre and the

domestic genre. As Harrison states, "Braddon defines her heroes as ideally masculine not by

their class but through their hard work and subsequent success" (214). The painstaking work

undertaken by Paul is meant to inspire Braddon's readers to become productive members of the

British nation at home rather than inspiring them to seek their fortunes abroad. Although the

octoroon Paul can be read as an exemplary figure for the British working-class reader, his

domestic role in the novel also relates to the racial issues of the time. According to Harrison,

"While Braddon's social vision is largely in line with nineteenth-century middle-class liberalism,

her message is pushed to radical extremes in its echoes of earlier nineteenth-century

abolitionist ideals of human equality as the narrative implies the potential for eventual social

progress, regardless of one's "nature," race, or even, by extension, class" (218). Although it is

true that Braddon does embrace a narrative of gradual social progress, especially in the

generational changes that are reflected in the stories of enslaved parents who give birth to

freed children, her control over Paul's narrative retains the conservative limits placed by Reid on

Gabriel's story. Like a female version of Cora, Paul is only recognized through his assimilation

into the domestic space of a white family and his reinscription as a hard-working white

"Mexican" man. As far as the reader knows, Camillia is never informed of his mother's race, just

as she is never informed of the crimes that motivated her own father's suicide. While Paul in his

childhood felt pity for Don Juan's slaves, endeavored to give them religious instruction, and

"looked forward to a day when, from the ranks of these despised people, great men should arise

to elevate the African race, and to declare aloud in the Senate, and before the assembled

nations, the EQUAL RIGHTS OF THE GREAT BROTHERHOOD OF MAN" (37, caps in original), he

never imagines himself in the role of their leader, even when he discovers his racial heritage.

The elevation of the non-white characters in the book is left entirely to white British figures, and

political action of any kind is eschewed in favor of domestic relationships and slow educational

and economic development.

Like Reid, Braddon's project is ultimately one of containment and domestication. By

rechanneling Paul's adventurous potential into professional work, and incorporating him into a

white family, Braddon effectively erases any revolutionary potential he might have had as an

active black subject. However, despite his domestication, Braddon keeps Paul at a distance from

England and her English couple. Although Camillia is depicted as white throughout the novel,

she is also identified as Spanish, which suggests that Braddon is drawing a line between English

whiteness and non-English whiteness. Rather than traveling to England, Paul and Camillia go to

France for their future life.[63] While Braddon was unafraid to portray Cora and Gilbert as a viable

English family, thereby "disputing fears of racial and national degeneration brought about by

mixed-race unions" (Harrison 222), she deliberately avoided incorporating a mixed-race man

into England as the head of a family. Such an action, as I have already discussed, would

challenge the familial power structures that were associated with the strength of the nation.

This fact may explain why the only man of African descent to leave America for England in this

novel is Toby, the mulatto slave who first tells Cora the story of her parentage.

Toby and Paul share an interesting parallel in the story: both are involved in instances of

near-suicide. Paul, as I explained, almost kills himself but then takes advantage of Prendergills's

offer to join his ship which reinvigorates his life. Toby, on the other hand, is present at the

moment when Silas Craig comes to seize Cora as part of her father's forfeit estate. In an agony

of fear, Cora pleads with her father to "Kill me, kill me sooner than abandon me to that man."

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[63] It was common in American fiction for a mixed-race couple or African American couple to move to continental Europe after their marriage. One such novel is *Clotel* by William Wells Brown, which is discussed in the next chapter.

Toby seconds her plea by handing her father a knife with the words "Kill her, master . . . better

that than she should meet the fate of her mother" who ultimately committed suicide after Leslie

sold her to Craig (150). Leslie asserts his prerogative by refusing to kill her, but we are left with

the impression that, to Toby, suicide is a viable option. This places him in a position diametrically

opposed to mainstream Victorian society, with its moralistic horror of suicide. Toby's willingness

to endorse suicide as an option for the threatened slave marks him as a foil for the reinvigorated

figure of Paul and signals the devastating lack of active options that faced slaves in distress. Toby

implies that for slaves autonomy lies not in the path of action, but the path of self-destruction.

Braddon does not condone this attitude (the only suicide in the novel is Don Juan, who kills

himself from shame) but she also does not offer alternative options that would allow a man like

Toby to claim autonomy, much less a collective national identity. In fact, Toby's life is devoid of

options.

Toby informs Cora that he fell in love with her mother, Francilia, when she first came to

the Leslie plantation, only to see her forced into a sexual relationship with Mr. Leslie. Toby's first

reaction was anger: "A terrible rage possessed me! I was like a drunken man! If, in that moment,

Mr. Leslie had appeared before me, I know that I should have become a murderer." But, this

moment of manly fervor died down quickly. As he explains, "the habit of suffering teaches

resignation to the slave. This first fury past, I felt my energy abandon me, and I could only weep

with Francilia over our vanished happiness" (55-56). Toby's lack of sustained manly energy

reflects Braddon's belief that the enervating effect of slavery, rather than nature, is the cause of

his subservient place in life. However, Braddon never returns to Toby the agency that he has lost

through slavery. Although he is as devoted to Cora as if he were her father, his role in the book

is constantly to step aside while white men take on the guiding roles in her life. While Braddon

allows her heroine to mourn for the loss of her mulatto mother's care and love, she allows her

only a fleeting moment of identification with Toby as a father-figure. Thereafter, Toby is incorporated into her family as a servant, "no longer a slave, but a happy attendant on those he loved" (210). Although Toby is nominally free, it is easy to connect this voluntary servitude with Gabriel's voluntary return to slavery. He does not attempt to claim an independent family or identity.

If we look at the novel's conclusion, we can see that Braddon ascribes different levels of integration to characters according to their color and gender. Cora, the nearly-white woman is naturalized into England as a "happy wife;" Toby, the mulatto man, is incorporated into her household as a free servant; Paul, the nearly-white man, is aligned with a Spanish woman and sent to France, while Tristan and Zara, the darkest-skinned characters, are shipped back to Africa where Tristan's "madness" is reflected in the landscape. This resolution, although it is more daring than Reid's (he does not even say whether or not Edward marries Aurore), shows the same determination to control the actions, movements, and prospects of black characters that we find in Reid's novel. It would seem that Braddon shares the anxiety found in Britain at that time about the effect American abolitionist rhetoric would have on British working-class reformers. She also seems hesitant, as Marryat was, to incorporate a body of economically-independent former slaves into the nation. The relentless domestication of the dark-skinned male characters in the book – to the point of madness and apathetic despair – suggests that Braddon was not prepared to think of black men as active agents within the national body.

If the lives and actions of black male characters in these plantation novels set in America demanded such tight narrative control from British authors hesitant to give them the status of citizen, those novels set in the Caribbean required it doubly because emancipation was not hypothetical. Faced with the reality of emancipation in Jamaica and the (to many British)

fearful power of parts of the colored population, Reid could not write off black male agency in *The Maroon* the same way he did in *The Quadroon* by reinscribing it as a temporary incident interrupting voluntary slavery. Like Braddon, Reid elects in this novel to portray a free mixed-race man who becomes domesticated in order to set narrative limits to the access that black men have to a nationalized masculine identity built on adventure. However, an examination of Reid's attempt to overwrite the adventure genre with a plot of domesticity reveals the flaws in Reid's narrative as he attempts both to account for the presence of Cubina, the maroon, and discount his importance in his imagined version of Jamaica.

It is clear that the maroon communities of pre-emancipation Jamaica appealed ideologically to Reid. As he wrote, "No lover of liberty, no advocate for the equality of mankind, can fail to feel an enthusiastic admiration for those brave, black men who for two hundred years maintained their independence against the whole white population of the island" (2). At the same time, Reid tempers his admiration of them with a rhetoric of distance. The maroons belong to "the historic past" since "the act of Emancipation had removed the barrier between them and the other blacks of the island."[64] The narrator goes in search of their "remnants," implying that the disappearance of the antagonistic force of slavery had caused an equal disappearance of the strong community of liberty-loving people. The author discovers only one important "remnant," an ancient man named Quaco who relates the following story to him (3), after which Reid begins his novel in earnest. Reid's portrayal of this story as romanticized history reassures the reader that such actions – and such men – are long gone from the island.

Cubina, the mixed-race captain of the band of maroons in the novel, vies with the white

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[64] This statement is misleading. In fact, during the Morant Bay rebellion the Maroon communities, which were still firmly in existence, helped the government put down the protesters rather than joining with them (Holt 302).

British man Herbert Vaughan for the role of the hero. The reader is introduced to Cubina when Herbert, who is hiding up a tree, watches him single-handedly kill a wild boar. Herbert remains in the tree while Cubina encounters the escaped slave, Cingües, and helps him kill the dogs that are pursuing him. Herbert only makes his presence known when Cubina is faced with a three-to-two fight against the men chasing the runaway. He then appears on the scene with the very British intention of making it a "fair fight" (89). Herbert's "neutrality" in this situation is symptomatic of his behavior throughout the entire novel. Although Herbert is the hero of the love plot, Cubina, the titular maroon, takes the lead in the action of the novel. It is Cubina who discovers Jessuron's betrayal of Cingües, a free African prince whom he has kidnapped into slavery, and the plot against Loftus Vaughan's life. Cubina and Quaco, his African lieutenant, combine to discover that Loftus's daughter Kate is merely in a drugged sleep after her abduction by Chakra the obeah man, and not dead as Herbert believed. At the end of the novel Herbert and Kate both acknowledge to each other the debt that they owe to Cubina and his sweetheart, Yola (the sister of Cingües), who through their actions and communications made Kate and Herbert's marriage possible. In the sheer sense of page time and action scenes, Cubina clearly surpasses Herbert as the heroic figure in the novel.

To counteract this imbalance in action, Reid persists in his attempts to distance Cubina from the narrative by describing his band of maroons as something that "might have been witnessed upon the stage of a theatre than in real life." He also compares Cubina to the legendary outlaw Robin Hood (95). However, it becomes clear almost immediately that Cubina is not an exact copy of Robin Hood. For instance, he does not exist outside of the law but within it. As he explains to Herbert, the maroons have a treaty with the government by which they are bound "to deliver up all runaways" (92). Due to this treaty, the maroon band is clearly distinguished from the other bands of black men in the woods who are "murderers" and

"robbers" (310). Cubina's later interview with Loftus Vaughan in his role of Justice of the Peace cements the fact that he has an officially-recognized status in the state – an identity that he has earned through his adventurous affiliation with the independent community of maroons – despite the fact that as a black man he has no legal ability to testify in court. In this way, Cubina is walking proof that the slave colony is a place where black men as well as white men can construct an autonomous legal identity through their actions.

It is possible, then, to view this novel as one with two heroes: Herbert is the hero of the domestic love story, while Cubina is the hero of the action adventure. Herbert's limited mastery of the land of Jamaica (he spends one night in the woods on his own) is circumscribed by Cubina's extreme comfort with the adventurous life. Reid attempts to bring closure to this schizophrenic form while at the same time limiting the power of Cubina's story by reducing Cubina's involvement in the action of the novel. To that effect, neither he nor Herbert is present at the deaths of the villains, Chakra and Jessuron, who are ambushed by the maroon Quaco and Cingües. Instead, Herbert is participating in the denouement of his love story, in which Judith Jessuron out of jealousy attempts to shoot Kate and instead, through Yola's intervention, shoots herself. Cubina is offstage for both of these events, and is heard of again only in the conclusion, when a letter is received from him and Yola while they are in Africa that details their plans to return to Jamaica and set up a coffee plantation (364).

Cubina's final domestication as a coffee planter, which we are presented with as the projected future rather than a reality, matches the conservative ending to Herbert and Kate's relationship, in which they rebuild Kate's burned plantation and live there happily ever after. Herbert's early distaste for the "black code" of Jamaica that dictates that "a *man of colour* must do nothing to make himself different from a docile and submissive brute" has clearly

evaporated, as he takes on the mantle of possible slaveholder (59, italics in original). As the owner of a coffee plantation, Cubina will also probably own slaves. Indeed slaveholding is shown to be common in Yola and Cingües's country in Africa, though not the kidnapping variety practiced by the white traders. Reid's willingness to imagine a mixed-race man running a major business like a plantation in Jamaica, though he was unwilling to even concede freedom to a black man in his Louisiana novel, reflects the post-emancipation reality of the West Indies in the 1860s, when men of color did have a limited amount of political and economic power.

Domesticating Cubina allowed Reid to refocus the story on Herbert; however, the figure of the successfully integrated maroon challenges white British control over the island. Reid minimizes the appearance of this challenge by leaving Cubina out of the preface of the story. When the narrator goes in search of the remnants of the maroons, it is the aged Quaco whom he finds, not Cubina. By replacing the successful planter with the romantic figure of the ancient outlaw warrior in the contemporary section of the story, Reid ignores the presence of Cubina and his descendents in the colony. Perhaps Reid felt that the character of Cubina was too close to that of George William Gordon, a mixed-race man who by the early 1860s was a prominent activist and political figure in the colored community of Jamaica (Parry 213). Although Reid's novel was published three years before the Morant Bay affair and the murder of Gordon by Governor Eyre, it is not unthinkable that Reid was aware of the tensions simmering in Jamaica around the issues of black land ownership and economic independence. Cubina's domestication forced Reid to acknowledge the ex-maroon's eligibility for a socially viable identity within an integrated version of the nation that, perhaps unwittingly, reflected the very fears that many white British had about post-emancipation Jamaica and the kinds of privilege that British "whiteness" was supposed to guarantee.

The negotiations between the adventure genre and the domestic genre appear differently in Wilkins's novel *The Slave Son* because of her overtly abolitionist and anti-racist project. Although in her preface she directs her novel towards the abolitionists of America, she also gestures towards the situation in post-emancipation Trinidad by noting that "slavery can never be said to be abolished where prejudice of caste keeps the people degraded" (101). Her novel follows the patterns of other abolitionist fictions by featuring a mixed-race hero, Belfond, (rather than a white hero) who falls in love with the mixed-race heroine Laurine. Although the story is set in British territory, Wilkins does not employ the same kind of nationalist and adventurous rhetoric employed by Reid and Braddon. Instead of claiming the right to explicitly British liberty, Belfond largely relies on a rhetoric of Enlightenment liberty drawn from the French Revolution. This mixture is similar to what we find in American abolitionist novels that make use of American Revolutionary rhetoric of ideal liberty in concert with a rhetoric of manly action. By representing Belfond as a man inspired by the French ideals of liberty while he is attending his young master at school in Paris, Wilkins gives him access to a type of heroic identity that does not depend upon the conventions of the British adventure genre. Instead of gaining a heroic identity through a violent encounter with the foreign other and the literal or metaphorical conquest of exoticized territory, Belfond gains it through language describing abstract concepts such as, "the march of freedom, and the equality of man." After some time in France "he awoke, as from a dream, to find himself one of the great human race – a creature endowed with a soul, animated by the breath of the Almighty" and ultimately more educated than his careless master (260). While this awakening allows Belfond to claim a human identity and subjectivity, it does not lead him to claim a national identity.

Throughout the novel, Belfond's heroic identity is not national, as is the identity embraced by the white heroes of the other novels I've discussed, but universal. Indeed, as the

slave son of a French man who lives in an English colony, the question of Belfond's nationality is

even more complicated than the ordinary slave's. When Belfond escapes from his master in

Trinidad, he forms his own settlement of maroons (in this case meaning runaways rather than

men granted liberty by a treaty with the government as in Jamaica) made up of "thirty brave

fellows" and their wives (215). In one of the most interesting passages in the book, Belfond

explains to Daddy Fanty, the Obiah man, that his intention was to form a kind of nation within a

nation, but that the maroons were unwilling to follow his lead:

> "Who gathered the Maroons up in the mountain yonder? Who taught them
> to till the ground, to lay up stores, to do without white people and their
> markets? Who taught them songs, and order, and courage? Who would have
> raised the glorious standard of liberty for them, - liberty and freedom, like
> America, like France, - and have made them a people among the nations of
> the earth, had they but listened to me and gathered round me like men,
> brave, bold, generous? But no! they would not, could not believe me: they
> must be murderers like you, and go, like sneaking cowards at midnight, to
> set fire to the white man's house, and murder him as he escaped from the
> flames. I am not a man to do that…" (206)

Belfond's intention, as he states it, is revolutionary in the extreme. His plans raise the specter of

an independent black nation built from the territory of a British colony, which was still a fear of

the British even after emancipation. Wilkins acts to calm these fears immediately by portraying

his followers as "sneaking cowards" who embrace an ethos of disorganized local rebellion that

he is too honorable to take part in. Like rebel leaders Madison Washington and Joseph Cinqué

(whom I discussed in Chapter 1) Belfond is portrayed as an exceptional man who is, therefore,

not representative of a common threat of rebellion. Wilkins uses his abilities to argue for

emancipation, but at the same time she falls back into a racist reassurance that most slaves are

not "men" like Belfond.

    Belfond's unwillingness to take part in the violence on the island is criticized by others,

most of all Daddy Fanty, who reacts to the news that Belfond plans to emigrate to Venezuela with scorn. "Wherefore were you about to try the sea? Why seek the water when dry land has soft blossoms for your feet? though, were it otherwise, a brave man's foot fears not even a thorn." Fanty's question is significant because it pushes Belfond to explain why he prefers to emigrate rather than assert his rights as an individual and battle for land in Trinidad, which (as Fanty knows) is still contested space open to adventurous claims. In response, Belfond denies Fanty's suggestion that he is afraid of the white men, but when Fanty asks him if he has "tried the cutlass" he says that he would never try it unless it was a fair fight. Fanty points out that such a thing as a fair fight between a slave and a master is impossible because of the systemic power dynamics of slavery. However, Belfond refuses to see Fanty's perspective. Belfond's idealistic commitment to a "fair fight" (a concept also espoused by Reid's hero Herbert) both marks his associations with British values and guarantees that he will never act against the British on the island because the conditions for a fair fight do not exist.

Fanty repeatedly offers Belfond the choice of an unfair fight against the white man, first by giving him poison to take to the plantation, and later by inciting a rebellion to free the captured Belfond from his master's prison. However, Belfond never takes the bait. He throws away the poison and instead of joining the rebellion makes an attempt to save his master/father's life. When that fails, he muses despondently amid the scenes of violence around him. The slaves "had given themselves up to the desperate delirium of their conscious guilt. Without plan, or chief, or immediate confederates in the island, these demented creatures rushed to destruction." Belfond's potential role of heroic leader of his people is taken by Talima, "the warlike daughter of Anamoa; for she had seized a horse, and with a torch in her hand was seen galloping off in the direction of the cane-fields, with a large detachment of the furious herd at her heels"(314). By portraying the rebellious slaves as a "herd" of "creatures," Wilkins

suggests that both Belfond and Talima are exceptions to a general rule of slavery. Talima is exceptional because she is an African-born princess, while Belfond is exceptional because of his white education. In both cases, their exceptionalism neutralizes their threat. Talima, like a classic Noble Savage, cannot effectively battle the white militia. Belfond has the skill to plan a well-organized revolution, but the "creatures" on the plantation are incapable of carrying it out. Wilkins highlights the futility of Belfond's position by having him dwell on the violent death of his father, Cardon, repeating obsessively the words "he would not let me save him" (314). Belfond's fixation on the domestic and personal nature of the tragedy that is slavery, rather than the systematic abuses that spawned the riot around him, is yet another technique Wilkins uses to separate him from the figure of the heroic adventurer. Belfond's role for the reader, as this section makes clear, is to plead with the readers for the slaves' freedom, not to model actions that would free them.

Belfond's rejection of violence throughout the novel combined with his description of the maroon community as a domestic paradise undercuts his claim to an autonomous national identity. Instead of embracing the potential for anti-national revolution on the island, he perceives the island as a pre-national Edenic paradise. This perception of the island is reinforced through his relationship to Laurine, who makes her living selling flowers from her garden. When Belfond, leaving Trinidad for good, comments that "God might have chosen you for Eden when first he created man; angels might have lived among your gardens" (320) he reaffirms the island as a naturally cultivated space. This comment echoes Wilkins's description of the island's "beautiful" and "enchanting" nature, which I quoted earlier in this chapter. By having Belfond choose to see Trinidad as a domestic paradise rather than as a battlefield, Wilkins conveys to her readers the message that abolition need not be associated with national strife. This message reflects the opinions she set forth in her preface on the subject of racial integration:

"I do not apprehend that the mixed race will ever form a nation apart. In these days of swift travelling and increased interchange of thought, it is more likely that exclusive nationality has seen its best days, than that it should spring up anew with another people." (103)

However, it is significant that Wilkins does not end the novel by portraying Belfond as a part of an integrated, non-exclusive British nation. Instead, she sends him to Venezuela. The editors of the novel explain in the introduction that "Venezuela had been an important escape destination for slaves and free coloureds since the 1780s or 1790s, and even after emancipation, it retained a reputation as a place for new beginnings" (xxv). This view of Venezuela persisted, especially on the part of free colored people who suffered less discrimination there, despite the fact that slavery was not fully abolished in the country until 1854. It is this country that Wilkins chooses for Belfond and Laurine's new life, which will be marked by further domestication as Belfond begs Laurine to "teach me to be good" in the religious sense of the word (320). Like Reid and Braddon, Wilkins does not go as far as to introduce a mixed-race man into Britain, even though in this case he is married to a woman of his own race. Although Belfond is given the language of heroism and some heroic impulses, he is ultimately both domesticated and exiled in order to maintain the "exclusive nationality" that Wilkins claims she does not support.

The conclusion of *The Slave Son* cements the novel's conservative message. Wilkins ends with a final chapter that relates the aftermath of the slave rebellion. Coraly, a slave woman who had earlier helped Fanty poison the white children of Cardon, is shipped off to Martinique (in much the way that Tristan in *The Octoroon* is shipped off to Africa). Talima, the cheiftan's daughter who took over Belfond's heroic role as the leader of the slaves, has been purchased by the Englishman Mr. Dorset, along with Belfond's friend Quaco and another house slave, Beneba. After the passing of the emancipation act, Wilkins informs the reader, the Dorsets went bankrupt. However, they were rescued from destitution by these three ex-slaves, who

voluntarily donated to the upkeep of the Dorsets all the profits the ex-slaves made from selling

merchandise door-to-door. Furthermore, the former slaves set aside enough extra money to

allow the Dorset family to move to New York where Mr. Dorset becomes a merchant. This idyllic

representation of the grateful freed people voluntarily toiling to keep their former master and

mistress "like gentleman and lady, as they are" (324) is geared to assuage any fears Wilkins

might have raised in her readers after the scenes of blood and destruction of the chapter

before. These former slaves have discarded their oppositional, African identities with the

abolition of slavery and adopted a position of voluntary servitude. Like Marryat, Reid, and even

Braddon, Wilkins imagines self-selected servitude on the part of the freed people as the solution

to the problem of racial integration. However, there is clearly no room in this picture for

Belfond, whose education ought to place him solidly in the upper-middle class of British society.

Like Reid, Wilkins erases the presence of the free mixed-race man from her story of

Caribbean history in favor of a society where black and white are absolutes as surely as the

categories slave and free used to be. Despite her pleas on the subject of colored integration in

her preface, Wilkins is ultimately incapable of representing it within a British context because it

would require that her hero be integrated as well as her heroine. Even a hero as domesticated

as Belfond remains a threat to the ideal image of British national identity in the middle of the

century. As a slave, the very fact that Belfond attempts to form a family with Laurine, who

certainly won't live with him on any terms other than marriage, represents a challenge to the

law. Black domesticity, as many scholars of African American literature have argued, is

inherently political in a slave state.[65] Wilkins demonstrates that even after the abolition of

slavery makes marriage legal the black patriarchal family poses a threat to any nation that

predicated national identity on a rhetoric of (white) family integrity. If Belfond as a revolutionary

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[65] See Hazel Carby *Reconstructing Womanhood* and Claudia Tate *Domestic Allegories of Political Desire*

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in the model of Simon Bolivar (whom Belfond mentions on page 320 of the text) is dangerous, so too is Belfond the family man, as his father Cardon recognizes when he arrogantly spurns his help during the riot. Wilkins, then, is caught between the two genres she is employing in her novel. Neither can sufficiently contain her hero within the space that British society had set for the black or mixed-race man.

My goal in examining these novels has been to show that plantation slavery created an environment that met the conditions for adventurous space, or space that could be contested between parties, rather than "civilized" national space. White British authors writing after British emancipation exploited this environment by using it as a proving ground for the ideal British man who rejected slavery as antithetical to the core values of Englishness.[66] However, the racial issues simmering in Britain between 1838 and 1865 made such use a double-edged sword. To counteract the dangers the adventure genre posed by the presence of strong black male characters, the authors deployed the domestic genre. Featuring a love plot in the novels meant that certain black characters, like Aurore and Cora and Toby, could be integrated gently into the national body through the framework of the family, which would also overwrite the hero's adventurous existence with a domestic one. While it was fairly easy to construct novels set in America that gave the white British hero ample opportunities to conquer literally and symbolically the plantation while restricting his actual involvement with enslaved characters to an honorable relationship with a nearly-white woman, fissures in the narrative would inevitably appear. Restricting black characters from taking advantage of the same kinds of agency that the white heroes enjoyed caused narrative disjunctures, as in the case of Gabriel in *The Quadroon* or

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[66] In fact, slavery would retain this power in boys' adventure books long after the debates over abolition disappeared. For examples see the works of George Manville Fenn, particularly *Nic Revel: A White Slave's Adventures in Alligator Land* (1898).

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Tristan in *The Octoroon,* that gave birth to psychological improbabilities, like Gabriel's preference for slavery, or psychological breakdowns, like Tristan's madness.

However, foreclosing on the adventure genre by incorporating the domestic in its place proves to be a failure in the context of these novels about slavery, as is highlighted in the corresponding novels set in the Caribbean. The narrative difficulties caused by strong black male characters are magnified in novels set in the Caribbean due to the fact that slavery no longer existed in the colonies. The nostalgic wish-fulfillment indulged in by Reid and Braddon when they envisioned contented slaves and gratefully subservient freedmen would appear even more patently false in a post-emancipation context where economic difficulties were spawned by the freed people's so-called "ingratitude" towards their former masters. This "ingratitude" was actually a refusal to labor for their former masters in slave like conditions, and this refusal caused well-publicized tension.[67] The strong presence of a free and/or enlightened mixed-race population in the West Indies, represented by Gordon, or the author/lawyer Maxwell Philip, is felt in these novels through the characters of Cubina and Belfond, who are equally dangerous as adventurous revolutionaries or domesticated family men. In order to maintain the hierarchical integrity of British identity defined by the adventurous Anglo-Saxon who reifies his own identity by defeating the Other and then forming a nuclear family, these authors must exile or refuse to discuss their black heroes, domestic or adventurous. It is nearly impossible to ignore these black male characters, even the ones meant to be subsidiary to the main plot, but the authors – even Wilkins – ask their readers to do just that at the ends of these novels. While these characters were instrumental to the sensational plots these authors wished to create, they do not fit in to the plots' conclusions which, in the manner of most popular fiction, end with traditional

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[67] On the alleged "ingratitude" of the freed population see Hall 359, Thome *Emancipation in the West Indies* (1837) p. 198, Sturge *The West Indies in 1837* p. 62.

happiness for the hero and heroine and a conservative reassurance of the strength and integrity of the British nation.

The fact that these plots do not neatly fit together, and that neither an adventurous nor a domestic resolution can satisfactorily portray black male characters, shows us the revolutionary potential both of these genres possessed for the representation of those characters. Although these authors attempted to defuse the adventurous potential of their characters by domesticating them, the potential for them to rebel does not entirely disappear. Gabriel would most likely run away again if he found himself in the hands of an unkind master; Paul could rekindle his interest in uplifting the slave population; Cubina could choose to use his leadership skills to fight the Black Code of Jamaica; Belfond could discover other like-minded men in Venezuela who would help him rebel against the British. None of these possibilities are explored in the novels, but they would be consistent with the characterization of each man.

The way that both the domestic and adventure genres coexist in these novels highlights the connections between the two genres in the project of national identity formation and control. These connections were also explored and exploited by African American and Afro-Caribbean authors. Like their white counterparts, black authors also departed from the tightly-controlled environment of the sea adventure in order to explore the potentials and pitfalls of adventure on land, and the liberatory possibilities of the domestic genre occluded in nautical fiction. The following chapter will examine three novels, *Clotel* by William Wells Brown, *Adolphus* by an anonymous Trinidadian author, and *Blake; or, The Huts of America* by Martin Delany, to see how each of those authors made use of the hybrid domestic/adventure genre in order to remap the geography of the plantation within the nation and to define their characters as individuals within a national and international context.

Chapter 3: Deconstructing the Plantation

In the previous chapter, I discussed how the conventions of the adventure genre were deployed in plantation adventures in a way that enhanced the national identity of some characters and restricted that of others. However, the semi-civilized nature of the plantation space resisted the constrictions of the adventure. The disjunctions in Reid's and Braddon's narratives caused by characters like Paul Lisimon and Cubina the Maroon point to a variety of ways that African American and Afro-Caribbean authors could adopt the conventions of the adventure genre to their own ends. In this chapter, I will examine three works by African American and Afro-Caribbean authors that respond to the adventure genre's representations of the West Indies and the American South: *Clotel* (1853) by William Wells Brown, *Adolphus* (1853) by an anonymous Trinidadian author, and *Blake; or, the Huts of America* (1861-62) by Martin Delany.[68] In each of these works, the author manipulates and/or responds to the British adventure genre's colonialist representation of these territories and its related depiction of national identity. By interrogating the adventure genre's depiction of plantation geography and its relationship to both "civilized" and "uncivilized" space, these authors suggest that the borders between adventurous territories and civilized territories – between slave states and free states – are much more porous than adventure novelists usually acknowledge. At the same time, these authors appropriate aspects of the adventure genre, particularly its association between male activity and masculine national identity, in order to write themselves into the

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[68] The first part of *Blake* was initially serialized in the *Anglo-African Magazine* in 1859. In 1861-62 the entire novel (we presume) ran in *The Weekly Anglo-African*.

nation. Like the novels in the previous chapter, all of these books are hybrid narratives that further represent the complexity of the adventure genre when it is applied to spaces that may also be defined as domestic. However, these authors use this narrative hybridity to expand, not limit, the opportunities for their black male (and, to some extent, female) characters to become active national subjects.

Between 1850 and 1865 there was an upsurge in the production of fiction by African American authors. These works – which included Douglass's *The Heroic Slave* (1853), William Wells Brown's *Clotel* (1853), Frank J. Webb's *The Garies and their Friends* (1857), Harriet Wilson's *Our Nig* (1859), Martin Delaney's *Blake* (1861-62) and Julia Collins's *The Curse of Caste* (1865) – refigured and challenged the works of white authors of the period, abolitionists and anti-abolitionists alike. The same period saw the emergence of fiction by authors of African descent in the British West Indies, including the anonymous newspaper serial *Adolphus* (1853) and Maxwell Philip's novel *Emmanuel Appadocca* (1854). The explicit connections made between these British and American texts (Philip mentions "the slave holders of America" in his Preface; Frederick Douglass and William Wells Brown both appeal to the British for aid) show that fiction's importance in the racial debates in the middle of the nineteenth century truly traversed national boundaries. Some form of transatlantic connection is found in all of these books (with the exception of *Our Nig*) because they either feature a transatlantic crossing in their narrative or were literally transatlantic publications, as in the case of Brown's, Philip's, and Webb's novels which were published in London.

What an examination of this mid-century fiction shows is that the conventions that were employed and manipulated by Reid, Braddon, and Wilkins in the novels I discussed in chapter two were already employed, changed, and in some ways undermined by works by African American and Afro-Caribbean authors. This pattern of contemporaneous critical response has

been noted by Richard Phillips, who writes that "resistance to the hegemonic identities and geographies mapped by powerful adventures, whether in the form of critical readings or critical writings, is the 'irreducible opposite' of – not a chronological response to – adventure stories, and the cultural spaces they construct" (114). As Phillips argues, critical adventure stories did not simply emerge at the end of the 19th century with Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*; critical reworkings of the adventure genre have co-existed with the genre from its inception. Phillips does not discuss the productions of African American or Afro-Caribbean authors in his text. He formulated his argument based on straightforward adventures set in places like Africa and Australia. Nevertheless, the idea of contemporary revisions can also be applied to novels set in America and the West Indies that combine the domestic and adventure genres. However, these novelistic revisions are more complex than those he discusses because they must negotiate between domesticity and adventure, both of which have narrative advantages for the purposes of these authors. In this chapter I will examine critical reworkings of the plantation adventure by African American and Afro-Caribbean authors, focusing on *Clotel*, *Adolphus* and *Blake*, in order to see how black authors employed adventure conventions and hybrid narratives in their novels to reconstruct definitions of national identity.

Each of the books I will discuss espouse a different solution to the problem of racialized national identity and resulting racial oppression. In *Clotel*, William Wells Brown argues for the expansion of American citizenship rights to the African American population based on their shared values of democratic idealism and capacity for heroic action, while at the same time using the character Jerome to question the value of the stereotypical hero (a step that sets him apart from Frederick Douglass who does not question typical heroic values). In the second novel I will examine, *Adolphus*, the anonymous author argues for Trinidad's independence from Britain and the establishment of a new nation with a new body of citizens that would not be

restricted based on race or color. The third novel, *Blake, or, the Huts of America* by Martin

Delany, follows a different direction. In *Blake*, Delany looks at slavery as a trans-national system

and argues for the establishment of a black nation that embraces a racial basis of citizenship and

re-makes established national boundaries. In each case, I will examine how these authors

employ elements of the adventure genre and of the domestic genre in their texts and engage

with the problematic aspects of the genres which I discussed in my previous chapter.

Clotel: Vision and Re-Vision

Although not all critical responses to adventure stories take the form of popular fiction,

Phillips reminds us that popularity is an important element to consider: "Realistic, lively stories

appeal to popular audiences, hungry for geographical info-tainment, which puts them into

cultural circulation and therefore establishes the possibility of some form of political impact"

(125). These words certainly apply to the works of William Wells Brown. As M. Giulia Fabi notes

in her introduction to Brown's novel *Clotel*, "[Brown] was profoundly aware of the close

interaction between popular cultural images, social hierarchies, and the political workings of

American democracy" (xiv). *Clotel* is a fascinating novel, not only for its incisive social and

political critique of antebellum America, but also for the way Brown combines that critique with

an agile and eclectic use of popular genre conventions. [69] In the introduction to his digital text

version of the novel, Christopher Mulvey argues that Brown "achieved the generic shift

[between slave narrative and novel] by grafting a romance-fiction onto or into a slave

narrative." According to Mulvey, Brown made this choice instead of turning to a different

potential plot archetype, an adventure tale such as the Robinsonade, because "everywhere the

romance-fiction plot superseded the lone-male plot. Now *Robinson Crusoe* seems anomalous"

[page number?]. However, as any examination of mid-century popular fiction will show, the

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[69] When I refer to *Clotel* in this text, I mean the first edition (1853). Any references to subsequent editions
will be clearly indicated in the text.

genres of Robinsonade and the "lone-male" adventure were very much in existence, as were

other permutations of the adventure genre. In fact, Brown did not ignore the adventure genre in

the creation of his novel. Instead, he combined an adventure plot with a "romance-fiction" plot

and gothic elements to create a hybrid text that re-mapped plantation geography and expanded

the narrative possibilities for his characters through a complicated interplay of generic

conventions.

In *Clotel*, Brown adopts both plot and character elements from popular plantation

adventures in order to "denaturalise" (Phillips 143) the geography of antebellum America

(making it appear strange and dangerous) by manipulating the colonialist lens of the British

adventure genre. By doing so, Brown manages both to imitate and critique the power dynamics

and related arguments for national identity enabled by that geography. Because the first edition

of *Clotel* was written and published in England, it is not surprising that Brown's novel specifically

addresses plot elements that were popular in British representations of the American "west"

(including the mid-west) in novels and travelogues. By including such elements in his story,

Brown reaches out to that British audience, but also seeks to change the parameters of the

"American adventure" sub-genre in order to redefine how the British saw America, and also

how the Americans saw themselves. The way that Brown re-orders and redistributes the

conventional segments of plot allows his novel to comment on the narrativization of America by

both Americans and by outsiders. At the same time, he rejects the simple narrative structures

(heroic white male, black sidekick or servant, passive mixed-race heroine) that I discussed in the

last chapter, and the limits that they placed upon the agency and identity of black characters,

particularly men. By examining specific narrative elements (a steamboat explosion, the slave

hiding in the swamp, the characterization of the heroine and hero) and the way they fit together

in *Clotel*, we can see how Brown incorporated the idea of the popular novel – particularly the

idea of the adventure and its narrative constructions of national identity – while rejecting the

exoticized and one-dimensional representations of America embraced by those popular novels.

One example of Brown's use of plot elements from the American Western adventure

genre to remap, rather than reinforce, traditional adventure tropes is his description of a

steamboat race and boiler explosion in chapter two. As Louis Hunter explains in his history of

river boats, "Writers of fiction naturally made the most of explosions as the dramatic climax of

an exciting race, and foreign travelers like to cap their accounts of American steamboating with

a grand blowup" (303).

Conflagration and Explosion of the Ben Sherod.
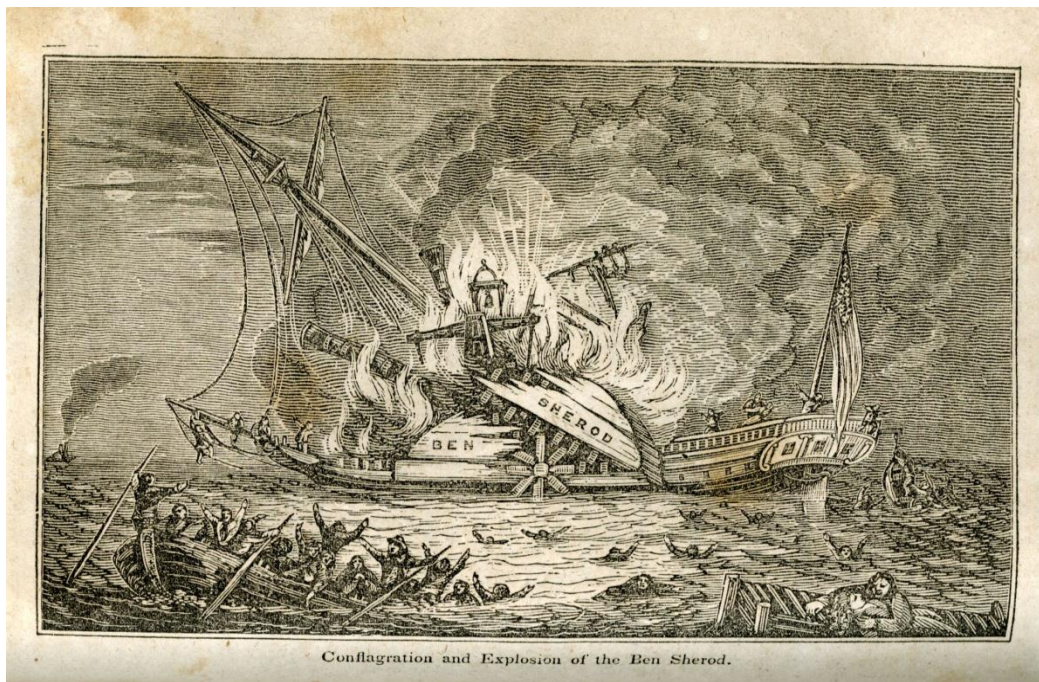
4. "Conflagration and Explosion of the Ben Sherod," a riverboat on the Mississippi. Illustration from *Steamboat Disasters and Railroad Accidents in the United States* by S. A. Howland, p. 134.

This is certainly the way that Reid, Boucicault, and many other authors used the steamboat race.

Brown, however, flouts this dramatic convention. Instead of using the explosion as the

culmination of the scene, Brown writes that "The killed and scalded (nineteen in number) were

put on shore, and the Patriot, taken in tow by the Columbia, was soon again on its way" (55).[70]

The immediate progress of the narrative minimizes the accident into an incident, which quickly

gives way to the emotional climax of the chapter: the gambling scene.

Riverboat gambling is another popular element from adventure fiction. However, in

Brown's novel the focus is not upon the white gamblers and an instance of cheating, as in Reid's

novel *The Quadroon*. Instead, Brown focuses on the fate of a young slave boy who stands "with

the bank notes and silver dollars round his feet" on the card table until he is won.

"BETTING" A NEGRO IN THE SOUTHERN STATES. *Page* 69.
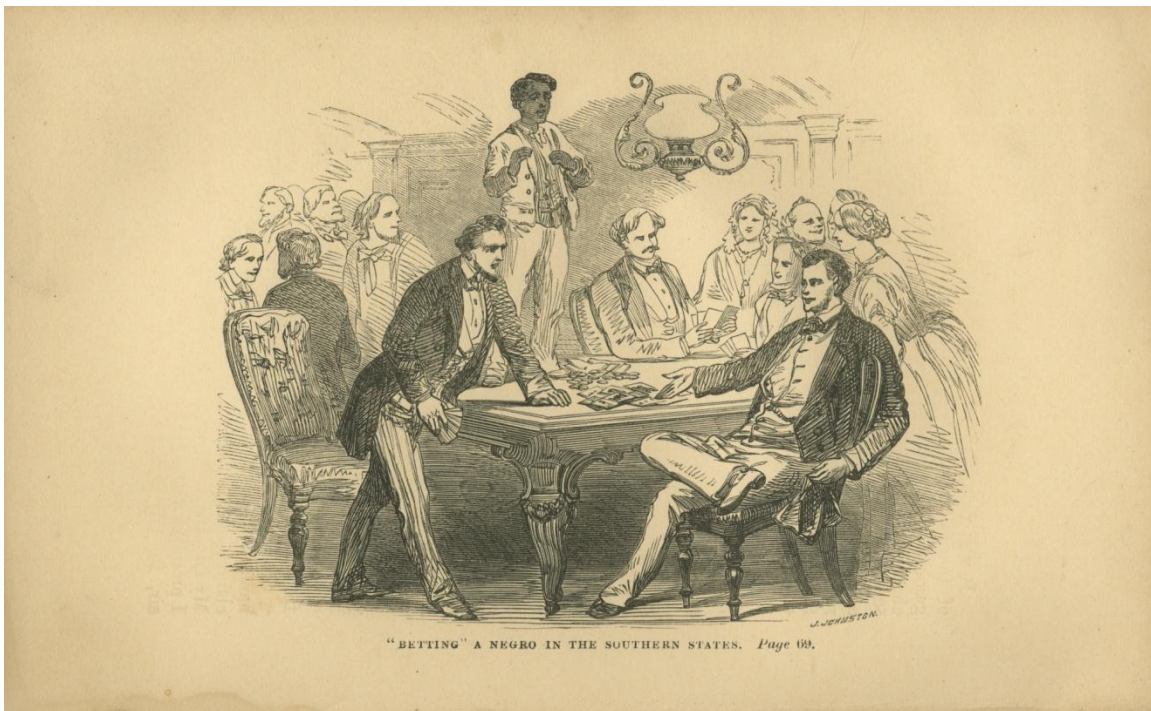
5. "Betting" A Negro in the Southern States" from the 1853 London edition of Clotel, p. 68b
(http://docsouth.unc.edu/southlit/brown/ill1.html)

In his narrative, Brown defamiliarizes these common scenes of a boiler explosion and riverboat

gambling in order to disrupt his audience's expectations of the scene and their definitions of

tragedy. The tragedy in Brown's novel is not the spectacular boiler explosion, but the fate of the

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[70] The lack of drama in this description is echoed in Mark Twain's novel *Huckleberry Finn*, where Huck, describing an (imaginary) steamboat explosion responds to Aunt Sally's question "Good gracious! anybody hurt?" with a laconic "No'm. Killed a nigger" (199). As in *Clotel*, the scene in Twain's novel points out the casual disregard for African American life in the antebellum South.

slave who "goes to bed at night the property of the man with whom he has lived for years, and gets up in the morning the slave of some one whom he has never seen before" (56).

Another popular trope that Brown unravels is the character of the fugitive slave hidden in the swamp. This motif is also featured in Reid's novels, and Braddon alludes to it in *The Octoroon*, when the mad slave Tristan hides himself in a wood "lonely as some primeval forest" (203). Although Brown's character, Picquilo, shares certain characteristics with Reid's character Gabriel, his function in the novel is very different. Unlike Gabriel (and Tristan) Picquilo does not appear in the action of the plot, or visibly interact with any of the main characters. He appears during Brown's description of Nat Turner's rebellion, which Brown uses to introduce the hyper-suspicious atmosphere of Richmond when Clotel arrives there in disguise. Although he is detached from the narrative, Brown gives us a full page description of Picquilo that focuses on his "savage" aspects and foreign antecedents:

> He was a large, tall, full-blooded Negro, with a stern and savage countenance; the marks on his face showed that he was from one of the barbarous tribes in Africa, and claimed that country as his native land; his only covering was a girdle around his loins, made of skins of wild beasts which he had killed…. Brought from the coast of Africa when only fifteen years of age to the island of Cuba, he was smuggled from thence into Virginia. (Brown 180)

Whereas Nat Turner is captured and killed after the rebellion, Picquilo remains alive and dangerous in the swamp with his wife and other followers.

In *The Slave in the Swamp*, William Tynes Cowan interprets the juxtaposition of the mysterious figure of Picquilo with the nearly-white hero, George, as Brown's effort to "[balance] the demands of a white audience for a character with whom they can identify and the looming threat behind the reasoned argument for emancipation." At the same time, Cowan notes that Picquilo is "perhaps a nod to the reader's expectations for scenes of the exotic primitive and/or the exotic landscape of the South" (Cowan 130). Cowan's reading of Picquilo highlights a generic

issue that shaped Brown's text. How could Brown stress the potential threat of slave

insurrection while not trivializing his rebellious character as a quaint "exotic primitive"? As

Cowan explains, Brown responds to this issue by presenting Picquilo in a scene that is

disconnected with the main story, requiring no narrative development or closure. By doing so,

Brown "manages to avoid demystifying the maroon and thereby maintains the figure's aura of

power" (Cowan 154). In addition to this reason for Picquilo's portrayal, I propose another: that

by leaving Picquilo disconnected from the rest of the story, Brown is able to reject the

geographical and narrative limitations of the swamp found in other novels. In *Clotel*, the swamp

is not mapped together with the plantation as part of a cohesive adventurous space that exists

within, yet apart from, civilized territory. Instead it is one of many diffuse spaces that Brown

describes in his novel, whose boundaries are permeable and unplottable, either literally or

figuratively. Instead of being associated geographically and narratively with a plantation –

specifically the plantation he escaped from – the description of Picquilo's swamp is sandwiched

between descriptions of the city of Richmond. Ordinarily, a city like Richmond would have been

narratively and geographically separate from the realm of "adventure" within a typical novel. By

refusing to geographically locate Picquilo's swamp, and by embedding it within a discussion of

Richmond in the text, Brown suggests that there is no hard-and-fast distinction between

adventurous space and urban domesticity. Due to slavery, the borders between the swamp and

the city are porous and unstable, and dangers (like the threat of Picquilo's rebellion, which

motivates Clotel's urban capture) travel easily between them.

Brown's novel departs most significantly from the adventure genre in the instability

of the space of the plantation. The omnipresence of slavery in this novel deconstructs the

careful mapping of plantation adventures. In the novels I discussed last chapter, the

American plantation is depicted as a colonial space where adventurous actions like

conquest and exploration can take place. These plantations are represented as geographically and culturally separate from the urban centers of the east coast. In those novels, slavery is "naturalised" (to use Phillips' term) by its geographic isolation. In geographically-isolated spaces, like the plantations in *The Quadroon*, *The Octoroon*, and *The Maroon*, the omnipresence of slavery is complete, and tends to magnify and concretize the dichotomy between black/slave/savage and white/free/citizen. In the space of the plantation, as it was imagined by authors like Reid, the parameters of black action were supposed to be clearly defined (although, as I pointed out, they are less defined than they appear at first sight). Plantations in *Clotel* are only one of many zones of enslavement through which the black characters travel, either willingly as fugitives, or unwillingly as slaves. While in the British novels I discussed previously the plantation and its surrounding wilderness contain slavery and keep it away from the more "civilized" parts of the country, in *Clotel* slavery is widespread and urban, calling into question the "civilized" nature of the rest of the country. Once the plantation and slavery are not geographically isolated from the rest of the country, the sphere of black action expands because the lack of isolation breaks down the simple correlation between "master" and "citizen". In fact, there are many citizens who are not slave owners, and there are also African Americans who are not slaves.

By breaking with the homogenous geography of the plantation adventure, Brown also breaks with the homogenous ideology of national identity espoused in those adventures. That identity was predicated on simple master/slave, citizen/savage binaries that were reinforced through the clearly-outlined and isolated geography of the plantation. Brown re-maps the geography of the plantation and its surrounding spaces to be more heterogeneous and expansive. In doing so, Brown is also able to replace the homogenous

representation of heroic identity as white with a heterogeneous image of heroism and of American citizenship.

In blurring the colonially-inspired boundaries between "home" and "away", "civilized" and "uncivilized" space in his novel, Brown draws upon an alternative style of adventure to the plantation/conquest story: the revolutionary tale where a country is at war with itself. This is the same kind of story Frederick Douglass drew on in his construction of *The Heroic Slave*. In *Clotel*, as in Douglass's work, the United States exists in two spheres, a physical sphere and an ideological sphere. As in *The Heroic Slave*, Brown's heroes and heroines embrace the idealized version of America set forth in the Declaration of Independence and view the physical nation as an imperfect echo of itself. Brown makes this distinction clear by framing his description of fugitive slaves in the terms of revolutionary expatriation:

> "Had Clotel escaped from oppression in any other land, in the disguise in which she fled from the Mississippi to Richmond, and reached the United States, no honour within the gift of the American people would have been too good to have been heaped upon the heroic woman. But she was a slave, and therefore out of the pale of their sympathy. They have tears to shed over Greece and Poland; they have an abundance of sympathy for "poor Ireland"; they can furnish a ship of war to convey the Hungarian refugees from a Turkish prison to the "land of the free and home of the brave." They boast that America is the "cradle of liberty"; if it is, I fear they have rocked the child to death." (185-186)

By casting the American government in the role of an oppressive regime that threatens the lives of native, liberty-loving citizens, Brown both uses and inverts adventure tropes. In *The Quadroon*, Mayne Reid compares the fugitive slave Gabriel to "the Swiss patriot" (William Tell) because Gabriel refused to flog a fellow-slave on the orders of the evil overseer. However, once the overseer is removed, Gabriel returns to the plantation. By limiting the "patriot" Gabriel's "country" to the constricted space of the plantation, which is restored to perfection by the

removal of the despotic overseer, Reid is able to direct attention away from the United States as a whole and the larger system of oppression that determines Gabriel's life. When Brown compares Clotel to the Greek and Polish nationalists fighting for their freedom, however, he participates in the adventure tradition of looking back to larger-than-life heroic figures to contextualize the present, but he does it with a twist. Clotel is not compared to a singular hero who is distant enough to be a legend (like William Tell, or Robin Hood whom Reid refers to in *The Maroon*), but to the nameless many who make up the contemporary resistance movements of these various countries. Additionally, her resistance and flight take place explicitly in inter-state national space, not within the limited boundaries of a plantation. The United States government is responsible for her oppression, and, like the citizen-patriots of the countries he mentions, Brown argues that Clotel and her fellow slaves will not be vindicated without a change in the national government. By updating his heroic exemplars, Brown suggests that national identity is not something that was pre-determined in the heroic past, but is constantly evolving and under revision. The making of a nation does not depend on one singular heroic figure encapsulated into a single storyline, but many nameless patriots who continue to struggle in diverse ways.

The fact that Clotel is a woman reverses the trope even further. Though she escapes with the help of a man, they are not romantically involved. Their escape is a business arrangement, and they part amicably at the end of it. The novel then continues to follow Clotel, who retains the white male disguise she adopted for her escape and turns southward to Richmond, looking for her daughter. Brown's decision to have Clotel pass as a white man during her travels has been discussed by many scholars. M. Giulia Fabi notes that in *Clotel* passing is "a female activity" that is only briefly used by one male character, George, who changes clothes with Mary in order to escape from jail ("Unguarded Expressions" 645). Fabi draws a distinction

between the "manly anger" and "oppositional stance" adopted by the African American men in

Brown's novel and the covert defiance of passing adopted by Clotel (641, 645). However,

Clotel's passing also has the power to challenge gender roles and distinctions. Eve Allegra

Raimon writes of Clotel's passing that, "the combined effect of these scenes is to convey the

inescapable sense that gender roles may be as mutable and suspect as prevailing categories of

racial classifications" (82). Through Clotel's passing, Brown calls into question both the racial and

the gendered expectations of heroism in traditional narrative forms like the adventure. Her

masquerade highlights the artificiality of the boundaries that separated white action from black

action, as well as male action from female action. Clotel's ability to embody action through the

planning and execution of her escape contributes to Brown's overall point: that the assertion of

identity through action in America is not limited to only white men or only to Europeans. By

passing successfully for both white and European (she is taken for an Italian), Clotel provides a

subversive challenge to the status quo that echoes the forthright challenge of figures like

George and Picquilo. The combination of Clotel's subversive movements with the open rebellion

of Picquilo and George destabilizes the perception of the American South as a kind of colonial

territory that is only acted upon by white (foreign and American) people. The actions that

George, Picquilo, and Clotel take on their own behalf reconfigure America as a revolutionary

territory where idealistic people, like Clotel, can claim national identity through their resistance

to the barriers created by hegemonic colonial control.

Though Brown rejects a singular and concise narrative of national action (the

Robinsonade type of adventure invoked by Mulvey) in favor of a multi-generational story with

strong romantic and domestic traits, he does retain the link between action and national

belonging found in novels that focus on one hero's adventures beyond the borders of the nation

(like *Robinson Crusoe*). Clotel's escape from slavery should gain her national praise, while

George's act of saving important city deeds from the Court House fire postpones (though it does not prevent) his conviction by the court for high treason following the Southampton insurrection. In George's story, Brown links action and narration together to formulate an ideal of American national identity. George risks his life to save legal documents that are a "treasure" and "much valued" by the city (190). His heroism in the defense of these documents earns him a postponement of his trial, and makes him a character of enough interest that the judge asks him why he joined the rebellion. George's answer calls upon another much-valued government document, the Declaration of Independence, which he had heard his master read out loud. George adds that "I also heard him talking with some of his visitors about the war with England, and he said, all wars and fightings for freedom were just and right. If so, in what am I wrong?" (190) George's answer to the judge's question points to the foundational narrative of American history and the important effect that those words and the myth that has grown up around them have on American national identity. In *Clotel*, Brown reclaims that American myth of national origins for African Americans. Like Douglass, Brown argues in his fiction that it is the heroic adventurers and outcasts who most fully enact America's national ideal. In *Clotel*, as in other African American novels of the period, the physical America is a hostile state that can be navigated by African Americans only with heroic courage. The goal of their adventures is inevitably the ideal of American liberty, which can only be achieved by traversing and exiting the false physical America. George, like Madison Washington, realizes his American right to liberty in British territories, traveling first to Canada and then to England.

Brown's philosophical position in the novel is that African Americans, slave and free, are American nationals who deserve American citizenship. He makes that position clear in the subplot that takes place on the Peck plantation. Georgiana, the mistress of the plantation, argues that their emancipated slaves should not be sent back to Africa, as the colonizationalists

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would have her do. America, she points out, is a country of immigrants, where the idea of a

"native" is always constructed:

> Is not this their native land? What right have we, more than the Negro, to the soil
> here, or to style ourselves native Americans? Indeed it is as much their home as ours,
> and I have sometimes thought it was more theirs. The Negro has cleared up the lands,
> built towns, and enriched the soil with his blood and tears; and in return he is sent to a
> country of which he knows nothing. (134)

In this passage, Brown links native belonging to a place to the action of cultivation (he does not

address the conquest of native people that made that cultivation possible). The African

American's claim to America is the same claim Robinson Crusoe laid to his island – the claim of

taming it and making it productive. In adopting this argument for the citizenship rights of African

Americans, Brown aligns himself with the dominant white American and British conviction that

land was not truly claimed unless its flora and/or fauna were cultivated in an organized fashion.

This argument, which is reflected in most popular adventure novels, was the backbone of both

British and American expansion in America and in other territories (like Africa) where the land

was inhabited by people with a different mode of life. Brown's approach to the concept of

national belonging (like the attitude of many authors discussed in this project) thus replicates

some of the attitudes that created the inequities he argues against.

The narrative elements that link *Clotel* to the adventure genre and its representations

of ideal citizenship are developed further in the later editions of the novel, although not in a

straightforward mimicry of the genre. As scholars have noted, Brown's career was marked by a

metamorphosis from documentary-style writing to novelistic writing that departed from the

standards of factual detachment that were frequently found in antebellum slave narratives. The

first edition of Brown's novel, which I have been discussing, is the most overtly political version

and the one that incorporates verbatim the most non-fictional, documentary evidence. The

following three versions, starting with *Miralda* in 1860, show Brown developing the generic

aspects of his novel in new and interesting directions. One result of this shift, I would argue, is

the creation of a character – Jerome – who can enact more fully the role of the adventurous

hero, yet allow Brown to critique it as well.

Jerome is the heroic slave figure who replaces George from the 1853 version of *Clotel*.

George is notable for being white enough to pass, and for doing the city of Richmond a great

service by saving important documents from a fire. Jerome, on the other hand, is notable for

being "perfectly black." He is also "brave and daring to a proverb, strong in person, fiery in spirit,

yet kind and true in his affections, earnest in his doctrines" (*Miralda* 119). In this version of the

novel, Jerome and Miralda (Mary in the former version) are the slaves of Mr. Wilson in Natchez.

Refusing to let Mr. Wilson whip him, Jerome runs away into the "bushy, dismal swamp,

surrounded with grim-visaged alligators" (124). However, Jerome's trip through the swamp is

brief. He is shortly captured and taken to jail, where he gives this speech, which is similar in

spirit to George's appeal to the Declaration of Independence:

> You make merry on the Fourth of July; the thunder of cannon and ringing of bells
> announce it as the birthday of American independence. Yet while these cannons are
> roaring and bells ringing, one sixth of the people of this land are in chains and slavery.
> (130)

George has been guilty of participating in an insurrection, while Jerome claims that he would

join one:

> If I mistake not, the day will come when the negro will learn that he can get his
> freedom by fighting for it; and should that time arrive, the whites will be sorry that
> they have hated us so shamefully. I am free to say that, could I live my life over again, I
> would use all the energies which God has given me to get up an insurrectian [sic].
> (131)

Jerome's potential for violence marks him as an adventurous hero, rather than "the trickster

who outsmarts The Man" identified by Jean Fagan Yellin as a key figure in Brown's earlier

autobiographical writings (frequently Brown himself) (160). Jerome's heroic character is

developed during his long journey north, which is much as it is in the first version with the

addition of him stowing away on a steamboat and escaping from a pair of slave catchers.

However, Jerome's most heroic action comes, like George's when he rushes into a burning

building, in his case to save the life of a young child. Unlike George, this action does not benefit

Jerome, who leaves the next day for Canada, nor does it further the plot of the novel. Instead,

Brown uses it to reinforce Jerome's characterization as an individual "who, if born under other

circumstances, might have made an heroic defender of his country's rights" (189). However,

though Brown portrays Jerome as an assertive, militant, masculine hero during his enslavement

and escape, he does not continue to portray Jerome in the same idealized light once the

character reaches England. Instead, he uses Jerome's character to critique key elements of the

stereotypical adventure hero.

   In his introduction to Brown's autobiographical writings, William Andrews notes

Brown's early and sustained resistance to the physically aggressive and uniformly heroic male

fugitive character invoked by other slave autobiographers, like Frederick Douglass (6). Instead,

Andrews writes, Brown typically presented the master-slave relationship as a battle of wits in

which "the slave used a kind of mental jujitsu . . . to deceive or divert his oppressors" (7). This

kind of subversive, trickster figure emerges briefly in *Clotel* in the character of Sam, a slave on

the Peck plantation. However, as Yellin points out in her book, "this ironic, tough black man" is

"almost ignored in later versions" of the novel in favor of Jerome's more assertive heroism

(177). However, Yellin doesn't discuss how Jerome's character is later deflated through his

engagement in a non-abolitionist plot sequence that takes place in the British isles. Brown's

choice to portray Jerome in a comical, less-than-heroic way during this section of the novel

suggests that Brown was aware of the problematic aspects of the stereotypical heroic character,

not only in representations of the slave-master relationship (as highlighted in his *Narrative*) but also in novels that valorized heroic adventurers.

In the British section of the novel, Jerome is portrayed as a typical traveler-adventurer, but one who falls into misadventures that unsettle the reader's perceptions of that role. While traveling in Scotland for his health, Jerome saves the life of a woman in a runaway carriage and is repaid by an invitation to her father's house where he is asked to take part in a fox hunt. Although he is not an expert rider, Jerome agrees to participate; however, he loses heart when his horse is faced with a high fence and turns back to the house, pleading illness. This coincidental series of events – a chance act of heroism that leads to a house-party invitation – resembles the casual adventures of a British tale more than an American anti-slavery novel. However, these events play an important role in Jerome's development as a character (his visit to the Colonel's gives him access to a large library of classics with which to educate himself) and also an important role in Brown's revision of the adventure genre. While Jerome's plucky attempt at fox-hunting reads like an adventurous mishap, the parallels to the earlier scene of his escape from Wilson's plantation allow for a more somber interpretation . Although Jerome is now the hunter, he has at one point been the one hunted: now considered a man, he was once chased like an animal. Jerome himself does not make these connections, but remains a happy adventurer, though somewhat out of his "proper element" (200). However, Brown's narration makes the parallels clear to his audience and suggests an alternative reading of Jerome's experiences as a critique of the colonial action-adventure that Brown has also been invoking.

Although Jerome is undoubtedly a heroic individual who deserves the rights of freedom, citizenship, and social mobility that he is working towards in England, those very rights are tainted by the power dynamics of empire and privilege that pervade the Anglo-American world, and even the adventurous model of identity that Jerome embraces. Although, as I wrote above,

Brown endorsed certain imperialist ideas in *Clotel* (like the connection between cultivation and national possession), his portrayal of the fox hunt in *Miralda* presents a critique of the conquest model of national identity espoused in many adventure novels. Fox-hunting is both a status symbol and a metaphor for the relationship between the privileged and those that they control. Jerome does not see himself in the caged fox, but as readers we can make that connection and regret the social structures that would put Jerome in the metaphorical place of Tabor, the slave-catcher, while rejoicing that Jerome was not sufficiently skilled to fulfill that role. By portraying this episode as a misadventure, Brown continues his project of unsettling and remapping the power structures created through the adventure genre. Jerome literally cannot navigate the terrain of Scotland on horseback the way his aristocratic hosts can. His failure suggests that the problems created by the dynamics of slavery – and, by extension, colonialism (Miralda, at this point in the novel, has followed her French husband to his garrison in India) – cannot be solved by simply placing the heroic African American male in the role of the adventurer. Although the language of adventure is useful to Brown as a way to create a recognizably heroic character who can lay claim to the virtues of citizenship, it is also deeply problematic because it reinforces the power structures that disenfranchised Jerome in the first place. Brown's transformation of Jerome from a heroic fugitive in America into a victim of comic misadventure in Britain reflects Brown's resistance to the cult of the hero, though he clearly realized its power. As Andrews has noted, Brown frequently embraced "the ordinary, the representative, and the no heroic" in his personal narrative and his other works (Introduction 7). As the novel shows through the Scottish episode, Jerome's heroism is tied to his fugitive status in America. He is not wantonly bloodthirsty or in love with the concept of conquest. In Scotland he becomes a more ordinary man, not an exception to the thousands of other men who remained in slavery.

Although Jerome is – by design – not completely heroic, Brown also makes it clear that

being ordinary or non-heroic is not equivalent to a class designation. Heroism in adventure novels (and domestic novels during the period as well) was generally restricted to members of the upper-middle and upper classes, while lower-class men were portrayed as unheroic. Jerome, though he loses some of his heroic characteristics during his European travels, is not relegated to the lower classes. Both *Miralda* and the 1864 version *Clotelle* end with Jerome and the heroine traveling Europe in the company of her father as wealthy, free, privileged tourists.[71] As fugitives, Jerome and the heroine cannot return to a home after they are married, but they can live a quiet and genteel life as befits the hero and heroine of a story. Although this ending to the tale is not sensational, it does reflect a somewhat radical resistance, both to the narrative assumptions about heroism and class that I discussed above, and to the actual racial discrimination practiced in Britain at the time.

Brown returns to the adventure genre in the last version of the novel, which was published in 1867, Brown turns again to the tropes of adventure to critique American race relations. In this version of the novel, Clotelle (formerly called Mary/Miralda) and Jerome return to the South as soon as the Union has recaptured New Orleans in order to aid the Northern cause. Although technically New Orleans is familiar territory for both of them, upon their return they feel themselves "in the midst of strangers; and these were arrayed against each other in mortal combat" (182). Like adventurers, they must make a place for themselves and demonstrate their fitness to claim the now-possible American identity. For Jerome, this means joining a black regiment in the Union army.

Military action as the basis of national identity is one of the fundamental tropes of the adventure novel genre, and one of the most powerful ones. In both his novel and in non-fictional works like *The Black Man: His Antecedents, His Genius, and His Achievements* (1863)

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[71] These brief sections point to Brown's affinity for travel writing and also raise the question of the relationship between travel writing and adventure, which is too complex to discuss in this project.

and *The Negro in the American Rebellion* (1867), Brown too is explicit about the role that

military action plays in citizenship. In the 1853 version of the novel, Brown argues that

"throughout the whole of the struggles for liberty in this country, the negroes have contributed

their share" by participation in the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812 (134).[72] The last

version of *Clotelle* appeared in the same year as *The Negro in the American Rebellion*, and in the

novel Brown forms Jerome into an ideal military hero. However, as in the previous sections (and

incarnations) of the novel, Brown adopts the character of the military hero in order to critique it.

Published several years into Reconstruction, and before the ratification of the 14th

Amendment which declared *"*All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to

the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States," Clotelle presents an ambiguous

picture of military service and citizenship*.* Jerome returns to America because he feels himself to

be a citizen of the idealized American nation that the Civil War is meant to bring into reality. As

the adventurous hero of a novel, the military should give him an arena in which he can perform

heroic acts. However, once he joins the service he disappears into the collective groups of the

"Native Guard" and "First Louisiana" (183). By refusing to focus on Jerome's individual actions

during the war, Brown disrupts the conventions of the traditional adventure story which is

always focused on the actions of the hero as a unique individual. While he is the hero of the

story, Jerome is not unique in his commitment to the American nation or exceptional in his

bravery. Those traits are shared by the African American military community. For this reason,

rather than making the community a backdrop to Jerome's actions, the military community

takes center stage in this portion of the novel.

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[72] William Wells Brown was not the only African American man who saw military service as a path to citizenship and equality. Martin Delany, who will be discussed later in this chapter, joined the army and gained the rank of major, while encouraging other black men to follow him into the service. Frederick Douglass, too, recruited black men for the army, saying "Once let the black man get upon his person the brass letter, U.S., let him get an eagle on his button, and a musket on his shoulder and bullets in his pocket, there is no power on earth that can deny that he has earned the right to citizenship" (852).

At the same time that Brown uses Jerome's military action to signify his right to be named an American citizen, he also critiques the conventions of the adventure genre that equate participation in nationalized violence as validation of citizenship (for example, in Marryat's novel *Mr. Midshipman Easy*, Jack only takes his place as a functional member of the British nation after joining the navy and fighting Britain's battles). Once the Civil War has started, Jerome is for the first time in the position of being able to fight for a literal, rather than an imaginary, nation. As a member of the Union army, his goal is the conquest of foreign (Southern) territory for the greater good of his nation. The war re-maps America for Jerome and for other African Americans. Whereas the entire country was once hostile territory that demanded adventurous navigation, it now seems divided into "friendly" territory (the Union areas) and "enemy" territory (Confederate areas). Theoretically, Jerome's military service grants him the status of a citizen fighting for his nation against a common enemy. He has what he never had before, a land base to call home. However, as the historical record shows, although the war re-mapped America's national boundaries, it did not re-map or remove the racial discrimination that exists separately from slavery. In the imaginative geography of America during the war, the white soldiers were still the defenders of the Union, while the African American soldiers were their sidekicks: a power dynamic that was reinforced by the practice of having white commissioned officers command black troops (Berlin 28-29). Although Brown briefly represents the war-torn country in the simple terms of "friendly" and "hostile" he quickly complicates this portrayal by representing the racism at work within the Union army.

The power dynamics of the military adventure, especially its dependence on rank, promote inequality and enable, rather than disable, incidents of racism. Brown shows this clearly in his description of Jerome's fate. While taking part in the siege of Port Hudson, a white officer of Jerome's black regiment is killed. The white colonel of the regiment sends wave after

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wave of black volunteers to retrieve the dead body. Jerome is a member of the last wave. He

succeeds in reaching the officer's body, but in attempting to carry it back "His head was entirely

torn off by a shell" (238). The fact that Brown disposes of the hero of his story in this one brief

and unceremonious sentence is the ultimate negation of the adventure tropes that insist that a

heroic life will lead to a heroic death. The racism of the white colonel who is willing to sacrifice

the lives of fourteen African American men for the dead body of one white soldier reduces

Jerome and his fellow-soldiers to the archetypical "native sidekicks" who are useful and

disposable bodies rather than fully-rounded individuals. Jerome's fatal bravery is ultimately not

enough to overcome the role forced upon him by a racist military system.

By denying Jerome's death a sense of grand climax, in the same way that he denied the

steamboat race a sense of grand climax, Brown critiques the parameters of the adventure genre

and the power structures that it engenders. Although Brown takes pains in all of the versions of

his novel to present George/Jerome as a heroic adventurer and ideal citizen of the "real"

America, he makes it clear in this last version of the novel – in the aftermath of the Civil War –

that the violence upon which the adventure genre and its ideological construction of national

identity are founded cannot solve the complex ideological problems that beset a country like

America. The inequality demanded by the power structures of the adventure genre cannot

imagine, much less help create, the kind of integrated and welcoming nation that Brown

envisions as the future America. For this reason, more than any other, he turns to the domestic

genre at the end of *Clotelle*. Although domestic fiction has its own connections to racism (as my

previous chapter demonstrates), its power structures are different than those of the adventure

genre. While the adventure often focuses on territorial conquest and unilateral action, the

domestic novel models a more collaborative (though still hierarchical and patriarchal) way of life

through the representation of the family unit. Whereas the adventure novel (structured upon

the hero's journey away from home and then back home again) most usually represents "home" as a one-dimensional and static area, the domestic genre develops "home" as a complex space where compromises are reached, problems are solved, and progress is made towards a happy conclusion. Although America may have been a space of adventure for African Americans during slavery, Brown makes it clear in his final version of the novel that a more collaborative, domestic approach to life is necessary for the post-war period.

All versions of the novel contain a domestic theme – particularly in Brown's use of the gothically-infused "tragic mulatta" plot which consumes the lives of Clotel's sister, Althesa, and Althesa's daughters, Ellen and Jane. However, each of the first three versions of the novel ends on a national, rather than a domestic note, with George/Jerome and Mary/Miralda/Clotelle living as American patriots in exile. Only the last version of the novel concludes on a domestic note. That is not to say that Clotelle does not have adventures. Her experiences as a nurse in Andersonville prison (where she helps prisoners escape) and as an African-American Union woman passing as a white rebel lady throughout the south can certainly be categorized as adventures. Throughout her experiences, Clotelle exhibits the bravery and the agency of a true adventure hero. However, once the war is over she reroutes that agency into a domestic concern: she buys the plantation upon which she and Jerome were enslaved and transforms it into a school for the emancipated slaves. This final rejection of the plantation as a determining space in literal and imaginative American geography points to a new future where education and the communication webs of civilization will replace the violence and silences of the antebellum period. While Clotelle's school is a domestic, home-like space, it is not entirely apolitical. As in the antebellum period, the education and training of African Americans during Reconstruction was an act with political implications because it gave them the tools to succeed economically and politically. And so, although Brown's conclusion to his novel may seem like a

retreat from the political to the particular, it actually highlights the political dimensions of the domestic genre that were frequently obscured by its focus on the family unit.

Adolphus: The Post-Plantation Novel

Brown's rejection of adventure as a generic form capable of coping with the complexities of the post-War American nation and citizenship within it resembles a similar generic shift that takes place in the short Afro-Trinidadian novel *Adolphus, a Tale*. *Adolphus* is an unfinished work of fiction that was serialized in the *Trinidadian* paper from January 1 to April 20th in 1853. Although it was published anonymously, the editors of the 2003 edition believe the author to have been George Numa Dessources, who was the editor of the *Trinidadian*, or possibly one of his friends (*Adolphus* xxiv).[73] Like *The Slave Son* and *Emmanuel Appadocca*, *Adolphus* opens with a preface that alerts the reader to its author's aims: to highlight continuing racial and economic discrimination in the British West Indies. As in *The Slave Son*, the author of *Adolphus* addresses the novel's role as a historical fiction(it is set in the early 1800s, before the abolition of slavery). While Wilkins, author of *The Slave Son*, claims that her story could be set in any time or place "for the same causes are ever followed by like effects" (99), the author of *Adolphus* explains the historical setting by saying that "The past is the parent of the present, and to whom can the youthful turn for instruction with more sanguine hopes of success, than to a father whose mind is ripened by age and experience?" (5) This book differs from the historical fictions by Wilkins and Phillip because the author of *Adolphus* does not address the subject of American slavery or place his book in the context of the transatlantic abolitionist movement of the 1850s.[74] Instead,

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[73] The *Trinidadian* "acquired a reputation for being a "radical", anti-white, anti-government paper" that "upheld the interests of the "foreign", Catholic, mixed-race group to which [Dessources] belonged" (xxiv). These same interests are visible in the lives of the Catholic, mixed-race protagonists of *Adolphus* who struggle against a both racial and economic discrimination.

[74] I am following the editors of the novel in the practice of using "he" and "his" to refer to the anonymous author.

his explicit goal is:

> to shew the contrast between the present position of the coloured people and that in
> which they stood formerly, that they may see the better the great step that colonial
> society has made in advance; and to learn that they have only to exert themselves in
> the same manner as did their fathers to clear from their sight whatever causes of
> complaint by which they may be surrounded. (5)

Although the book is set during slavery, it is (as the editors note) possible to read the entire tale

and not register that slavery is still in existence. Only two slaves appear as characters, and both

play minor roles in the plot. By featuring white violence against free people, the author of the

story acknowledges contemporary Caribbean issues through the medium of a historical novel.

The main subject of *Adolphus* is the racial discrimination that exists outside of slavery in

Trinidad and Britain's other West Indian colonies. While the author claims in the preface that

advances have been made, and it is certainly true that emancipation greatly improved the lives

of the Afro-Caribbean population of Trinidad, it is difficult to read the novel and not believe that

a certain amount of irony is present in the preface. Though slavery has been eliminated from the

colonies, racial discrimination has not been eliminated, and it is possible that the author is

suggesting that the "barbarities of the past" are not as distant as many would like to believe (5).

In fact, Trinidad's continuing status as a colonial possession of Britain is the target of the author,

who places his novel in dialog with the historical plantation adventures appearing at the time in

order to critique their representation of the colonial landscape as dangerous and uncivilized and

the related representation of its black inhabitants as ignorant foreigners rather than free British

subjects.

The editors describe the genre of *Adolphus* in the same terms that they describe the

genre of *The Slave Son*: not as an adventure, but as a Gothic melodrama with "luridly violent

villains, handsome and brave heroes, and heroines whose virtue is surpassed only by their

helplessness" (L). The novel certainly owes more to the genre of melodrama than to any other

popular form of fiction; however, certain aspects of it suggest an interesting relationship to the

adventure novel genre – both the plantation fictions I discussed in the previous chapter, and

Maxwell Phillips's nautical novel *Emmanuel Appadocca*, which I discussed in the first chapter. In

this story, the young, beautiful mixed-race heroine, Antonia Romelia, is abducted by the villain

DeGuerinon, who is also mixed-race, but who passes for a wealthy white man. Before

DeGuerinon can rape her, Antonia's lover, Adolphus, the mixed-race foster-son of the local

priest, rescues Antonia with the help of his friend, Ernest. However, in the process they wound

DeGuerinon and are forced to flee Trinidad. In the mean time, Antonia is restored to her family

only to see her mother die of grief and her father die in prison, where he has been placed as an

accessory to the attack on DeGuerinon. The story cuts off prematurely, with Antonia in the care

of the priest in Trinidad and Adolphus and Ernest living in exile in Venezuela. The abrupt

conclusion of the serialization leads the editors to speculate that "it seems likely that the author

simply tired of the tale, or had other pressing demands to meet" (lxxix). While the lack of a

recognizable conclusion makes the novel difficult to assess in terms of a plot arc, the existing

chapters of the tale are a fascinating blend of popular storytelling and political commentary.

The plot of *Adolphus* participates in the same kind of re-mapping project embraced by

William Wells Brown through its relationship to the plantation adventure novel genre. While

mid-century adventures and adventurous melodramas set in the Caribbean tend to be

obsessively focused on the site of the plantation, as are the novels discussed in chapter two,

Adolphus takes place entirely outside the space of the plantation. Although the novel does take

place during slavery, the primary action of the novel occurs at DeGuerinon's house in the

suburbs of Port of Spain, the city of Caracas in Venezuela, and at the Romelia's "small estate"

which is a "plantation" only in the most literal sense of the word (7). By reimagining Trinidad as a space of rural small family homes and urban dwellings, the author of *Adolphus* rejects the idea that the plantation, and the power dynamics of the plantation, completely circumscribe the lives of the entire Afro-Caribbean population. That is not to say that plantation slavery plays no role in the story. Adolphus, the hero, is the product of master-slave rape, as was his mother. Pregnant with her master's child, his mother fled to her brother in the maroon camp, gave birth there, and died shortly thereafter. Her brother, Jimbo, gave the baby to the priest, Padre Gonzalvez, to raise. Thus, Adolphus is technically a slave but grows up as a free man and is never in danger of reenslavement. The effect of his painful past is emotional: he fears his illegitimacy will prevent him from winning Antonia's love. Antonia, the daughter of two free colored people, does not allow Adolphus's heritage to come between them. Even though this story takes place during slavery, in the relationship between Antonia and Adolphus (both free) as the author implicitly suggests a model for post-slavery relationships that acknowledge and then move beyond the convoluted family ties that are the legacy of plantation slavery.

Although the plot of *Adolphus* is melodramatic and domestic, elements of the adventure genre surround it and provide it with its framework. The maroon camp where Padre Gonzalvez is taken to minister last rights to Adolphus's mother and take custody of her baby is wild and remote. The maroons blindfold the Padre on the journey, and when he arrives he sees a rough camp and "eight negroes partially naked with cutlasses in their hands" as well as Jimbo, their leader, "a tall athletic man [whose] bare arm shewed that he was of uncommon strength" (15). These maroons, and the runaway life they inhabit, are part of the dynamic that inscribes the plantation as a space of adventure. However, the plantation itself never makes an appearance, and the maroons exist only in the past as the background to the main action of the plot. This use of the maroon community by the author of *Adolphus* recognizes the fact that the competitive

space of the plantation, in fact, once provided a space of adventure for both white and black men within the colony. At the same time, it also insists that the colony is no longer a de-facto space of adventure, but instead a domesticated and urbanized landscape where identity is predicated on color and on wealth, not on adventurous actions of imperialism, as is popularly imagined. By placing the plantation in the past, the author of the novel suggests that the future of Trinidad depends on new economic models (for example, the Romelia's small farm). The author further suggests that the restrictions placed on men of color by the government and public opinion are outdated relics of the ancient past and an increasingly-irrelevant colonial landscape.

The second intrusion of adventure elements on the plot of the novel occurs during Adolphus's flight from Trinidad to Venezuela after wounding DeGuerinon. While on the British ship to Venezuela, Adolphus and his companion Ernest are entertained by the "jovial discourses of an old sailor named Roughtide" (61) who tells the story of a sailor who was knocked overboard and rode on the back of a shark to shore (65). Roughtide's appearance in the novel does not advance the plot in any signal way: his purpose is purely to entertain Adolphus and the reader with the tales of his exploits at sea. This British sailor is a figure more properly found in the sea adventures I discussed in the first chapter rather than in this novel of domestic drama. His presence and his story remind the reader of the alternative narrative genres that the author of *Adolphus* is rejecting in order to focus his story on a domestic plot. Like Belfond in *The Slave Son*, Adolphus is given the option to "seek the water" (Wilkins 210) as a mode of existence, and like Belfond he views it only as a form of transport to his new life. However, while Belfond and Laurine sail off to a hopeful, but undescribed life in Venezuela, the author of *Adolphus* follows his characters to Caracas where they meet Simon Bolivar and find employment. Integrating Adolphus and Ernest into the urbanized life of Caracas allows the author of the tale to reject

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once more the ideals of adventure (life on the sea) while also rejecting the haziness of Wilkins's portrayal of Belfond's future life and actions. Wilkins refused to portray an economic function or social role for Belfond within any nation (Britain or Venezuela). The author of *Adolphus*, on the other hand, provides his mixed-race hero with an office job in Bolivar's government, clearly depicting the kinds of integrated opportunities that the Afro-Trinidadian population agitated for after emancipation. While the author of *Adolphus* rejects wildly romanticized adventures of the sort narrated by Roughtide, he does embrace revolutionary violence as a legitimate means to attain freedom. Adolphus and Ernest arrive in Venezuela shortly after the conclusion of the war of independence from Spain, and Adolphus clearly admires what the Venezuelans have accomplished:

> He had left a land where prejudice against colour had destroyed many of the social ties, – where the soil was daily watered with the tears of slaves, – and where none whatever of the descendants of Ham could claim the rights of a man and a citizen. Another picture was now before him – all was free, all men were equal. Joy reigned in every dwelling, – Liberty had given life to all; the father, instead of mourning for his son who had fallen in the last campaign, felt proud and joyous at knowing that his child had offered himself as a sacrifice at the shrine of Patriotism; the tender spouses beheld with secret admiration the glorious scars which their husbands had brought home from the scenes of combat. (71-72)

In this passage, the author of the story sets the revolutionary violence of Bolivar against the oppressive and exploitative violence of European (specifically British) actions in Trinidad. Citizenship in Venezuela is the result of violent action, but it is the action of liberation, rather than the action of oppression that is responsible for the "ideal" British colonial citizen. By describing Venezuela in these terms, the author of *Adolphus* imagines what could also be a radical shift in the mapping of the colonial Caribbean. Venezuela, once a colony, is now an independent republic, where the freedom of (most of the) slaves is accompanied by the

freedom of the rest of the population from Spanish rule.[75] Whereas in *Emmanuel Appadocca*

Philip argues for Appadocca's rights as a citizen of a British territory and merely hints at the

possibility of an independent Trinidad, in *Adolphus* the author clearly argues for an independent

state along the lines of Venezuela. While the benefits of such a state would be the greatest for

mixed-race and enslaved people, the author is careful to say that even a privileged man, such as

Padre Gonzalvez, would benefit from "the pure air of liberty" found in an independent state

(74). This vision of an independent, multi-racial nation challenges British portrayals of Trinidad

(and other Caribbean colonies) as dependent, partially-civilized territories that lack the

economic and intellectual resources to be fully-fledged nations.

Although the author of *Adolphus* advocates for the violence of revolution to counteract

the violence of colonial oppression, he rejects the narrative violence of the adventure genre in

favor of a domestic and urban narrative where the violence is personal and racial, not national.

While violent adventure might be necessary to free a colony like Trinidad from imperial

oppression, the author shows no signs of wanting to rewrite Adolphus and Ernest as

adventurers in their own right. Instead, he describes them as white-collar workers; Adolphus is a

clerk, and Ernest, though he has an independent fortune in Trinidad, seeks employment in

Caracas because he believes that "money without employment or friends is like a turret without

foundation" (72).[76] In describing these potential adventurers as sober businessmen working

their way up in the world (Ernest eventually falls in love with his employer's daughter and

marries into the business), the author embraces an economic model of citizenship and rejects a

model based on land ownership and the power violently to oppress a laboring population. This

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[75] As the editors of *Adolphus* note, Venezuela had a "complicated history of slave emancipation" and that full freedom for all slaves did not come until 1854 (xxvi).

[76] Ernest's race is never disclosed in the novel. Because he is Adolphus's friend, it seems likely that he is the son of one of the wealthy mixed-race planters of Trinidad, rather than a white man.

approach to the two main male characters of the story suggests that the author was not trying

to advocate for a physical revolution, although he did respect the actions of Bolivar and

Venezuela's citizens. Instead, the author of *Adolphus* points to a different kind of revolution: an

interior revolution where an intangible violence destroys and reconstructs the social and

economic barriers and expectations that rule the British nation. This interior revolution would

replace an economy of oppression with an economy of opportunity while rejecting the physical

violence that supported that oppression from the beginning.

The novel ends abruptly, with Ernest planning for his wedding and Adolphus anxiously

awaiting the time when he will be able to return to Trinidad safely to reunite with Antonia. It

seems likely that the author originally projected a different conclusion for the novel, but it is

difficult to predict a satisfactory ending. Adolphus and Padre Gonzalvez are sincerely attached to

Trinidad in the way that patriots love their country; however, Adolphus cannot return until he is

certain he won't be persecuted for saving Antonia. Since DeGuerinon is discovered at the end of

the novel to be of mixed race himself, Adolphus should theoretically be absolved of his crime of

attacking a white man. However, even if he was absolved, the limited opportunities for mixed-

race men in Trinidad under British rule might prevent him from living happily there. Therefore,

the lack of conclusion, though it is most likely an accident rather than a narrative choice on the

author's part, does represent the kind of suspended life experienced by free mixed-race men in

the post-emancipation Trinidad that the author inhabited. The challenges that face Adolphus

are similar to the challenges that faced Dessources (the possible author), Maxwell Philip, and

other educated men of mixed race in Trinidad in the post-slavery period: making a decent living

and resisting the systematized racial oppression of the British government. Although *Adolphus* is

technically a historical novel, as are *The Maroon* and *The Slave Son*, it is much more modern

than either of those books. By resisting the narrative mode of adventure, the author of *Adolphus*

reaches towards a modern understanding of the nation-state which is founded on civic and

economic principles of citizenship, rather than a mystic appeal to birth and blood-born virtue

enacted through colonial violence. Rewriting Trinidad as a domestic and urban space, the author

narratively dismantles the individualizing power dynamics of the plantation that pervade the

novels of Reid and Wilkins, and replaces them with the systematic abuses of urban colonial

bureaucracy: a move that suggests the need for an updated approach to the governance of

Britain's West Indian colonies.

Domestic and urban settings were also making an appearance in fiction by African

American authors in the years immediately before and during the civil war. In 1857, Frank J.

Webb published *The Garies and Their Friends,* a novel that takes place primarily in Philadelphia

and features urban free blacks. In 1865, Julia Collins's novel *The Curse of Caste; or The Slave*

Bride, another novel that contains an urban setting, was serialized in *The Christian Recorder*.

Both of these novels are similar to *Adolphus* in the way that they are rooted in the plantation

past. In *The Garies and Their Friends*, Mr. Garie is a former plantation owner who married his

slave, Emily, and then emigrated to Philadelphia. In *The Curse of Caste*, the heroine, Claire, is the

daughter of a plantation owner's son and a slave he purchased, freed, and married. Although

the plantation looms in the background of these stories and provides the characters' history, the

setting is largely urban (Philadelphia and New Orleans) or non-plantation countryside (suburban

Pennsylvania and small-town New England). Neither of these novels contains significant

adventurous content (encounters with wild animals, violent physical conflicts in a wilderness

setting, characters who exist on the borders of national and "uncivilized" territory) , instead

focusing on urban domesticity and business affairs. Like *Adolphus*, both of these novels can be

read as reactions to the brutality of the adventure genre and its power dynamics and an attempt

to replace those dynamics by replacing the genre of the story with one that described the modern, urban industrialized world rather than a feudal past.

Blake: Looking Beyond Borders

The final novel I will discuss in this chapter, *Blake, or, the Huts of America* by Martin Delany, moves constantly between the traditional space of the plantation and urban life (represented by Havana, Cuba). Like *Clotel* and *Adolphus*, the novel also features a hero who crosses national borders in pursuit of his goals. However, *Blake* departs significantly from the previous two novels because Delany represents his hero as traveling from slave nation (America) to slave nation (Cuba) in pursuit of revolution, rather than traveling from a slave nation to a free nation where he can live in exile. Using this tactic, Delany represents slavery as a trans-national economic system (rather than a local, semi-feudal, romanticized lifestyle) that can only be destroyed by trans-national action. Delany's solution to the problem of slavery and racism is the creation of an independent black nation – a nation that will be constructed by breaking the boundaries of an existing nation, rather than by severing the ties between a colony and its colonizer, as is suggested in *Adolphus*.

Martin Delany's political career was long, complex, and sometimes contradictory. As Tunde Adeleke has argued, the prevailing portrayal of Delany as a militant black nationalist and father of pan-African thought obscures "another Martin Delany who was conservative and accommodationist, who compromised when necessary, and who advocated and defended color-blind policies" (xiv). In his work *Without Regard to Race*, Adeleke notes that Delany's best-known works of black nationalism that favor emigration all date from the period between 1852 and 1862, a period that was framed by phases of moderate, pro-integration activism. It is not my intention to attempt a comprehensive portrayal of Delany's evolving and complex political beliefs. Instead, I will be focusing on his decade of militant nationalism (the decade in which

Blake appeared) and his activities during the Civil War. As I will show, it is not at all surprising that Delany's turn towards a militant black nationalist agenda was accompanied by his first and only work of fiction, and that that work of fiction drew largely on the conventions of the adventure novel genre.

Martin Delany's novel *Blake, or the Huts of America* incorporates aspects of the plantation adventure and also aspects of the sea adventure format I discussed in chapter one. Delany combines these two formats to produce a novel that reflects a very different approach to both race and citizenship than that exhibited by any of the authors I have previously discussed, with the possible exception of Maxwell Philip.[77] In *Blake*, Martin Delany creates an active, manly, mobile hero who inhabits the tropes of adventure in order to erase the colonial and national boundaries surrounding him and reconfigure the space into a new, black nation. Blake's goal – to form a new territorial nation, rather than to integrate into an existing nation – sets the action of this novel apart from the other novels I've discussed. Because the story is focused on the process of nation building, Delany's use of colonialist adventure novel conventions is in some ways more straightforward and less critical than that of the other authors I've discussed. For that reason, the novel is also more troubling for modern scholars than either *Clotel* or *Adolphus*.

A signal difference that sets Delany's novel apart from *Clotel* is the fact that *Blake* is anchored by a heroic black male character, Henry Blake, who maintains a significant presence throughout the novel. In this way, *Blake* resembles an adventure novel much more closely than does *Clotel*. However, the plot of the novel is different from the novels by Marryat and Reid that I have discussed. In those works, the hero gradually develops into an appropriate national citizen. Instead, as with George/Jerome, Madison Washington, and Adolphus, Blake is represented as a fully-developed character who is ready for citizenship as soon as a nation can

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[77] The hero of Philip's novel *Emmanuel Appadocca* does propose setting up a new nation, but, unlike Delany, Philip does not envision it as a strictly black nation.

be found that will take him. Delany highlights Blake's heroic characteristics by comparing him to

his master, Colonel Franks, who does have the status of a free citizen of the United States:

> Henry was a black -- a pure Negro -- handsome, manly and intelligent, in size
> comparing well with his master, but neither so fleshy nor heavy built in person. A man
> of good literary attainments -- unknown to Colonel Franks, though he was aware he
> could read and write -- having been educated in the West Indies, and decoyed away
> when young. His affection for wife and child was not excelled by Colonel Franks's for
> his. He was bold, determined and courageous, but always mild, gentle and courteous,
> though impulsive when an occasion demanded his opposition. (16-17)

Henry Blake's virtues, which are both physical and intellectual, set him apart on the Franks

plantation, but this is a disadvantage rather than an advantage to the slave. Delany clearly

perceives slavery first and foremost as an attack on black masculinity. As Blake says,

Colonel Franks's goal in his possession of Henry is to destroy his "lingering manhood" and

reduce him to the level of a beast (29). Rather than being crushed, Henry seizes an

opportunity to escape, asserting his manly character through his physical mobility, which

he later translates into social mobility. Although the book is frequently described as a

"picaresque novel" due to Blake's travels (Levine 191), it shares many characteristics with

an adventure plot. Not only does Blake travel from place to place, but he does so in an

atmosphere of constant danger. His journey is saturated in violence: violence narrated by

the slaves he meets, and violence enacted by the white men he avoids. Rather than stand

apart from this violence, Blake participates in it, once killing a pack of bloodhounds that

were hunting him, and once killing a black overseer who had a reputation for viciousness.

Two incidents in Blake's first journey highlight the novel's connection to the adventure

genre. The first occurs at the beginning of his journey as he attempts to cross the Red River from

Mississippi to Louisiana. Attempting to hide from a steamer on its way upriver, Blake retreats to

a cove "when to his terror he found himself amidst a squad of huge alligators" (69). This

proverbial dilemma between a rock and a hard place is a common element in adventure fiction, where characters frequently get out of one 'jam' only to get into another. Blake's response to this situation marks him as a true adventure hero:

> His first impulse was to surrender himself to his fate and be devoured, as in the rear and either side the bank was perpendicular, escape being impossible except by the way he entered, to do which would have exposed him to the view of the boat, which could not have been avoided. Meantime the frightful animals were crawling over and among each other, at a fearful rate.
>
> Seizing the fragment of a limb which lay in the cove, beating upon the ground and yelling like a madman, giving them all possible space, the beasts were frightened at such a rate, that they reached the water in less time than Henry reached the bank. (70)

Blake's encounter with the alligators serves no other narrative purpose than to showcase his bravery and initiative in the face of danger, which is rewarded by his successful crossing of the state line. These qualities will carry him through the rest of his adventures, though they are frequently displayed in less physical terms. Many of Blake's confrontations are battles of wits rather than fists. However, Delany carefully establishes Blake's capacity for physical action first, and strategically reminds the reader of that physicality and violence throughout the narrative. We do not see the same shifts of characterization in Blake as we saw in Brown's hero Jerome. Instead, Blake is unequivocally presented as a hero throughout the book.

The second incident that represents a clear narrative connection to the adventure genre is Blake's encounter with runaway slaves in the Dismal Swamp. It is possible to read Blake in this instance as a revision of Brown's character Picquilo. Both Blake and Picquilo are brought from Cuba to America, both are runaways, and both are associated with violence. However, Delany's presentation of the swamp life is very different than Brown's. Like Brown, Delany connects these runaways to the insurrection led by Nat Turner. However, in Delany's narrative Turner is portrayed as long gone, and his "old confederates" are in need of an infusion of youth and hope

of the type carried by Blake (112). Delany's depiction of life in the swamp is similarly distancing.

The runaways who live there are "bold, courageous, and fearless adventurers" but also

described as "denizens of the mystical, antiquated, and almost fabulous Dismal Swamp" (112).

Delany's choice of adjectives for the swamp transform it from a place of active resistance to a

place of myth or legend, much in the same way that Mayne Reid's retrospective, mythologizing

prologue in *The Maroon* distanced the Maroon community of Jamaica from contemporary life

and action. However, Delany's goal is not to quiet his readers' fears of revolution. Instead, he is

clearing the way for the next phase of revolution.

Delany spends the bulk of this section of the novel describing Blake's interactions with

the "High Conjurors" Gamby Gholar and Maudy Ghamus. Blake's opinion of the conjurors is

complex, and not always complimentary. He clearly respects them for their connections to past

insurrections and is willing to be recognized as the inheritor of the revolutionary tradition that

they trace back to Gabriel and Denmark Vesey. However, he also views their conjuring as

quackery. When describing Gamby Gholar's hut, Blake notes that it contains "scales which he

declared to be from very dangerous serpents, but which closely resembled, and were believed

to be those of innocent and harmless fish." He also repeatedly uses skeptical language to

describe their conversation, like "apparently," "he claimed," "as he termed it," which

foregrounds his own modernity (112). Blake's description of the conjurors as "the aged

devotees of a time-honored superstition" leaves no doubt in the reader's mind that Blake's

movement is more than just a continuation of the old insurrections (114). Cowan's assessment

is that "Maroons, for Delany, are pathetic prisoners of the wilderness" (154). I don't entirely

agree with this description. Blake respects the independence of the conjurors in their "great

seclusion" of the swamp, wording that echoes his own project (he calls his revolutionary

meetings seclusions) (115). They are not prisoners so much as they are members of a previous

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generation who have reached the end of their phase of the revolution and who must hand over the reins to the vibrant soldiers of his new movement.

This distinction in the treatment of the slave in the swamp is indicative of the different approaches that Delany and Brown take to constructing a national identity for African American slaves through their texts. Delany eschews the mystical, yet distant, threat of the slave in the swamp in favor of a more mobile, militant, and practical threat. In *Clotel*, Brown represents Picquilo as an ominous shadow behind the rhetorical American patriotism of George/Jerome. In *Blake*, Delany foregrounds the violence of insurrection and wholly neglects the rhetoric of patriotism. Blake's goal is not to integrate the slaves into American society, but to overthrow the American social order. The marginal space of the swamp that both reinforces and threatens either the contained space of the plantation or the organized space of southern cities in Reid's and Brown's novels is of little interest to Delany. In *Blake*, he has a much more radical re-mapping of the slaveholding territory in mind. By taking the insurrection to the plantation itself, the way Blake does as he travels the south, Delany aggressively represents the south as not just an ideologically-foreign territory, but an actively foreign territory that must be conquered by his hero and his associates. Throughout the novel, Blake is earning his national identity, not by enacting an idealized version of Americanness, but by imagining an alternative identity that will be achieved through the conquest and re-shaping of the territory around him.

Like *Clotel*, *Blake* portrays the boundaries of the slave plantation as permeable rather than inviolable as they are in Reid and Braddon's novels. In *Blake*, slaves frequently visit from plantation to plantation to socialize and spread information. However, the most significant rupture of plantation boundaries occurs after Henry's escape from Colonel Franks, at which point Delaney challenges the traditional patterns of African American

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narrative. As Robert Stepto writes in his book *From Behind the Veil*, "the seminal journey in Afro-American narrative literature is unquestionably the journey north" (67). In most stories (or, for that matter, non-fictional narratives) that feature a slave who asserts his/her rights by running away, that journey is uni-directional and aimed at either the Northern states or Canada. In the fictional cases where a character does return South, as in *The Heroic Slave* or *Clotel*, the returning character tends to end up either recaptured or dead. The message is clear: even in stories that embrace the South and the plantation as a scene of adventure for the enslaved protagonist that leads to freedom, that freedom and any continued adventures are found in the North or in British territories.[78] Stepto describes these northern journeys as narratives of "ascension" where the protagonist's physical trip is frequently mirrored by his or her intellectual growth, particularly the acquisition of literacy (67). He contrasts those texts with narratives of "immersion" which are characterized by a journey south during which the protagonist is immersed in "a source of culture and of what Du Bois would term "race-spirit"" (66).[79] Although this framework is useful, it only partially describes the narrative structure of *Blake*, which does not neatly fit either an ascension or immersion pattern.

Another narrative structure we could apply to *Blake* is the adventure genre pattern in which the protagonist leaves home for a distant or dangerous location and then returns back to their home place. The return "home" is a key element in adventure fiction, whether that home is a birthplace (as in the Marryat novels I discussed) or an adopted home (in the case of the formerly-enslaved protagonists in *The Heroic Slave*, *The Slave Son*, and *The*

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[78] An exception to this trend is Picquilo from *Clotel*, who maintains a constant shadowy presence in the swamp outside of Richmond. However, Brown does not develop Picquilo's character or describe his actions in any meaningful detail that would counteract this perception of the South.

[79] Stepto identifies Du Bois's book *The Souls of Black Folk* as the first true immersion narrative in African American literature.

Octoroon). The black authors I've discussed tend to problematize the concept of "home" in their works to signify the difficulties faced by protagonists who have no secure national identity or citizenship. Douglass leaves his protagonist a wistful American in British territory, Philip drowns his rootless hero which redirects the idea of "home" to "heaven," the anonymous author of *Adolphus* leaves his hero an expatriate yearning for a return to Trinidad, and Brown's numerous revisions of *Clotel* reveal more wistful outcasts, and finally a return to America that is shadowed by Jerome's death. The endings of each of those novels can be viewed by readers as frustrated returns home. Like *Blake*, these novels urge the creation of a national home for their protagonists by depicting its absence. However, Delany goes a step further in his novel by reconfiguring the narrative trajectories of both the African American and the adventure traditions to create a new national home for his protagonist.

Taking full advantage of the fictionality of his text, Delany confronts the trends of the uni-directional ascension narrative and the failed "homecoming" in African American literature. He replaces them with a narrative that draws on (but does not exactly mimic) what Stepto described as an "immersion" pattern and also certain aspects of the adventure genre. In this novel, the hero works actively to transform adventurous plantation territory into a home for himself and his fellow slaves by running *across* the South, not *away* from it. In constructing a runaway narrative that is multi-directional and directed primarily southwards, not northwards, Delany challenges the dominant portrayal of the plantation country as an adventurous space for black characters to escape from, rather than one they can manipulate and change. Blake's journey is similar to the immersion narratives described by Stepto in the sense that Blake travels farther into slave territory rather than away from it. However, his goal is not simply cultural immersion. Instead, he intends to

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change that culture by encouraging a kind of in-place ascension through revolution. Blake, in this quest to reshape the political, economic, and social contours of the South, resembles the heroes of British colonial adventures who use adventure as the means to confront, control, and eventually reshape a foreign space – like the West Indies or Australia – into a facsimile of British life.

After Blake is sold by his master to a slave trader, he travels around the South, spreading his "plan for a general insurrection of the slaves in every state, and the successful overthrow of slavery" (39). This plan is never explained to the reader, only alluded to by the catchphrase: "Stand still and see the salvation" (38). Using this phrase as the key to his insurrection, Blake challenges the rhetorical power of the slave holders and their oppressive system by reimagining a phrase used by Christian ministers to inspire patience and forbearance (used by Daddy Joe on page 21 of the text) as a call to arms. The phrase also signifies his own philosophy of liberation (which is linked to his patterns of travel): standing still in the South and fighting rather than running away to freedom.

Blake's first journey takes him as far west as Texas and as far north as Washington D.C., and in every place he plants the seeds of insurrection. In each place that he visits, Blake encounters a different facet of slavery. Delany's representation of slavery as a multi-faceted system illustrates Stepto's observation that "the confining social structure (slavery) is not a fixed geographic or symbolic space; it is not quite simply and powerfully "Georgia" or "Mississippi"" (68). In *Blake*, Delany does not only break down the barriers surrounding and isolating the plantation in fiction. He also acknowledges the different locations of slavery, while remaining focused on how the system itself retains the same fundamental characteristics no matter where it is taking place. Moreover, unlike the other authors I've

discussed, Delany looks beyond slavery in his own country to slavery in neighboring

regions.

The most significant difference between Delany's vision of the re-mapped

American South and Brown's is Delany's willingness to disregard national boundaries. Like

previous protagonists, Blake's mobility extends beyond the boundaries of America, but,

unlike heroes like Madison Washington and George/Jerome, Blake remains only briefly in

British territory (Canada) before traveling to Cuba in order to expand his insurrection. In

fact, Delany identifies Canada as a racist, though not slaveholding, territory.[80] By looking

beyond the British/American binary embraced by other authors, Delany highlights the

trans-national range of slavery and racial oppression.[81] This is an idea he focuses at the

beginning of his earlier work, *The Condition, Elevation, Emigration and Destiny of the*

Colored People of the United States Politically Considered (1852). He writes: "That there

have been in all ages and in all countries . . . especially among those nations laying the

greatest claim to civilization and enlightenment, classes of people who have been deprived

of equal privileges, political, religious and social, cannot be denied" [?]. In *Blake*, Delany

focuses specifically on the connections between the Southern states and Cuba, the closest

significant slaveholding territory to America during this period. In his novel, Delany spends

less time valorizing the abolitionist sentiments of Britain than he does expressing anxiety

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[80] Delany describes the disappointment awaiting one of Blake's companions in Canada:"He little knew that while according to fundamental British Law and constitutional rights, all persons are equal in the realm, yet by a systematic course of policy and artifice, his race with few exceptions in some parts, excepting the Eastern Province, is excluded from the enjoyment and practical exercise of every right, except mere suffrage-voting -- even to those of sitting on a jury as its own peer, and the exercise of military duty. He little knew the facts, and as little expected to find such a state of things in the long-talked of and much-loved Canada by the slaves" (152-153).

[81] *Adolphus* also looks beyond America and Britain to Venezuela, but the author of that novel does not discuss the ongoing existence of slavery in that country, instead representing it as a place of liberation for his hero.

over America's interest in annexing Cuba as an additional slaveholding territory, which

started as early as 1810 and peaked in the 1840s and 1850s (Perez 36, 43). The northern

character Judge Ballard expresses the annexationist point of view in the novel: "Cuba must

cease to be a Spanish colony, and become American territory. Those mongrel Creoles are

incapable of self-government, and should be compelled to submit to the United States"

(62). By placing those sentiments in the mouth of a northerner, Delany places the

responsibility for the continuation and encouragement of slavery upon the entire Union

rather than just the Southern states, and he links the encouragement of slavery to

America's growing expansionist tendencies.

Although Delany indicts American expansion into Cuba (and, implicitly, into any

other territory), he also makes it clear that America's economic ties already transcend and

render suspect its putative national borders. He does this by combining two types of

adventure tale: a land-based story founded on the physical constraints of the plantation,

and a sea adventure that brings the hero to a variety of locations around the Atlantic. This

combination allows Delany to engage with the particular dynamics of slavery in America

while also relating those dynamics to a larger international problem. Through his hero's

travels, Delany imaginatively replaces a world mapped in distinct national blocks with a

world that is, to use Immanuel Wallerstein's term, a "world-system" dependent on extra-

national economic ties.[82] From its first page, Delany's novel focuses not on dividing lines

between nations, but lines of communication and economic exchange. As Levine writes:

> Though *Blake* can seem lacking in formal unity in the manner of a picaresque novel,
> that clipper and its group of owners work to hold the novel together. Blake is the slave

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[82] Wallerstein defines a world-system "as one in which there is an extensive division of labor. This division is not merely functional – that is, occupational – but geographical. That is to say, the range of economic tasks is not evenly distributed throughout the world-system. . . . for the most part, it is a function of the social organization of work, one which magnifies and legitimizes the ability of some groups within the system to exploit the labor of others . . ." (Wallerstein *The Modern World System I*, 1974, p349).

of the investor from Mississippi, Stephen Franks; Blake's wife will be sold to the Cuban investor, Captain Juan Garcia; Blake will make his way to Cuba with another of the investors, Captain Richard Paul; and in part 2 of the novel he will journey to Africa on the refitted ship with Paul and two other investors (U.S. and Cuban) at the helm. (191)

Delany's representation of the system that bound America to Cuba and Africa through the slave trade and a shared plantation economy is an accurate one. According to Perez, "Havana was crowded with North Americans . . . who participated in a brisk trade in slaves from Africa and ships from the United States." He further notes that "The special sea vessels required by Cuban slave-trading houses, possessed of ample cargo dimensions to underwrite profits and of speed and maneuverability to elude British patrols, were available only from the United States, principally from the shipyards of Baltimore" (35). These trade connections between Baltimore, Mississippi, Cuba, and Africa suggest a much less regimented world than the hard-and-fast national boundaries represented in *Clotel*, which focuses exclusively on the dichotomy between America and Britain . Blake's mobility within this trans-national system as a free man rather than a slave (he works his way to both Cuba and Africa during the novel) demonstrates a mastery of the system that suggests his goal of re-mapping the national boundaries within that system to incorporate a black nation is plausible, if not possible.

Delany stresses the two key factors of his international approach to the problems of slavery and racism In his earlier text, *The Condition Elevation, Emigration, and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States* (1852): economic knowledge and geographical knowledge. In his book, Levine notes that a border-crossing ethos is one of the things that made Delany's writings stand apart from that of other African American activists, like Frederick Douglass. As he writes, although both made use of patriotic American rhetoric, "more regularly than Douglass . . . Delany concluded that such a pragmatics of U.S. place was futile for blacks; his efforts to

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challenge and cross borders emerged as one of the fundamental points of difference between himself and Douglass in their debates on black leadership and community" (15). Blake's goal in the novel – to create a new and separate black nation out of the slaveholding territories of America and Cuba – shows Delany's understanding of both the artificial nature of national boundaries and the two elements (economic and geographical knowledge) necessary to the successful nation-state in his period. In *The Condition*, Delany focused on these elements in his section on the ideal education for African American youth:

> The branches of Education most desirable for the preparation of youth, for practical useful every-day life, are Arithmetic and good Penmanship, in order to be Accountants; and a good rudimental knowledge of Geography—which has ever been neglected, and under estimated—and of Political Economy; which without the knowledge of the first, no people can ever become adventurous—nor of the second, never will be an enterprising people. Geography, teaches a knowledge of the world, and Political Economy, a knowledge of the wealth of nations; or how to make money. These are not abstruse sciences, or learning not easily acquired or understood; but simply, common School Primer learning, that every body may get. (207)

As Delany says, knowledge of geography is essential if a people are to "become adventurous" and investigate beyond the borders of their worlds. At the same time, they also need economic knowledge in order to put those geographical discoveries to good use.

In *Blake*, through the medium of the adventure tale, Delany shows his readers how these two branches of knowledge work together for the good of "the race." Blake's geographical knowledge enables him to travel across the extent of the southern United States, up to Canada, down to Cuba, and across to Africa, either on his own or as a knowledgeable member of a ship's crew (his position on the slave ship to Africa is Sailing Master). At the same time, his economic sense comes through in the advice he gives to Andy and Charles, his runaway companions and fellow-organizers: "Keep this studiously in mind and impress it as an important part of the scheme of organization, that they must have money, if they want to get free. Money will obtain

them everything necessary by which to obtain their liberty. … Bear this in mind; it is your certain

passport through the white gap, as I term it" (43). As Blake travels the south to organize his

insurrection, he passes on this advice to those he meets along with his inspirational rhetoric.

Delany's focus on the economic side of the insurrection serves to remind the reader that slavery

was an economic arrangement, not a social one, that could only be destroyed with the advent of

a new economic system.[83] Delany's combination of economy with geography connects the novel

to the concerns of the colonial adventure novel type. Like the authors of colonial adventure

tales, Delany focuses on the transformation of unexplored space into productive territory rather

than solely exploration. To him, "The pioneer who . . . seizes upon a portion of the soil . . . the

toiling laborer and husbandman, who cuts down and removes the forest, levels and constructs

post-roads and other public highways—the mechanic, who constructs and builds up houses,

villages, towns, and cities, for the conveniency of inhabitants—the farmer, who cultivates the

soil for the production of breadstuffs" were all key members of any nation, a sentiment he

shared with Brown (*The Condition* 75).

However, although Delany's novel is African American in source, it has more in

common with *Adolphus* than with *Clotel* in its representation of national identity. While

Brown is focused on the integration of African Americans into the United States, Delany,

like the author of *Adolphus*, is focused on the creation of a new state that will place blacks

in positions of power. Delany goes a step farther, however, by planning a new nation rather

than independence for a current colonial territory. In *Adolphus*, Trinidad is held up as a

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[83] Although Delany does not extend Blake's imagined nation into Africa, Blake's familiarity with the
shipping routes between Africa and the Caribbean suggest an economic connection between Blake's
nation and the African coast. By bringing Africa imaginatively into the sphere of Blake's nation, Delany
foreshadows what Wallerstein argues was the end of slavery, which was Africa's shift to "part of the
periphery" of the economic world-system, from being "the external arena" that was valuable only as a
source of labor, not as a site of labor with a flourishing 'modern' economy of its own (95).

potential nation, and the author's goal is to re-direct patriotic feelings away from the

metropolitan center of London and towards the island itself. Delany's relationship to the

territory of his birth is less affectionate. In his *Official Report of the Niger Valley Exploring*

Party (1861), Delany writes "I have outgrown, long since, the boundaries of North America,

and with them have also outgrown the boundaries of their claims" (343). At the point when

he wrote *Blake*, Delany rejected integration into an American national identity and

advocated for the creation of a new nation and a new identity.

The new black national identity advocated by Blake in the novel is predicated upon

violent struggle and resistance against oppression, and this identity is enacted in the novel

through Blake's adventurous exploits – his literal and metaphorical mastering of the various

spaces through which he moves. Blake's notion of national identity is founded on the same

idea of autonomous masculine identity that inspired the American Founding Fathers, who

proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence that "all men are created equal." This is the

same belief held by Frederick Douglass and William Wells Brown, who used it to argue for

the inclusion of African American men into the American nation. Delany, however,

combines this belief with a commitment to black racial unity in order to argue for the

foundation of a black nation that would be an equal and opposite to the white Anglo-

American territories that he found so disappointing. In order to combat the white racism

that he saw transcending national boundaries, Delany advocated for a corresponding trans-

national black unity. As Paul Gilroy describes it, Delany's "anti-mystical racial rationalism

required that blacks of all shades, classes, and ethnic groups give up the merely accidental

differences that served only to mask the deeper unity waiting to be constructed not so

much from their African heritage as from the common orientation to the future produced

by their militant struggles against slavery" (*Black Atlantic* 28). Delany's goal, as explained in

The Condition and imagined through *Blake*, is to channel this militant resistance into adventurous action as modeled by British and American national expansion. Delany, through Blake's journeys, argues that black men must be willing to look beyond the domestic concerns of current (racist) nations in order to found a new physical nation.

Blake's rejection of integration into America or another pre-existing nation is matched with the novel's rejection of the domestic plot found in so many other plantation adventures. At the opening of the book, Blake is married to Maggie, who is the beautiful and loyal maid of his mistress, Mrs. Franks. While Blake is away from the house, Colonel Franks sells Maggie away to Cuba. The reason is never stated, but Delany implies that it was because she refused to sleep with the Colonel (8, 15, 19). Her sale provides Blake's motivation to run away. As he explains to his master, he had become "entangled in such domestic relations as to induce me to remain with you; but now the tie is broken!" (19) Although she is not a typical "tragic mulatta" (she cannot pass for white and she is always aware of her slave status), Maggie's suffering at the hands of a rapacious master resembles that of Francilia, Cora, Althesa, Jane, and numerous other black female characters from the plantation novel tradition. However, the domestic plot of this novel is notable, not for its poignant and tragic nature, but for the way Delany presents it and then fractures it in order to proceed with the adventure.

Blake does devote part of his time in the novel to reconstructing his "domestic relations" outside of the plantation system, by aiding in the escape to Canada of his mother- and father-in-law with his young son, Joe, and by tracking down his wife, Maggie, in Cuba. However, his domestic life has been permanently damaged by the break-up of his family. The most stunning example of that damage occurs when Blake finally reaches the Cuban plantation on which Maggie is a slave, but fails to recognize her when they are

introduced. They carry on an entire conversation, in which Blake asks her a number of

personal questions, without a moment of recognition. It is not until Blake travels to the

plantation where he knew she was first taken upon reaching Cuba, and hears the story of

her troubles with her new master, including the beatings that have damaged her memory

and the fact that she is now being called Lotty, that Blake realizes the woman he talked

with at the first plantation was his wife. Upon his return to that plantation and further

conversation with the woman about her past, Blake exclaims "O! My God! Is this my wife!"

– an exclamation that expresses loss and confusion more than it does joy and confidence

(180).

Although Maggie's memory is restored to her, and their son eventually joins them

in Cuba, Blake's domestic life never fully recovers. Blake's inability to recognize his wife is

followed up by his rejection of a domestic life in favor of his plan for revolution. After their

reunion, Maggie pleads with her husband to "attend to our own affairs" and let God tend

to the greater good (191). This is the same future that Laurine and Belfond plan at the end

of *The Slave Son*; however, whereas Belfond embraces a domestic future, Blake rejects it.

Blake's refusal casts his project in domestic, as well as national terms. He vows to Maggie

that "I will avenge your wrongs" at the same time as he forces the whites to "cease to steal

away our people from their native country" (192). Ideologically, Blake believes in the

importance of the home and the nuclear family. However, he refuses to secure his own

domestic happiness without first ensuring the freedom of all black people. This plot point

suggests that Delany saw the domestic focus of novels like *Clotel* (the first two versions) as

too individualized, or as distractions from the larger threat to black domesticity.[84] The

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[84] Paul Gilroy comments on Delany's representation of domestic life and its relationship to national identity in this way: "I want to suggest that this obstinacy expresses something profound and characteristic about Delany's sense of the necessary relationship between nationality, citizenship, and

defense of black domestic space may be one motivation for Blake's insurrection, but his commitment to the domestic space is not something he personally enacts. Instead, he spends only a brief time with Maggie before shipping out to Africa on board the slave ship, the *Vulture*.

The rest of the novel maintains the adventurous rhetoric and plotting of the first section. While in Africa, Blake encounters Angelina, the mulatto daughter of the Portuguese slave trader Don Ludo, and encourages her to condemn her father for his inhumane business. Their encounter is not romantic, but it holds echoes of other stories of unattached adventurers who experience brief encounters with women in foreign places who are then left behind in the picaresque tale. The novel quickly moves on from the African coast back to the slave ship, where Blake takes advantage of his position on the ship to identify potential revolutionaries among the captives. Upon his return to Cuba, Blake forms a revolutionary society that brings together wealthy mixed-race Cubans and the darker working class characters. Blake initially succeeds at his undertaking because he has domestic ties among Cuban high society (we discover that he is the son of a wealthy Cuban family who was kidnapped into slavery). However, the revolutionary group soon expands beyond upper-class society to include slaves. Although Delany does not ignore class distinctions in his depictions of the characters (the wealthy have different speech patterns, for example), these distinctions do not stand in the way of their unity of purpose. This is especially true of the men, who share the assertive masculine identity prized in heroes of adventure fiction. The focal character in this part of the story is Gofer Gondolier, who is "a

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masculinity. He was probably the first black thinker to make the argument that the integrity of the race is primarily the integrity of its male heads of household and secondarily the integrity of the families over which they preside. The model he proposed aligned the power of the male head of household in the private sphere with the noble status of the soldier-citizen which complemented it in the public realm." (*Black Atlantic* 25).

man" because he invented a large weapon-like carving knife (254). The women in the movement, notably Gofer's wife, Abyssa (a slave newly-arrived from Africa), are militantly committed to the nationalist movement, but their role is secondary. Like Maggie or Ambrosina (the beautiful mixed-race daughter of a conspirator who is whipped in the street by a white man), they are victims whose suffering motivates the movement. Or, like Abyssa, they are voices of spiritual inspiration.

Delany never describes Blake's revolutionary plan in detail. We know that it is meant to be an uprising that occurs simultaneously in the American South and in Cuba, and that its goal is the creation of an independent black nation carved out of those territories. Delany also does not identify an inspiration for Blake's plan. Delany's belief in the unalienable rights of man expressed in the novel suggests a connection to the American Revolution, but unlike Brown he does not explicitly associate his hero with the Founding Fathers or with an American identity. Nor does he associate Blake with the South American liberator, Simon Bolivar. While Blake's organization of a militant revolution associates him with Bolivar as a military leader, their projects differ significantly on the point of race. Bolivar advocated for equal rights and an integrated citizenship (though with varying success). He resisted any divisions within his countries "along racial lines" – including those organized by blacks – because they contradicted his "colorblind project of liberation" (Bushnell XL). Blake, on the other hand, advocates for a racially-determined revolution and a separate black nation. The end of the novel has been lost, so it is hard to draw conclusions about the ultimate direction of Blake's revolution. However, the final words of the last extant chapter, spoken by Gofer Gondolier, are "Woe unto those devils of whites, I say!" (313), a sentence that foreshadows a violent conclusion, rather than one of domestic bliss.

As Adeleke demonstrates, Delany's extreme black nationalist/anti-American period did not last past the middle of the 1860s. Like William Wells Brown, the Civil War gave Delany hope that there would be a way for African Americans to integrate into the American nation. As might have been guessed from his choice of literary genres in *Blake*, Delany embraced the idea that African Americans could participate in a violent struggle meant to free them. He was commissioned a major in the Union army, and actively recruited African American soldiers, as did Douglass and Brown. The text of Delany's recruitment notice in Charleston, South Carolina reflects his commitment to the actualization of national identity through violence: "It is the duty of the colored of every colored man to vindicate his manhood by becoming a soldier, and with his own stout arm to battle for the emancipation of his race" (qtd. in Rollins 211). Delany's ideological connection between manhood, soldiering, and collective freedom is clearly linked to the same tradition of soldier-heroes discussed by Graham Dawson in his text on the imperial adventure genre and its idealized heroes, personified by characters like Marryat's Jack Easy or Percival Keene. This connection suggests that Delany's shift from a staunch emigrationist to supporter of the Civil War is not as drastic as it might seem, since both positions share an imaginative foundation in the mythos of the adventure hero.

Delany's focus on building an independent black nation in his three important early works (*The Condition, Elevation, Emigration, and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States*, *The Official Report of the Niger Valley Exploring Party*, and *Blake*) sets him apart from many of his African American and Afro-Caribbean contemporaries (whom I have discussed in this chapter and chapter one). In one sense, his goal is more radical than theirs since it involves the destruction of current national boundaries and the creation of a new nation-state. However, looked at from another perspective, his project shares many characteristics with the European and American imperial and colonial agendas that he opposed because of their shared focus on

nation-building. These characteristics emerge when Delany discusses the role that African

Americans and Afro-Caribbeans ought to play in Africa, particularly in his non-fictional text

describing his trip to Africa, *The Official Report of the Niger Valley Exploring Party* (1861).

Although he wrote against emigration to Africa in *The Condition* in 1852, by 1859

Delany was willing to consider emigration to Africa (though not under the suspect auspices of

the American Colonization Society) and participated in an African expedition to seek out a

suitable site for settlement. Delany's account of his trip to the Western coast of Africa displays

his complex feelings about the continent. Although in *Blake* and in other places, he argues for a

kind of essential blackness based on shared history and shared experiences, Delany clearly

approaches Africa more as an outsider than as a native son. For instance, in the *Official Report*,

he cites "Livingstone's great work on Africa" (241) as one of the inspirations for his plan to visit

the continent. Delany presents Africa in his text with a scientific, detached gaze that sounds

much like that of a European adventurer. True to his medical training, Delany examines the local

diseases, as well as local manners, dress, occupations, morals, flora, fauna, etc. His conclusions

are favorable; he recommends that qualified African Americans emigrate to Africa. However, his

description of the ideal future African nation resonates with imperialist ideas.

Like most men of his time, Delany holds up European/American civilization as the goal

towards which all other nations should strive. He writes:

> Africa, to become regenerated, must have a national character, and her position
> among the existing nations of the earth will depend mainly upon the high standard she
> may gain compared with them in all her relations, morally, religiously, socially,
> politically, and commercially. (344)

Although Delany is arguing against white colonialism, the type of regeneration he imagines

for the continent involves enforcing, however gently, the faith, mores, goals, and ideals of

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Europe upon the African continent and African people. This project is apparent in *Blake* as well, primarily through Delany's descriptions of the female slave Abyssa, who is the one African character substantially discussed in the novel. Abyssa, is described as "simple but great- and good-hearted," a person who is valued by Blake for her strong spiritual feelings, but who lacks the cultural and political sophistication of the Cuban conspirators (249). Although she plays an important role in the revolutionary organization, Abyssa's portrayal affirms stereotypes of Africans as simple, devout, and culturally naïve. This representation of "native" Africans is consistent with the rest of Delany's writings on the subject. Like Maxwell Philip, Delany's ambitions in *Blake* are immense, but are tainted by his unswerving belief in Western culture and "modernity": a belief that tends to blur the lines between racial "regeneration" and cultural imperialism.

Conclusion

The three authors I examined in this chapter adapted the adventure genre to argue for equal rights for people of African descent (both slave and free). William Wells Brown used the adventure genre to argue for the inclusion of African Americans into the nation by virtue of presenting them as adventurers in their own land, adhering to an ideal of American identity brought into being through their actions. The author of *Adolphus* used the adventure genre to argue for an independent Trinidad by connecting his hero most closely with the lawful adventurous actions of Simon Bolivar. Delany chose a third path by using the adventure genre to argue for the formation of a separate black nation that would radically change the map of the southern United States and the Caribbean. Delany's focus on black nationality marks him as the most radical of the three authors in his national politics, and his ideas about "the (re)generation of the modern nationality in the form of an

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autonomous, black nation state" (*Black Atlantic* 23) would resonate into the twentieth

century, particularly his firm statement: "Africa for the African race and black men to rule

them" (*Official Report* 358). At the same time, I argue that his novel mirrors more closely

the problematic aspects of the adventure genre than the other novels do because Delany,

out of the three authors, does not question the relationship between the militant,

masculine hero and the negative aspects of imperialism and nationalism associated with

him through the adventure genre.

There remains another interesting aspect to these novels, though it is an aspect that is

harder to discuss. Of the eight works of African American and Afro-Caribbean fiction I

mentioned at the beginning of this chapter –*The Heroic Slave*, *Clotel*, *The Garies and their*

Friends, *Our Nig*, *Blake*, *The Curse of Caste*, *Adolphus*, and *Emmanuel Appadocca* – only four of

them are what I would consider "finished" novels. Three of them literally have no ending that

we know of. If Delany wrote an ending to *Blake*, the newspaper number it existed in has been

lost; *Adolphus* was left unfinished by its unknown author; Julia Collins died before publishing a

conclusion to *The Curse of Caste*. The fourth novel I include in this list is *Clotel*, which Brown

repeatedly revised and published, each time adding a new and different ending to his novel.

Although there are various obvious reasons for three missing endings and one ending that was

in a constant state of evolution, I find it interesting to speculate on what that lack of ending says

about black diaspora fiction in the middle of the century, and black diaspora life in the middle of

the century.

As I've shown, these authors each battled in their own way for a right to citizenship in a

recognized nation. Yet, in the 1870s racism was as rampant – if not more rampant – than it had

been three or four decades earlier in both America and in Britain. The collapse of Reconstruction

in America and Europe's increasingly invasive colonial policies in Africa made, if possible , the

national/political lives of African Americans and Afro-Caribbeans even more precarious. There was still no consensus on the role that they had to play in the territorial nation, or even whether that nation was America, a Caribbean island, or somewhere in Africa. It is tempting to read these ending-less books metaphorically in terms of the precariousness of that national life that they strove to create. However we choose to read and interpret the lack (loss?) of conclusion in these narratives, it is certain that the struggle for racially-inclusive national identity continued into the end of the century and beyond. In the next chapter, I will discuss late-century narratives of adventure by British and African American, and the relationship between British fictional representations of Africa and African American novels at the turn of the century.

Chapter 4: Long-Lost Princes

Although plantation fictions set in the pre-emancipation past continued to be written up

until the end of the nineteenth century (especially for the juvenile market) the British West

Indies and the American South slowly but surely lost their status as adventurous frontiers as the

American border expanded westwards, and as the British empire turned its attention to new

colonial frontiers. The most important of these was Africa. Africa had been a place of interest for

British colonialists and British adventure authors throughout the century (Marryat published a

novel set in Africa in 1845, and Reid published two in the years 1855-1856). However, interest in

the continent during the earlier part of the nineteenth century was inconsistent and largely

related to efforts to suppress the slave trade.[85] As a result of the subsequent and well-

documented "scramble" for African colonies by European nations during the 1880s, Britain

gained or consolidated control of much of Southern Africa, Egypt, the Sudan, and Kenya.[86] These

circumstances surrounding African colonization at the end of the nineteenth century led to a

new kind of African adventure novel, which is best exemplified in the works of British author H.

Rider Haggard.

Haggard's novels feature the typical elements of adventure: exploration, big game

hunting, and coping with natural disasters. However, they are best known for bringing to

prominence one particular narrative arc in which the hero travels to a hidden or forbidden

[85] Chamberlain, 16-21.

[86] See Chamberlain, *The Scramble for Africa*; Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa, 1876-1912*; Robinson
and Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians*.

kingdom and is acknowledged as a long-lost prince, king, or other leader. Like other adventure

plots, this one enhances the national identity of its hero through actions against a foreign Other.

However, in this narrative arc there is no need for the adventurer to return home. As the long-

lost prince of the hidden kingdom, he has the power to transform that kingdom into his new

home. At the same time, the fact that the kingdom is hidden means that the hero is not

identifying with the totality of the continent, just one special area. That kingdom is typically

imagined as an idealized version of the national community the hero left behind, and it pre-

dates the surrounding African people. By imagining the hero's journey to Africa as a journey

home to an ancient yet familiar kingdom, the author naturalizes the hero's presence on the

continent.

By representing British colonists claiming Africa as an ancient homeland, Haggard's long-

lost prince novels creatively revoked Africans' claim to their own continent and their own

particular national spaces. This depiction of Africa was challenged by African American authors,

who used the same plot element to argue for a cause earlier championed by Martin Delany:

"Africa for the African race" (*Official Report* 358).In this chapter, I examine this long-lost prince

plot using a combination of non-fictional and fictional texts. First, I look at William Sheppard, an

African American missionary in the Congo whose speeches and autobiography highlight the

relationship between real-life experiences in Africa and storytelling about Africa at the turn of

the twentieth century. Then, I analyze the key elements of that storytelling tradition, starting

with three major early works by H. Rider Haggard – *King Solomon's Mines* (1885), *She* (1887),

and *Allan Quatermain* (1887). In the novels of Haggard, Africa becomes – through mystical or

unrealistic means – a spiritual homeland for his British adventurers, who become aligned with

the white races that colonized or inhabited the continent in ancient times.

Finally, I move on to three novels by African American authors: *Of One Blood* (1902-1903) by Pauline Hopkins, and *Unfettered* (1902) and *Imperium in Imperio* (1899) by Sutton Griggs. In her novel, Hopkins rejects Haggard's white cooptation of Africa's past, while she also posits a living, vibrant, advanced, yet ancient black African civilization as the heritage of her lost-heir hero. At the same time, Hopkins's narrative structure – split between the domestic and adventure genres – exposes the static racialized binaries that form the foundation of the genre, and points to the cultural foundations that will have to be challenged and changed in order for it to evolve into a form that is truly transnational, rather than just pretending to be so. Griggs, on the other hand, acknowledges Africa as the background for his characters, but rejects it as an important location for them. Instead, he focuses on the Americanization of his characters, in their attitudes towards Africa as in other things. In all of these novels, even those by Griggs, Africa plays an important imaginative role because the question of who belongs in Africa and *how* they belong in it helps determine their national identity. Haggard, Hopkins, and Griggs each use their hero's relationship to Africa to define his national identity, but that identity is never a straightforward African identity.

Europeans' attitudes towards Africa at the end of the nineteenth century were significantly different from their attitudes earlier in the century. As Laura Chrisman writes, "the emergence of South Africa's mineral industries transformed the country from a service station en route to India to a global centre of industrial production" (23). As the value of Africa's natural resources became apparent, colonial powers became less enamored of the idea of educated Africans from the diaspora re-settling in Africa as educators, businessmen, and leaders because they were likely to resist the kinds of oppressive labor practices that grew up around new African industries, like rubber production and diamond mining. As Sylvia Jacobs notes in *The African Nexus*, "By the time of the unification of South Africa in 1910, identification of Afro-

Americans with African unrest was universal throughout the continent. Until the late 1920s, colonial authorities did their best to discourage black American contact with Africa because of the fear that they would drive Africans together to upset the colonial governments." (157). What had once seemed a tidy solution to the "problem" of emancipated slaves in America by organizations like the American Colonization Society, now was discouraged by the European powers battling for control of Africa's resources.

Europe's increasing interest in Africa at the end of the century was paired with increasing interest in Africa from the African diaspora community, and the increasing visibility of pan-African ideas. Pan-Africanism is a broad term that has been defined in many ways since its inception in the nineteenth century. As P. Olisanwuche Esedebe writes, the major components of Pan-Africanism include "Africa as the homeland of Africans and persons of African origin, solidarity among men of African descent, belief in a distinct African personality, rehabilitation of Africa's past, pride in African culture, Africa for Africans in church and state, the hope for a united and glorious future Africa" (3). Although elements of Pan-Africanism can be traced as far back as Paul Cuffee in the early decades of the nineteenth century and identified in the works of some mid-century authors like Martin Delany, it took shape as a movement at the end of the century, kindled by Europe's brutal partitioning of the continent and the responses to it by men like Edward Wilmot Blyden and Henry McNeal Turner.[87]

That is not to say that all members of the African diaspora in the British West Indies and America desired an African identity or a return to Africa as a homeland. African Americans and Afro-Caribbeans who had spent decades asserting their rights as American and British citizens could have conflicted feelings on the subject of Africa. Africa was a continent full of possibilities

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[87] For information on Blyden see Esedebe; for information on Turner see Jacobs, *The African Nexus*.

for African Americans and Afro-Caribbeans, but, as Elekima Wariboko demonstrates in the work

Ruined by "Race": Afro-Caribbean Missionaries and the Evangelization of Southern Nigeria,

1895-1925, those possibilities depended on whether they traveled to Africa as American or

British citizens venturing into the unknown, or as African "natives" returning home.

I will illustrate this complex position and demonstrate the effect it had on storytelling

about the African continent through an examination of the life and work of William Sheppard,

an African-American missionary who was active in the Congo from 1890 to 1910. The African-

American missionary Sheppard's experiences both demonstrate the connections between

exploration and missionary activity (first made apparent in the works of the white British

missionary David Livingstone), and show the links between adventure fiction and the real events

taking place in Africa at the end of the century. Sheppard's life story not only highlights key

themes that were found within African adventure fiction (like exploration), but also illustrates

and complicates the ways these themes related to African American identity and the work of

African American fiction.

William Sheppard

In March of 1890, when William Sheppard[88] stopped in London on his way to his

missionary assignment in Africa, one of the sites he visited was Livingstone's tomb. By that time,

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[88]William Henry Sheppard (1865-1927), was one of the most celebrated African American missionaries to Africa at the end of the nineteenth century. Born in Waynesboro, VA, he attended the Hampton Institute, where he was a student of Booker T. Washington's, and the Tuscaloosa Theological Institute. He graduated from Tuscaloosa in 1886 and served as a pastor in Atlanta, waiting for an opportunity to go to Africa as a missionary. The Presbyterian Church in the United States, a segregated southern denomination, was reluctant to send an African American to Africa as a missionary without a white companion, and so Sheppard had to wait until 1889, when a young white man named Samuel Lapsley volunteered for the Africa mission. The church moved quickly, and in February of 1890, Lapsley and Sheppard were en route for England, the first stop on their journey to Africa.

Livingstone was the most famous missionary in the western world, not because of his large number of converts, but because of his dedication to the exploration of Africa. Although missionaries went to Africa with the intention of bringing "light" to the "dark" souls of the inhabitants of Africa, they more often brought to light the unknown geography of the continent through his explorations of unmapped territory. By the time that Sheppard went to Africa, saving souls in Africa was synonymous with laying bare the topographical details among which those souls lived.

Sheppard's memoir of his first years in Africa, though not a work of fiction like the rest of the books in this study, shows just how much of an impact the adventure genre had on the lives, attitudes, and self-representations of people (particularly men) who experienced a colonial encounter. Examining Sheppard's narrative allows us to identify aspects of the adventure genre that played an important role in images of national identity and racial identity in the fraught period of the "scramble for Africa", especially for African American or Afro-Caribbean men, like Sheppard and other black missionaries who were called to Africa. Because America did not have an official colonial presence in Africa, the perceptions of Africa generated by British adventure novelists and adventurers played an important role in the perceptions Americans had of Africa during the nineteenth century. Sheppard had few other rhetorical places to turn when he attempted to frame his encounter with Africa in written form. Sheppard's memoir, then, draws on both the narrative tradition of Livingstone and that of fiction writers like Rider Haggard. He uses these rhetorical strategies to represent himself as a man as well as a minister – something especially important to him as an African American who was denied opportunities for significant independent work in his home country during the nadir of race relations in the Post-Reconstruction South.

We know of Sheppard's work through his numerous letters and speeches, which were published in American newspapers like the *Christian Observer* and the *Southern Workman*, and through a 1917 autobiography that he wrote to chronicle the early years of his ministry in Africa. Sheppard's fellow missionaries, white and black, also published letters and articles, which help fill in the picture of who Sheppard was and what conditions he faced in his work. Sheppard's life story provides an interesting window into the complex relationship between colonial Africa and African Americans at the end of the nineteenth century, and how Africa could play an important role in constructing a positive identity for African Americans who valued their association with Africa but did not wish to be seen as giving up their American identity.
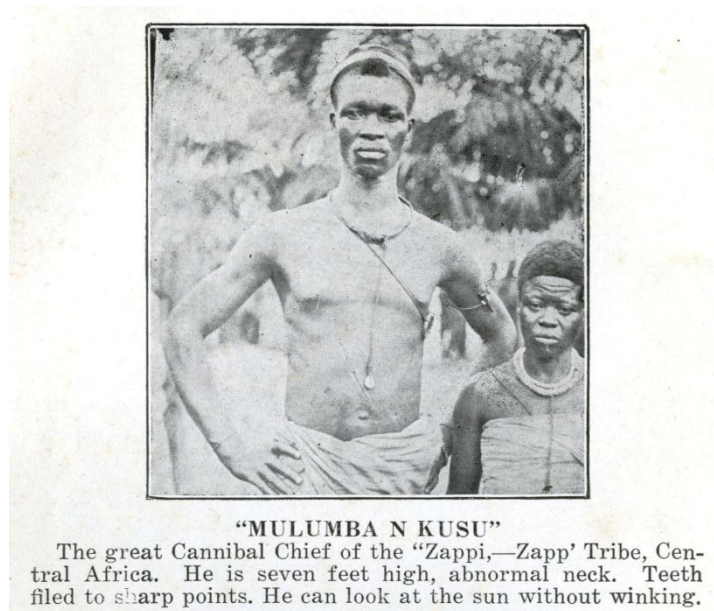
From reading Sheppard's own writings, it is clear that he viewed himself as an American traveler to Africa, rather than as a native African returning to his homeland. Although he refers to Africa as "the country of my fore-fathers" in a letter published in *The Missionary*, he also (in that same letter) calls it a "heathen land" (355). In neither his 1893 Hampton speech, nor in his autobiography does he describe his emotions upon seeing Africa (unlike Delany in *Official Report*, who focuses on an emotional attachment and estrangement to/from the country). The white missionary Lapsley, in fact, records a more emotional response. His letter to *The Missionary*, published next to Sheppard's, contains a section titled "I Felt at Home in a Moment" (354). He expands on this theme in his diary (published after his death as part of *Life and Letters of Samuel Norvell Lapsley*), writing that the first boat to meet them at Banana "with its crew of half-clad Africans, just like our own darkies" made him "feel quite at home" (52). Sheppard, on the other hand, mentions no feeling of affinity or sense of home regarding the "half-clad natives, called Luongas" in his autobiography. Instead, he relates an incident in which Lapsley, swimming in the ocean, was almost attacked by a shark (*Pioneers in Congo* 18). Pagan Kennedy notes in her biography of Sheppard, that these two perceptions of Africa illuminate the different

attitudes Lapsley and Sheppard brought to their journey. As she writes, "Lapsley's Africa bore a suspicious resemblance to his native Alabama" (29) while for Sheppard "the natural world ruled" (30). In these two passages from their respective writings, we can see Lapsley recreating Africa as a new home, while Sheppard embraces the exciting strangeness of the unknown continent, despite its danger, because he sees its potential to offer him a life radically different from the one possible in his home country.

Indeed, throughout his texts on Africa, including his early speeches and his late autobiography, Sheppard approaches the continent as an explorer and adventurer who can improve his status as a black American man and consolidate his national identity through his actions on the frontier. His 1893 speech at the Hampton Institute (published in *The Southern Workman*) is filled with scientific details and enumerations that create an objective distance between himself and his subject. He gives the exact number of days from New York to Liverpool (eleven), Liverpool to Africa (twenty-five), and miles to Matadi (one hundred). He then explains "we had to disembark there because there are thirty-two cataracts in the river, in the two hundred and sixty miles between Matadi and Stanley Pool" (182). He also counts the number of fevers he has experienced in Africa (twenty-two). All of these numbers serve to enhance the sense of geographical distance for his audience. They also assert the factual nature of his account, which lends credence to his later explanations about the customs and superstitions of the people he encounters.

However, Sheppard was more than a scientific observer; he was also a story-teller, who knew how to interject pithy comments and humor into his informational discourse. One such moment comes in the 1893 speech, in which he describes the visits he and Lapsley made to various tribes in the area surrounding Luebo: "Next, south-east, to the Zop-pa-zop[sic] tribe –

cannibals. You can trust them as far as you can see them – and the farther off you see them the

better you can trust them" (182). This comment not only emphasizes the geographic and

cultural distance between his audience and Africa, it also adds a personal element to

Sheppard's speech and shows us how his story was at once objective and subjective.[89]

Sheppard's gift as a story-teller emerges fully in his autobiography, which combines scientific

data with pious Christian platitudes and hair-raising adventurous exploits worthy of popular

fiction. Through this mix of elements Sheppard shapes himself into a heroic figure whose

American identity is enhanced through his unique African experiences.

"MULUMBA N KUSU"
The great Cannibal Chief of the "Zappi,—Zapp' Tribe, Central Africa. He is seven feet high, abnormal neck. Teeth filed to sharp points. He can look at the sun without winking.

6. "Mulumba N Kusu" from *Pioneers in Congo* by William Sheppard. Sheppard's autobiography contains many photographs. Some are domestic scenes of the mission, but many record the people who lived in the surrounding area, like this member of the Zap-o-Zap tribe. *Pioneers in Congo*, p. 64a.

Sheppard's narrative contains many key elements of adventure texts, particularly

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[89] Sheppard's description of the Zappo-Zaps is not entirely hyperbolic. Although he did build relationships of trust with some members of the tribe, who later saved his life, their cannibalism and position as mercenary slave-dealers and enforcers for the Belgian state frequently placed him at odds with them.

African adventure texts. Big game hunting plays an important role in his story, as can be seen from some of the section headings of the text: "OUR FIRST HUNT," "A BIG BOA," " 'CROCKS' IN THE N'KISSY," "MY FIRST HIPPOPOTAMUS," "HUNTING HIPPOPOTAMI AROUND STANLEY POOL," and "MR. LAPSLEY'S BIG HIPPO" (21, 29, 30, 33, 35, 43). However, Sheppard is careful to demonstrate that he did not hunt merely for the sake of slaughter. His first hippopotamus is killed, not for sport, but to feed the starving people of the village at Stanley Pool. During a subsequent hippopotamus hunt, Sheppard refuses to shoot an elephant, despite the encouragement of his African companions, and writes "I told them it was not right to kill simply to be killing, and as we have no steamboat to carry the meat away, it would lie here in the sun and decay" (37). This sentiment tempers the hypermasculine activity of big game hunting with the humble and service-oriented attitude expected of a Christian missionary. Nevertheless, Sheppard's talent as a hunter plays an important role in the manly identity he constructs for himself.

In addition to characterizing himself as a hunter, Sheppard also describes his initiative in the face of natural disasters, another quality that can be found frequently in adventure novels. While en route to Luebo, the steamship Sheppard and Lapsley are traveling in is overtaken by a sudden storm. Sheppard acts to save the ship:

> Big waves dashed over the *Florida's* deck and for a while we were in peril. The captain called to me and asked if he should stop, but I answered quickly, "No, captain, never; run her full speed on the shallow bank." By so doing she stuck fast in the sand while the men quickly (and I assisted them) made the chain fast around a near tree. (52)

The next day, Sheppard takes the wheel for the captain while they make the tricky turn into the Kasai river against the current:

While the steamer was under such an awful strain the rudder chain snapped and there we were in that awful current between a hill of stones and no rudder chain. I called out to the captain to keep her going, and then ran back to the stern of the boat, got hold of the iron bar which governs the rudder, and as the captain signalled to me with his hand, guided her safely to a sand spot just between two enormous boulders. (53)

In both of these anecdotes, Sheppard portrays himself as the person in authority, and as the main actor responsible for saving the ship. Lapsley, the white missionary who was nominally in charge of the excursion, is notably absent from these stories. By leaving Lapsley out of these stories, Sheppard highlights his own role as a leading American on the expedition and avoids any interpretation of his actions as being those of a sidekick to the white missionary.

Lapsley himself relates the last incident in a slightly different manner:

Sheppard was at the wheel and just edging through the last of the bad part – pop! and a noise of a dragging chain, the rudder chain had broken and there were the rocks awaiting us. I ran for a piece of wire I knew about; and Sheppard ran back and took charge of the rod connecting and controlling the rudders themselves, and put her into the sand-bank ten yards below the rocks. (*Life and Letters* 140)

Although Lapsley does include his own role in this retelling, the main initiative is still Sheppard's, which suggests that Sheppard's adventurous take-charge attitude towards his mission was not merely a rhetorical ploy adopted in his speeches and autobiography, but an actual fact. Throughout his writings, Lapsley consistently gives credit to his African American colleague for his initiative and practical skill. In his diary, he writes of their camp being caught in a storm, "but Sheppard was equal to it. He ran here and there, always just in the nick of time, and saved the canoes from being swept down to Banana, and carried the long ropes into the men's shelters. Then he swung on the guy rope just as its peg gave way and the tent was getting ready to fly over land to Kintamo" (101). Lapsley's phrasing in this passage suggests just how far Sheppard and Lapsley's relationship had developed since their time in London, when Lapsley describes

him in a letter as "very modest, and easy to get along with; also quite an aid in sight-seeing, and in anything else where I need help" (34). Although his tone is still occasionally patronizing, Lapsley gives Sheppard credit for his actions. In a letter to his mother, Lapsley writes that Sheppard is "really a man of unusual graces and strong points of character. So I am thankful to God for Sheppard" (94). It is still possible to read Lapsley's praise of Sheppard in this passage as that of a supervisor praising a subordinate who has surprised him. However, it seems that he and Sheppard had a cordial partnership that became more equal as their journey progressed. This suggests to me that Sheppard's choice to leave Lapsley out of his anecdotes was not made in order to conceal Lapsley's role in them. Rather, that he was afraid that as a white man Lapsley would automatically overshadow him in the scene, despite Lapsley's (self-admitted) minimal contributions. Leaving out Lapsley is the best way for Sheppard to convince his readers that he has the "strong points of character" that Lapsley ascribed to him. Indeed, as Lapsley implied, Sheppard was "equal to" the challenges of the Congo in many ways that Lapsley was not. One of those ways was physical. Although Sheppard and Lapsley both suffered through multiple bouts of fever, Lapsley was the one who died of it only two years after his arrival in Africa.

All of these anecdotes taken together allow us to see the literal benefits that Sheppard experienced as an African American man by becoming a missionary in the Congo, even within a racist denomination. Each step in his journey through Africa led Sheppard farther from American racism. In a letter home from England, Lapsley writes "As to Sheppard, the English don't notice at all what seems very odd to us" (34), a cryptic remark that only hints at the relative freedom with which Sheppard can move through London and conduct business compared to his circumscribed existence in America. Sheppard himself writes little about his time in London and mentions nothing about his first experiences of a desegregated life. It is possible that he did not feel as liberated as Lapsley suggests he might feel, or that the English did "notice" Sheppard's

race and make him feel uncomfortable in ways that were not apparent to Lapsley as a white

man. England, after all, though not segregated was still a hotbed of the racism motivated by

scientific discourse during the period.[90] However, once he reaches Africa his narrative begins to

expand and it becomes clear that he believes that in Africa his cultural background as an

American trumps his African ancestry. He narrates his experiences in a way that encourage the

reader to see him as an American citizen in Africa, not an African descendent returning home.

Sheppard's ability to embody a manly ideal of American citizenship while on his mission

in Africa highlights the similarities between missionary activity and other types of colonial

activity (conquest, cultivation) that typically result in a hyper-enhancement of national identity

in the face of surrounding social and cultural "others." Sheppard's role as an American

missionary gave him access to a colonialist position that would ordinarily be denied to him as a

black man. In fact, American missionaries pressured the government explicitly to recognize and

protect their status as legal American citizens in foreign lands. A *New York Times* article titled

"Rights of Missionaries" (published April 26, 1900) reports a meeting in which James B. Angell,

ex-minister to Turkey, argues that "missionaries have the same legal right to reside, travel,

trade, teach, heal, transact their legitimate business in a foreign country as any of their fellow-

citizens have to follow their chosen pursuits there" (column 2). The race of the missionaries

making those kinds of claims is most probably white, as it is unstated. However, the effects of

their arguments did extend to cover African American missionaries, as Sheppard's subsequent

career shows. The kinds of protections implied in this article become evident in the 1909 libel

case in which the Belgian Kasai Company accused Morrison and Sheppard of libel for publishing

an article exposing the atrocities committed by the company in pursuit of rubber profits. The

Presbyterians appealed to the government, and the American State Department sent Consul

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[90] See Bolt, *Victorian Attitudes To Race*.

William Handley and Vice Consul Kirk to see that the trial ran fairly (Bennedetto 21). Since

Morrison was involved, it is hard to say whether Sheppard's identity as an African American

made a difference in the level of the government's involvement. However, the Belgians dropped

the charges against Morrison at the last minute, leaving Sheppard as the sole defendant in a trial

that was being covered by major news outlets like the *New York Times*. When he won the case

the *Boston Herald* ran the headline "American Negro Hero of Congo" and called him "one of the

most famous Americans of his race" (qtd. in Kennedy 186). If anything, the libel case proved that

Sheppard, as a missionary in the Congo, was granted protections by the American government

and recognitions in the American press that African American men living in the lynching-friendly

southern states of America barely even dreamed of.

However, Sheppard's identity as an American in the Congo was not uncomplicated. In fact,

the event that won him early and lasting fame as a Congo missionary – his penetration of the

forbidden kingdom of the Bakuba people in 1892 – also significantly complicates this

representation of his identity because while he presents himself to the Bakuba as an outsider,

he is received by them as an insider. In both his 1893 Hampton speech and in his autobiography,

Sheppard relates his successful journey to the Bakuba country as a thrilling narrative of

adventure and suspense, rather than a spiritual exercise. Sheppard opens his chapter "Into A

Forbidden Country" with a litany of the dangers that lay between Luebo and the capital of the

Bakuba country:

> "I called our station natives together and laid plainly before them the perils of the journey. I told them, from the information which I had, that the trails which had been made by elephant, buffalo, antelope and Bakuba natives were many and they led over long, hot, sandy plains through deep dark forests, across streams without bridges, and through swamps infested with wild animals and poisonous serpents. And above all, the king had sent word throughout the land that we could not enter his country" (91).

This ominous beginning sets the stage for Sheppard's slow and somewhat devious trek into the Bakuba country. He relates how he and his men traveled as far as they could on the roads that they knew, and then continued on either by befriending someone who was willing to defy the king's edict, or by sneaking after traders who were traveling to the next town. In the course of his journey, Sheppard connects with the town chiefs by hunting elephants, showing off the use of his gun, and at one town by building "a big, broad road" through the jungle to the local stream. His trickery gets them to the town of Bixibing (Sheppard's spelling), where they are confronted by a group of men sent by King Lukenga to drive the foreigner out of the country and punish the townspeople who sheltered him.

Throughout this journey, Sheppard acts like an outsider, and is recognized everywhere as a foreigner who should be kept out of the Bakuba territory. However, his encounter with N'Toinzide, the son of King Lukenga who leads the king's men, changes that dynamic. Puzzled by Sheppard, N'Toinzide goes to consult with his father. Returning, N'Toinzide confronts Sheppard with a startling announcement:

> "You need not try to hide it longer from us. You know our paths and we know who you are. I said to my father 'The stranger has had no guides, our people try to turn him back. He knows our roads, he speaks our language. My father called the wise men together and said to them, Who is this stranger? … The wise men studied this mystery and they told my father, we know who this stranger is. … You are Bo-pe Makabé who reigned before my father and who died. His spirit went to a foreign land; your mother gave birth to it, and you are that spirit." (*Southern Workman* Dec. 1893, p. 185, column 1.)

Sheppard resists this explanation of his success, re-stating his own identity: "You are mistaken. I am not Bope Makabe. My name is Sheppard, as I have told you before" (*Southern Workman* Dec. 1893, p. 185, column 1.). Nevertheless, both the prince and the king persist in believing that Sheppard is the reincarnated spirit of the previous king.

The long-lost prince motif is one of the central elements that draws together the books in this final chapter, as is the concept of the hidden or forbidden African kingdom. Made popular by H. Rider Haggard's African adventure novels, notably *King Solomon's Mines* (1885) and *Allan Quatermain* (1887), these plot elements would have been familiar to a large part of Sheppard's Hampton audience in 1893, and certainly familiar to his readers in 1917. Like instances of big game hunting and coping with natural disasters, traveling to a hidden or forbidden kingdom and discovering a long-lost prince (or being discovered as one) are hallmarks of an adventure tale. However, in narratives like Sheppard's they can complicate, rather than confirm, the adventurer's pursuit of national identity.

Throughout both of the accounts of Sheppard's journey to the Bakuba kingdom that I have been drawing on – his Hampton speech and his autobiography – Sheppard uses his status as an adventurer, as well as a missionary, to distance himself from the African people he encounters and connect himself to an American identity. Evidence from Lapsley's writings and Sheppard's later support from the American government during the libel case suggest that while he was in his missionary field, Sheppard was successful in his embodiment of an American national identity. Describing his journey into the Bakuba country, which he viewed as a project of exploration and discovery, Sheppard highlights his analytic, deductive, and diplomatic powers (searching for a "clue" to the right road and presenting a friendly and non-threatening aspect to the villagers he met) and the intrepidity of himself and his men whose hearts were "strong" (*Southern Workman* 1893, 184). From Sheppard's perspective, his journey is mapping new territory – literally marking the paths for his men, and possibly others to follow (*Southern Workman* 1893, 184).

However, when Sheppard reaches his goal, an entirely different interpretation is placed on

his trip. By labeling Sheppard as the reincarnated (long-lost) spirit of the previous Bakuba king who already knew the paths, N'Toinzide and Lukenga transform a journey of exploration into a homeward return. This is the kind of interpretation of his African experience that Sheppard had resisted. Nevertheless, by the time he writes his autobiography, Sheppard's language suggests that he at least partially accepted this interpretation of his journey. He introduces the announcement of his identity as reincarnated prince with the section heading "They Knew Me Better Than I Knew Myself" (106). Later Sheppard writes how, in an audience with King Lukenga, he tried to explain that he was not a native of the country. However, the king's reply to Sheppard's statement "I have never been here before" is written in such a way that suggests an elder humoring an obtuse child: "The king leaned over the arm of his great chair and said with satisfaction, "You don't know it, but you are 'Muana Mi" (one of the family)" (113). That passage, which is the end of that section of the autobiography, gives the King the last word, which suggests that Sheppard's resistance to an African identity was balanced by a sense that he was also connected to the Bakuba more closely than any white missionary could have been.

Dr. Sheppard and his friend, Prince Mashamalianga.

7. Dr. Sheppard and his friend, Prince Mashamalianga. Prince Mashamalianga (also spelled Maxamalinge) was one of the sons of King Lukenga. Pioneers in Congo, p. 152a.

This notion of a special connection between African Americans or Afro-Caribbeans and Africa was one of the most hotly contested points in the employment of African American and Afro-Caribbean missionaries at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. Initially, American churches had advocated for the employment of African American missionaries because of their supposed special relationship to Africa. This was due in part to the apologist arguments that African Americans had been brought to America, enslaved, and Christianized through divine intervention so that they could then return to Africa to spread Christianity and "civilization." It was also due to scientific opinions that African Americans would be more immune to the diseases that so often killed white missionaries (which was not the case) (*Black Americans* 16-17).

The Church Missionary Society that sponsored missionary activities in Nigeria had another reason for employing Africans from the diaspora (specifically, from the West Indies): an economic reason. According to their "Book of Regulations," West Indian missionaries were required to "make Africa a permanent home" and were consequently paid and treated the same as African missionary workers and denied the payment, housing, medical care, and benefits given to European missionaries (Wariboko 104). This policy is an example of how the common racial heritage of the black missionaries and their African flock could have negative consequences. The West Indian missionaries studied by Wariboko "rejected Africa as their homeland in order to protect their personhood from the evil effects of racism and to qualify for better wages and benefits in Southern Nigeria" (12).

The Church Missionary Society's plan to use West Indian missionaries in Nigeria failed in the early part of the twentieth century because of the West Indians' refusal to give up their claims to British identity and become the cheap, naturalized labor the society had wanted. However, it

also was a part of a larger movement to end the previously-desired participation of African

American and Afro-Caribbean missionaries in Africa. Sylvia Jacobs attributes this movement to

"the reversal of missionary attitudes, aims, and goals in Africa after about 1880, as the emphasis

of missions changed from conversion to trusteeship" due to the supposed permanent inferiority

of the Africans (whereas before they had been viewed by the missionaries as backward, but

teachable). She also notes an economic motive: "[Europeans] felt that Afro-American

missionaries who were Christianizing and educating the Africans would only jeopardize the

colonial system" (*Black Americans* 20-21). Their fears weren't unfounded. While some

missionaries, like Sheppard, maintained a stringent but non-violent protest against colonial

oppression, others, like the African-born and American-trained John Chilembwe, staged armed

rebellions against colonial powers.[91] In fact, the British became so concerned about African

American missionary activity in South Africa that they "began to discourage black American

missionary work in that country" and eventually "placed a restriction on Afro-American

missionaries in South Africa" after the 1906 Bambata Rebellion (Jacobs *African Nexus* 157).

These changes shaped the end of Sheppard's missionary career in 1910. The official reason

for his resignation was poor health. He had certainly sustained some stress from his libel trial in

1909. However, the unpublicized reason for his resignation was an accusation of adultery made

by his white fellow-missionary, Morrison. Although Morrison's accusation against Sheppard was

true – he had, in fact, fathered a son with an African woman – Sheppard biographer Pagan

Kennedy suggests racism played an unofficial role in Morrison's accusation. As she points out,

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[91] Chilembwe, a native of Nyasaland (now Malawi), attended the African American Virginia Seminary in Lynchburg Virginia, a Baptist institution, from 1897-1900. After his graduation and ordination, he returned to his home country and founded the Providence Industrial Mission. He used his ministry to speak out against the abuses of British landowners and the conscription of African men into the British army during World War I. On January 23, 1915, he led an uprising that targeted the most abusive local landowners. Chilembwe was killed on February 3 and the rebellion was crushed by the British (Brockman, Tangri).

the other two African American male missionaries, also senior members of the Presbyterian mission staff in the Congo, were accused and convicted of adultery at the same time. "Thus in one swoop, Morrison cleared the mission of its black leaders – all of them men who had served in the Congo longer than he himself" (190). The eviction of the black male leaders of the Congo mission, planned or not, echoed the larger trend I have just described. The last thing the European powers wanted in Africa were men of African descent who could explore territory, discover treasures, and be recognized as long-lost princes by powerful African tribes. This was a field on which white men could not compete. Samuel Verner, a white missionary who was sent out to provide a white presence at Sheppard's station discovered as much in 1897 when he traveled as the first Christian missionary to the town of King Ndombe. While he was well-received, he was not hailed as returning family, nor given the same kind of prestige as Sheppard had been by the Bakuba (Bradford 76-81). This goes to show that even when African American (or Afro-Caribbean) missionaries rejected the notion of Africa as a homeland in favor of bolstering their American (or British) identities they were still perceived as a threat to European dominance in Africa. The Europeans did not merely want to force their rule on the Africans (although brutal force was their main tactic). They wanted to naturalize their rule. They wanted the Africans to acknowledge their own inferiority and the primacy of white claims on the land and resources. The presence of men like Sheppard, and the Pan-African ideas of men like Chilembwe, called into question the European rule of Africa that Europeans had sought to naturalize through a process of storytelling that relied on narratives of discovery and return to a lost, hidden kingdom. While writers like Haggard might try to imagine such plots for white heroes, these were the kinds of narratives that in reality happened to black men like Sheppard, and not white men like Verner.

The rest of this chapter will examine the role that adventure fiction played in the attempt

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to naturalize British rule (and by extension European rule) in Africa, and the attempts to de-naturalize that rule by African American authors who believed in Pan-African ideas and a greater African destiny. British author H. Rider Haggard reimagined adventure plot elements, particularly that of the long-lost heir/prince and the hidden kingdom in order to support British colonial activity in Africa. The transformation of these plot elements in the hands of the novelists Pauline Hopkins and Sutton Griggs, however, expressed their complicated (and oftentimes conflicted) feelings towards Africa as African Americans who felt the pull towards both an American identity and a Pan-African identity.

H. Rider Haggard

H. Rider Haggard did not invent the African adventure novel, nor did he originate the concepts of the hidden kingdom or lost prince.[92] Haggard's significance isn't that he originated these ideas, but rather that he synthesized these preexisting elements to form a new style of African adventure that spoke specifically to the concerns of the British during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. Storytelling, as Haggard realized, could be used to shape perceptions of white activity in Africa and combat the rising tide of Pan-Africanism. This realization gave rise to a new kind of African adventure novel and gave new significance to old tropes, particularly that of the hidden or forbidden kingdom and the long-lost prince. In his novels set in Africa that feature lost kingdoms and/or lost heirs to those kingdoms – the most famous are *King Solomon's Mines* (1885), *She* (1887), and *Allan Quatermain* (1887) – Haggard pushes the territorial boundaries of adventure at the same time that he brings Africa psychologically closer to home. Haggard's African adventure novels are significant because they construct an idealized form of British national identity that is explicitly linked to the new frontier

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[92] One example of a pre-Victorian "lost race" tale is the legend of Prester John. Lost or exiled princes appear frequently in Greek and Roman myth, and also in English legend; King Arthur is an excellent example of a prince whose identity is hidden until it is revealed by a mysterious sign.

of Africa. Simultaneously, they fill a concrete function in the project of imperialism, which is reimagining Africa as a legitimate space for the British, and other European powers, to occupy.

At first glance, the Africa portrayed in Haggard's novels – specifically in the three novels I named above – is a completely foreign, threatening territory that must be mapped and tamed by his British adventurers. As scholars have noted, there are multiple ways that Haggard approaches the taming of Africa. One is through his depiction of Africa's geography as a "feminized landscape" (David 192). This attitude, according to Richard Patteson, was not unique to Haggard: "For the imperialist romancers, the earth is the essential feminine – the body to be conquered, penetration followed by possession" (121). However, as Patteson and many other scholars have pointed out, *King Solomon's Mines* stands out from other imperial romances due to its graphic depiction of the feminized landscape in da Silvestra's map, which Rebecca Stott describes as "an image of a headless female body turned upside down" (77). The journey undertaken by Allan Quatermain, Sir Henry Curtis, and Captain John Good over the mountains labeled "Sheba's Breasts," through Kukuanaland, and down into King Solomon's Mines represents quite literally the penetration and domination of the African landscape. That landscape is personified at the end of the novel by Gagool, an ancient and fiendish woman who meets her death when she attempts to entomb the British men in the mines. This representation of Africa as a female body symbolizes Britain's domination of the continent. At the same time, it also reinforces the idea that those imperial activities (exploration, conquest) are intrinsically male activities. By writing the female body into the African landscape, Haggard writes women out of the action of the adventure unless, like Gagool, they are physical

manifestations of the land itself.[93]

Another way Haggard tames Africa's landscape in his novels is through representations of big-game hunting. In his analysis of *She*, Madhudaya Sinha writes that through the hunts in the novel, the heroes "establish control . . . taming and humbling the vast African landscape" (33). The same could be said of *King Solomon's Mines*, which features an elephant hunt early on in the plot. As Laura Chrisman notes, that hunting scene not only establishes the British men's control over the landscape, but also over the African people through the death of a servant, Kiva, who throws himself in the elephant's path to save the British naval officer, Good. Chrisman argues that this action not only saves Good's life, but also demonstrates the British adventurers' exploitation of the land and people, since they are able to "trad[e] in a servant for the wealth of ivory" and also gain "spiritual profit from the affirmation of the African servant's unswerving fidelity" (55).[94] This moment points to a larger truth about Haggard's plotting implied in Chrisman's argument. In this scene, as in all of the other elaborate scenes of hunting and exploration that Haggard uses in *King Solomon's Mines*, *She*, and *Allan Quatermain*, there is one constant fact: the dangers that emerge from the African landscape threaten the white characters, but kill only the African ones.

The ability of white men to survive and master an environment that becomes progressively more extreme (as it does in all three novels), even when the "natives" of the place cannot, is a common element within British adventure tales. However, Haggard challenges that typical representation of the dangerous landscape by pushing his settings beyond the terrains

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[93] For more detailed discussions of the complex topic of women in Haggard's works see David, Ardis, Auerbach, and Stott.

[94] This discussion is part of her larger argument that "Haggard rewrites the narrative of modern capitalism in South Africa" (24).

found in authors like Marryat and Reid into the realm of the uncanny (in the Victorian sense of weird, supernatural, and unfamiliar). In *King Solomon's Mines* this realm is represented by the mountains shaped like a woman's breasts, in *She* it is a trackless swamp and the caves of Kôr, and in *Allan Quatermain* the mysterious underground river lit by a pillar of fire. As Brantlinger notes, uncanny settings with "Gothic overtones" were more common within African adventure novels than other kinds of adventure tales (189). Yet, Haggard's plots contain an important twist that makes him stand out from other authors of African adventure. Within the heart of Africa – beyond the dangers of animals and elements and past the uncanny territory – lies a land that is familiar, and in some way home-like.

It is Haggard's unique method of blurring the boundaries between home and away within the remote and uncanny geography of Africa that sets him apart from other authors of African adventure and that resonates with African American and Afro-Caribbean authors at the end of the century. Previous scholars have argued that Haggard's novels represent psychological journeys to the inner or primitive self. However, those arguments frequently dismiss the important racial dimensions of his texts. In his article "Rider Haggard, Imperialism, and the Layered Personality," Norman Etherington argues in "Rider Haggard, Imperialism, and the Layered Personality" that "the heart of Africa is in Haggard's romances just what Conrad said it was in *Heart of Darkness* - a special psychological terrain in which European man confronts and nearly succumbs to his deepest fears" (77). Another analysis of the psychological journey of Haggard's heroes comes from Bradley Deane, who describes how "the British men who travel to these lost worlds do not confirm their manliness by vanquishing the primitive, but by partaking of it, by immersing themselves in the struggles of the men they recognize as their primal counterparts" (207). Deane's argument departs from Etherington's by representing the hero's regression to a primitive type of masculine identity as a positive move; however, both

discussions share the same dismissal of race as a key factor in these situations. According to

Etherington, "the real point of bringing color and ancient ruins into [*Allan Quatermain*] is not to

make statements about race but to make statements about us, about our psychology, our past,"

and "this literature was neither a cause nor an effect of colonial expansion and deserves study

quite apart from the problems of political and economic imperialism" ("Layered Personality" 79,

87). Deane states that "the berserk impulses of primitive masculinity, so central to mid-Victorian

constructions of difference, are here used to *collapse* the differences of time, space - even race"

(210).

Likewise, those scholars who make persuasive arguments about Haggard's racial and

colonial politics do not address the psychological aspects of the narratives. Deirdre David reads

King Solomon's Mines as a false idyll in which Haggard falsely represents a "white Britannic

presence in black Africa [that] is untainted by abuse of native labor" (191). Laura Chrisman also

focuses on the economic dimensions of the novel, arguing that Haggard uses fiction to

transform what was occurring in the colonial diamond industry from "a multinational capitalist

phenomenon into an exclusively national one" (45). While these arguments are important to our

understanding of these novels, I believe it is important to see the connections between the

psychological aspects of Haggard's fiction and its historical role within the British empire. In the

rest of this section, I will demonstrate that the psychological journeys represented in these

novels – *King Solomon's Mines*, *She*, and *Allan Quatermain* – are, in fact, essentially connected

to Europe's scramble for African colonies and the racial politics of the Anglo-Atlantic world in

the late nineteenth century. I argue that by focusing on each hero's journey as a psychological

return home, Haggard is making a political case for the British right to found an African empire.

Each of these novels represents a kind of homecoming for the hero of the story: a

homecoming that gets progressively more intense in each novel. In *King Solomon's Mines*, Haggard focuses on mapping a psychological journey into the origin of the English race through the character of the British gentleman, Sir Henry Curtis. Although the literal homecoming in the novel belongs to Umbopa, Curtis's African servant who reveals himself to be Ignosi, the long-lost prince of the Kukuana people, the virtual homecoming belongs to Sir Henry, who finds his own heroic past in the interior of Africa. Haggard directs our attention to Sir Henry's role as a returning prince of sorts by pairing him with Ignosi. From the moment he is introduced (as Umbopa), he and Sir Henry are described as mirror images: "'They make a good pair, don't' they?' said Good; 'one as big as the other.'" (36). This pairing persists throughout the novel.

Sir Henry and Ignosi also share a motif of returning, though Ignosi's return is physical and Sir Henry's is spiritual. When Quatermain first meets Sir Henry, he remarks that "somehow he reminded me of an ancient Dane" (7). This instinct turns out to be correct: Sir Henry is a descendent of the Viking raiders who settled in England. As Sir Henry progresses into Africa, his character regresses to his ancient lineage. Upon reaching Loo, the capitol of Kukuanaland, Quatermain remarks that Sir Henry's hair had grown and "he looked more like an ancient Dane than ever" (102). In the great battle to overthrow the false king, Twala, Umbopa and Sir Henry are "arrayed in a similar costume" and Quatermain writes "I had never before seen two such splendid men" (148). This parallelism again highlights their twin roles as returning heirs. Like Ignosi, Sir Henry's return is completed through the process of battle. At this point, Quatermain drops the equivocation with which he has addressed the subject in the past and states, "there he stood, the great Dane, for he was nothing else" (167). Read in this way, we can see that Sir Henry's return to his long-forgotten origins through his journey to the heart of Africa echoes other adventure novels who use foreign journeys to exaggerate the Englishness of their characters. However, the fact that Sir Henry is retrieving ancient sources of Englishness, rather

than modern Englishness, and that Haggard represents his retrieval through an analogy with the native African Ignosi instead of through character contrasts, sets this novel apart from the more common model of adventures. Africa does not enhance Sir Henry's national identity because of its differences from England, but because of a fundamental similarity – the warrior culture – which has been obscured in England through centuries of civilization. While Deane argues in his article that parallels like that drawn between Ignosi and Sir Henry can "collapse" racial differences, I believe that isn't true in this instance. Although Haggard clearly admires the military prowess of the Kukuanas, he draws a clear line between them and Sir Henry who is "nothing else" than a Dane.

Haggard's insistence that Sir Henry's authentic self – the Viking warrior - can be best realized in the heart of Africa suggests to me that Africa – the "dark continent" – is actually the home of an authentic and original whiteness. He pursues this idea more fully in one of his next popular novels, *She*. In that book, Leo Vincey and his guardian, Horace Holly, travel to Africa to investigate a family tradition that claims Leo is the reincarnation of Kallikrates, an ancient Greek who lost his life because he would not return the love of the near-immortal woman Ayesha, She Who Must Not Be Named. Like Sir Henry, Good, and Quatermain, Leo and Holly are directed on their quest by a map that is more imaginative and allusive than real. In their case, the map comes in the form of two narratives passed down from Leo's family. The first one comes from Leo's father, and reads as follows:

> "On the coast of Africa, in a hitherto unexplored region, some distance to the north of where the Zambesi falls into the sea, there is a headland, at the extremity of which a peak towers up, shaped like the head of a negro, similar to that of which the writing speaks. I landed there, and learnt from a wandering native . . . that far inland are great mountains, shaped like cups, and that the people there speak a dialect of Arabic, and are ruled over by a *beautiful white woman* who is seldom seen by them, but who is reported to have power over all things living and dead." (28, italics in original)

This narrative map resembles the map in *King Solomon's Mines* in the fact that it describes the landscape in terms of human physiology, though this time it is the head of a man rather than the body of a woman. This "Ethiopian" head is later seen and described by Holly in much more negative terms than those used by Amenartas and Leo's father:

> "the top of the peak, which was about eighty feet high by one hundred and fifty thick at its base, was shape like a negro's head and face, whereon was stamped a most fiendish and terrifying expression. There was no doubt about it; there were the thick lips, the fat cheeks, and the squat nose standing out with startling clearness against the flaming background. There, too, was the round skull, washed into shape perhaps by thousands of years of wind and weather, and, to complete the resemblance, there was a scrubby growth of weeds or lichen upon it, which against the sun looked for all the world like the wool on a colossal negro's head." (58)

The head that Holly describes is less of a topographical marker than an emotional figuration of the negative attributes ascribed to Africa and Africans during the nineteenth century. In one passage, Holly marks both the land and the people as "fiendish and terrifying."

However, this land that Holly at first marks as dark and Other contains traces of whiteness. Buried in the swamp, Holly finds remnants of architecture that he ascribes to "the Babylonians and the Phoenicians, and the Persians" who had presumably colonized Africa in ancient times (63). These architectural signs act as a counterpoint to the negro's head because they suggest that the land that at first seemed foreign is already a site of colonization by lighter, northern people. By portraying Africa as an already-colonized territory, Haggard naturalizes the British presence there. He reinforces this idea in the preface that he wrote for the non-fictional work *Monomotapa (Rhodesia). Its Monuments, and its History from the most Ancient Times to the present Century* (1896) by A. Wilmot. In that preface, Haggard calls the Phoenicians "the

English of the ancient world" though "without the English honour" (qtd. in Chrisman 35). [95] By

casting the Phoenicians as earlier, less-perfect versions of the English, Haggard presents the

British exploration and exploitation of Africa's resources as projects of recovery of pre-existing

colonial rights, rather than projects of discovery.[96] As in *King Solomon's Mines*, Haggard carries

this motif into the personal life of his main character, Leo Vincey, who recovers his past life

through interaction with the white queen, Ayesha, who lives within the inhospitable African

landscape.

Ayesha, better known as She, is one of Haggard's most fascinating characters. Many

scholars have written about her and her relationship to white British femininity and to the

masculine character of Horace Holly.[97] However, fewer have addressed the experience of Leo in

his encounter with She. This is perhaps because the story is narrated by Holly, so his experiences

and thoughts dominate the novel. Through Holly, Haggard explores questions of spirituality, the

nature of knowledge, the nature of woman, and the very definition of humanity. Leo, who

spends the first part of his time with Ayesha unconscious and ill, has a much less complex

interaction with her. But it is through Leo that Haggard revisits the relationship between

national identity, personal identity, and the past that he started working out in the character of

Sir Henry.

Haggard blurs the line in this story between domestic and adventurous space by placing

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[95] It was common belief in the Victorian period that the ruins of Great Zimbabwe were built by a European race, or a white race closely related to the Europeans because of the widely-held racial theories that claimed Africans had never been as socially- and technologically-advanced as the Europeans. For more about the supposed origins of Great Zimbabwe and its impact on Haggard's fiction see Chrisman, Stiebel, Kaufman, and Etherington "South African Origins."

[96] This pattern resembles William Sheppard's experiences with the Bakuba, as I'll discuss at more length later in the section.

[97] Auerbach, Stott, Rodgers, Ardis

a woman at the heart of the narrative and by making her white. In the caves ruled over by

Ayesha, Leo is brought face to face with the embalmed body of his ancestor and look-alike

Kallikrates. Like Sir Henry, Leo recovers a past that is not technically British (Kallikrates was

Greek), but from a culture that was recognized as a worthy antecedent to the British. Sir Henry

recovered his martial past which had been overlaid with a veneer of civilization. Leo's recovery

is more abstract. Like Kallikrates before him, he rejects the advances of Ayesha. Kallikrates did

so because he loved his wife, Amenartas, and refused to leave her. Leo has a similar reason;

before he met Ayesha he became attached to an Amahagger woman, Ustane, who nursed him

through his fever, and he refuses to give her up. However, Leo's deepest attachment is not to

Ustane, but to Britain, represented by the figure of Queen Victoria. When Ayesha plans to travel

with Leo to England and make him the ruler of the country, both he and Holly "broke out into an

exclamation of dismay" (255) at the thought of overthrowing the queen. By blending a romance

plot between two white characters (Leo and Ayesha) with an adventurous threat (to overthrow

the Queen), Haggard starts to collapse the distance between "home" (England) and "away"

(Africa). Africa has the possibility of being Leo's home, and he also has the opportunity to bring

that home to England by agreeing to a marriage with Ayesha. Haggard stops short of Leo's

complete identification with Ayesha as a domestic partner, but it is clear in this novel that he is

fascinated (if also somewhat horrified) at the thought that British men might find more than just

exploitable resources in the heart of Africa.

In both *King Solomon's Mines* and *She*, Haggard represents the journey to Africa as a

return home to an Englishman's spiritual roots by incorporating the plot element of the long-lost

or reincarnated prince. This motif of the return, coupled by Haggard's descriptions of ancient

relics of "white" civilization (King Solomon's road and the embalmed blonde-haired white corpse

in the Amahaggers' caves) in each of these novels suggests that British interventions into Africa

are not simply colonial conquest. Instead, the British are returning to a land that has already been possessed and marked by white inhabitants who pre-date the black Africans of the present time. This idea that the British have a prior claim to African territory, or that they somehow belong there more than the Africans they encounter is taken to its ultimate conclusion in the third book I am discussing in this chapter, *Allan Quatermain*. In that story, Haggard's characters discover a living white civilization in the heart of African wilderness.

Allan Quatermain features the same British characters as *King Solomon's Mines* (Allan Quatermain, Sir Henry Curtis, and Captain John Good) and another "native" adventurer, the Zulu warrior Umslopogaas. Tired of life in England, the British men decide to reunite for another journey into Africa. This time their motivation is "rumours of a great white race" living in the interior of Africa somewhere beyond Mt. Kenia (Kenya) (11). The pattern of this story echoes the previous two novels I have discussed. The travelers begin their journey on the coast of Africa and encounter natural disasters and human threats during their travels to the interior. During their journey, they pass through increasingly fantastical landscape, culminating in the underground river that leads to Zu-Vendis, the hidden white civilization that they seek.

Zu-Vendis is the first living white civilization that Haggard depicts in his African novels. The people of Zu-Vendis "were decidedly of a white as distinguished from a black race" to Quatermain's eye, but at first sight he is careful to draw a line between them and the English by adding that they are "as white, for instance, as Spaniards or Italians" (120). At second sight, he softens the distinction: "we noticed certain ladies whose skin was of a most dazzling whiteness; and the darkest shade of colour which we saw was about that of a rather swarthy Spaniard" (128). Although the people of the country are explicitly compared to Italians or Spaniards rather than the English, the country itself is described in terms of England. The Englishmen's first sight

of the country in the distance is "a great golden dome, not

THE APPROACH TO MILOSIS. [See page 124.

8. "The Approach to Milosis," featuring European-appearing boats and a shining dome in the distance. *Allan Quatermain*, p. 120b

unlike that of St Paul's" (120). Later, Quatermain describes the climate of Zu-Vendis as "being

very similar to that of southern England, only brighter and not so rainy" (149). These

descriptions suggest what Haggard later makes clear: Zu-Vendis is not just another African tribe

to be conquered by the superior British, as were the Masai warriors earlier in the novel. Instead,

Zu-Vendis is an alternative version of England used by Haggard to reflect on the current state of

his nation. As a result, in this novel even more so than in the others I have discussed, the

journey to Africa is a journey home. It is also a permanent journey – none of the three

adventurers return to England at the end of the story, suggesting that it is possible for British

men to find a permanent national home in Africa, not just a temporary dwelling place.

Haggard's creation of an idealized alternative England within *Allan Quatermain* echoes the pattern of the sea novels I discussed in the first chapter of this work. In those novels, Marryat, Douglass, and Philip imagined shipboard communities that reflected and idealized the national communities they sought to critique. Haggard's imagined country is less of a mirror than these shipboard communities. There are some aspects of Zu-Vendis that he describes as barbarous or uncivilized, such as their sun-worship. However, he frequently uses the customs of Zu-Vendis to critique the customs of England. For example, Quatermain compares the laws of the two countries in this way:

> The law of the country is, on the whole, mild and just, but differs in several respects from our civilized law. For instance, the law of England is much more severe upon offences against property than against the person, as becomes a people whose ruling passion is money. A man may half kick his wife to death or inflict horrible sufferings upon his children at a much cheaper rate of punishment than he can compound for the theft of a pair of old boots. In Zu-Vendis this is not so, for there they rightly or wrongly look upon the person as of more consequence than goods and chattels, and not, as in England, as a sort of necessary appendage to the latter. For murder the punishment is death, for treason death, for defrauding the orphan and the widow, for sacrilege, and for attempting to quit the country (which is looked on as a sacrilege) death. (154)

Quatermain's description calls into question the civilized nature of English law, which privileges property over persons. Although Quatermain does not commit himself to an outright critique of English law, his phrasing ("rightly or wrongly") provokes the reader to make a value judgment, which is likely to come down on the side of Zu-Vendis (where "horrible sufferings" inflicted by a man upon his children are appropriately punished).

Modern technology, the other hallmark of "civilized" England, is also called into question in the novel. After considering the medieval technology of Zu-Vendis in comparison with the modern technology of England, Sir Henry states "I cannot see that gunpowder, telegraphs, steam, daily newspapers, universal suffrage, etc., etc., have made mankind one whit

the happier than they used to be, and I am certain that they have brought many evils in their train" (276). Haggard's preference for pre-modern society and technology, which was suggested in *King Solomon's Mines* through his praise of the Kukuanas, is here stated outright. In fact, the journey to Zu-Vendis for the Englishmen is a return to a historical home – England's pre-technological past, purified and idealized to erase the materialism of capitalist law and society.

Although they arrive as adventurers, Haggard's Englishmen proceed to make Zu-Vendis their home. This process is not an easy one. Sir Henry's marriage to one of the twin queens of the country, Nyleptha, provokes a civil war with her sister-queen, Sorais, who resists the idea that a "base outlander shall sit upon my father's throne and rear up half-breeds to fill the place of the great House of the Stairway" (217). Although Sorais accuses Sir Henry of being a threat to the racial purity of Zu-Vendis, Haggard goes on to demonstrate that Sir Henry belongs in Zu-Vendis even more than some of those born there. Even their civil war is cast in terms of English history; Sorais's main supporter is Nasta, whose territories "of which he was virtually king, were to Zu-Vendis much what Scotland used to be to England" (192). The defeat of Sorais and Nasta by Sir Henry's forces replicates the English subjection of the Scottish and the eventual union of the territories. Although the accusations of Sorais against Sir Henry seem to be valid, Haggard constructs her as a character who is frequently blind to the situations surrounding her (for example, she proposes marriage to Sir Henry herself while it was clear to everyone else that he was in love with her sister). Her blindness, combined with the repeated analogies between Zu-Vendis and England, suggests that her perception of Sir Henry as an outsider is inaccurate. He has, instead, reached his spiritual home and is prepared to remain there for the rest of his life.

The marriage between Sir Henry and Nyleptha and their defeat of Sorais cements the status of Zu-Vendis as an idealized alternate England. Sir Henry's goals – to eliminate civil unrest

and bring Christianity to the country – echo the goals of King Arthur, the other idealized king of an idealized England popular in nineteenth century literature. However, unlike King Arthur, Sir Henry possesses domestic peace and the promise of continuity in the form of his heir: "a regular curly-haired, blue-eyed young Englishman in looks, and, though he is destined, if he lives, to inherit the throne of Zu-Vendis, I hope I may be able to bring him up to become what an English gentleman should be, and generally is -- which is to my mind even a prouder and a finer thing than being born heir apparent to the great House of the Stairway, and, indeed, the highest rank that a man can reach upon this earth"(277). Haggard does not tell his readers exactly what an English gentleman "should be." Clearly, it has nothing to do with living within the territorial limits of England or Great Britain or participating in a parliamentary system of government. Instead, the definition of "English gentleman" appears to be made up of more abstract characteristics that resonate as much, if not more, within the feudal atmosphere of Zu-Vendis than within the modern hustle of Britain. In fact, the conclusion of this novel suggests that Haggard viewed the true "English gentleman" as an endangered species that required a new and more purified version of England in order to exist. In his novels Haggard argues, albeit obliquely, that the adventurous frontier is necessary as a corrective to the somewhat corrupt imperial center of Britain. On the frontier, especially in Africa, Englishmen will find a new home that will call them back to their heroic roots.

One of the important functions of the adventure genre in the nineteenth century, which I discussed in the first chapter of this work, was the way it allowed the author to imagine an idealized national community outside the nation. The imagined communities invoked in the sea adventures of the first chapter were necessarily fleeting due to the unstable nature of shipboard life, constant encounters with other environments, and the inevitable return to the home port. Haggard's land-locked nation does not share the inherent temporary nature of those isolated

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communities. However, his anxiety about the permanence of his imagined England is apparent

at the end of the novel. Although Haggard is careful to draw a distinction between the restless

explorations of Sir Henry, Good, and Quatermain and predatory colonial settlers, the connection

between foreign incursion and exploitation is clearly significant. Sorais characterizes Sir Henry

and the others as "this foreign wolf and those who came hither to prey with him"(217).

Although she is wrong about them, Sir Henry himself acknowledges that they are anomalies. For

that reason, he states that any further foreigners "will be shown the shortest way out of the

country"(276) as soon as they arrive.

> I have no fancy for handing over this beautiful country to be torn and fought for by
> speculators, tourists, politicians and teachers, whose voice is as the voice of Babel, just as
> those horrible creatures in the valley of the underground river tore and fought for the body
> of the wild swan; nor will I endow it with the greed, drunkenness, new diseases,
> gunpowder, and general demoralization which chiefly mark the progress of civilization
> amongst unsophisticated peoples. (276-277)

This passage, a description of what Haggard believed he saw happen to the Zulu nation with the

advent of colonization, is the strongest anti-imperial statement found in these three early

books. The irony, of course, is that Sir Henry, Good, and Quatermain found their paradise

through the avenue of colonial institutions like the missionary station and the British Consul in

Lamu. The publication of Quatermain and Sir Henry's "manuscript" (the novel), which was sent

out of the country before the border to the outside world was sealed, is not likely to discourage

interlopers. In fact, Haggard's novels and the novels of other adventure authors were calculated

to encourage readers to pursue adventure.

Haggard's novels highlight a key tension in the end-of-the-century adventure genre. The

obsession with territorial exploration and discovery, which is intimately linked to personal

exploration and the discovery of identity, undermines itself by eliminating the undiscovered

places of the world. If national identity is based upon exploration, as is represented in adventure novels, what happens when there is no more room for exploration? How can identity be secured? Haggard himself acknowledges this problem in an 1894 essay titled "'Elephant Smashing' and 'Lion Shooting.'" In it, he writes mournfully that "Soon the ancient mystery of Africa will have vanished." Where, he wonders, "will the romance writers of future generations find a safe and secret place, unknown to the pestilent accuracy of the geographer, in which to lay their plots?" (qtd. in Etherington, *Rider Haggard* 66). And yet, Haggard's heroes share this obsession with mapping and discovery. In *She*, Holly regrets their nighttime travels through the ruins of the city of Kôr because he is unable to clearly see the lines traced on "the great ball of stone representing the World" which he theorizes contains "a map of the Universe as it was known to the people of Kôr" and which he himself wishes to know (265-266). In *Allan Quatermain*, the three companions are determined to discover the rumored white race or die in the attempt. Without adventure, as Quatermain explains in the opening of that novel, he feels aimless and lost. Haggard's lost-race novels suggest the answer to Quatermain's problem – the rise of the genres of fantasy (which could include the three books I have discussed here) and science fiction, which allow unlimited room for exploration and imagination.[98]

In *Allan Quatermain*, Sir Henry's triumphant accession to the throne of Zu-Vendis legitimates his exploration of that country. Through the novel, Haggard argues that a truly powerful and advanced civilization in Africa does not lie with the Masai warriors, nor does it lie with the precariously balanced rule of Nyleptha and Sorais. It lies with Sir Henry, who enters Zu-Vendis as a foreigner and finds himself naturalized as its king. This narrative of the long-

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[98] Although these two genres are intimately connected to the nineteenth century adventure genre, they are far too complex to be discussed in this work. The other genre that offered a solution to Haggard's problem, as Etherington points out in his book, was historical fiction.

lost/suddenly-appearing European ruler sends a powerful signal to consumers of the text that Africans – dark or light-skinned – are not the natural rulers of their own countries.

We can guess somewhat the effect that this message had on African people, especially those in the diaspora, by looking at William Sheppard's narrative. As I noted, Sheppard believed firmly that European civilization was superior in most ways to African civilization, and that people with European training should settle in Africa and make significant changes to African society. it is Sheppard's desire to be seen as a civilized, Anglo-European male that causes him to resist identification as a reincarnated Bakuba king. However, after experiencing the full horror of Belgian rule in the Congo and returning to America to write his autobiography, Sheppard seems to take more pride in his adoption by the Bakuba. He still believes in the importance of European ideals, but he is willing to hint (gently, so as not to antagonize his readers) that civilized black men, like himself, have far more right to positions of power in Africa than the whites. Whereas Haggard posited a white identification with the heart of Africa that made it a natural national home for his British heroes, Sheppard highlights (especially in his articles about the Belgian atrocities) the disidentification practiced by Africa's white exploiters. Sheppard can feel for the Africans – even the Zappo-Zaps who are semi-responsible for the brutalities – far more than whites, even including his fellow-missionaries and crusaders against injustice. Sheppard, as reluctant as he was to admit it, belonged with the African people in a way that the Europeans did not.

Haggard's long-lost country/king narratives legitimating the white rule of Africa at the expense of Africans clashed with the increasing popularity at the end of the century of Pan-Africanist ideas about African rights, history, and the potential avenues of cooperation between Africans and African Americans. African American authors like Pauline Hopkins wrote articles

highlighting Africa's history and the accomplishments of its civilizations and negating the

assertions of men like Haggard who claimed all ancient advancement in Africa was due to light-

skinned colonial powers.[99] At the same time, Africans and African Americans proposed

cooperative economic programs, such as the proposal for an African Development Society which

John Chilembwe helped create while he was in Lynchburg. That society was designed in

response to "certain Christian natives of East Central Africa" who asked for African American

"co-operation and direction in the development of the rich resources of their country." Although

the main goal stated in the society's prospectus was the economic development of the land, the

prospectus also explicitly states that the association would have the "power to provide,

construct, or organize such means of defense as the Directors may consider necessary in order

to retain and develop the territories they may acquire in Africa." This statement, taken with the

condition that property owners could only "sell to any Afro-American or African purchaser,"

suggests that the society was viewed not only as an economic enterprise but as a way of

creating a Pan-African-run state that would be independent of any European power (Hill 167,

168, 169).

In addition to writing histories of Africa and suggesting plans for African economic

development, African American authors wrote books that critiqued and revised the motifs in

Haggard's novels in order to reclaim the continent of Africa as a source of a culturally- and

technologically-advanced African past that could form the foundation of a positive African

identity. A problem, of course, was that there was no singular African identity, nor was there a

simple answer to the question of how exactly African Americans (and other members of the

diaspora) should or could negotiate the cultural and historical distance placed between

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[99] See "A Primer of Facts Pertaining to the Early Greatness of the African Race and the Possibility of Restoration by its Descendants – with Epilogue" (Hopkins).

themselves and Africa by a century or more of life in the New World. The works that I will be examining by the authors Pauline Hopkins and Sutton Griggs show their authors grappling with these issues. Although both Hopkins and Griggs saw value in their African heritage and reached out to Africa, they also valued their American identities and American modes of thought and progress. Like the missionaries I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, they were not willing to discard their Americanness in favor of a completely African identity. Nevertheless, both authors believed that Africa was an important part of the modern world of which African Americans should be aware, not the isolated and mystical continent presented by Haggard. In the next sections of this chapter, I will examine how those authors used their novels to incorporate Africa into their representations of African American life at the turn of the century.

Pauline Hopkins

Pauline Hopkins's novel *Of One Blood* was clearly meant as a rebuttal of Haggard's imperialist lost-race African fictions. The novel, which was published serially from 1902-1903, tells the story of a young African American doctor who is passing for white and who travels to Africa in search of buried treasure and a lost city, and finds instead his own lost cultural heritage. Hopkins uses two complexly interwoven plots in her novel, an adventure plot and a domestic plot, to simultaneously construct an affirmative Pan-African adventure while deconstructing some of the foundational and problematic elements of the adventure genre, most particularly the way that it represents and magnifies the distance between the home and the territory of adventure. The complex intersections between the adventure and domestic plots, and the unresolved issues in the novel not only represent an experiment in the use of popular genres in African-American fiction, but also one author's attempt to find a literary form that can articulate a diasporic identity and create a positive model of pan-African relationships

for the popular reader without diminishing the American aspects of African American identity.

The adventure plot of Hopkins's novel centers on two characters: Reuel Briggs, an African American doctor who is passing for white, and his white friend, Charlie Vance. The two men are part of an exploration team headed for Meroë, the ancient capital of the Kushite empire, in order to search for hidden treasure and a legendary lost city that will prove that Africa was the cradle of Western civilization. Reuel discovers the entrance to the hidden city, but he is knocked unconscious and kidnapped by its inhabitants before he can return to the group. When Reuel awakes, he finds himself in a luxurious palace and is informed that a lotus-shaped birthmark on his chest marks him as Ergamenes, the long-lost king of the hidden city of Telassar.

This plot clearly draws on sources like H. Rider Haggard for some of its devices, such as the treasure map, the hidden city, and the tell-tale birthmark. However, while Haggard depicts Africa as a territory shaped and dominated by ancient and modern white colonization, Hopkins portrays Africa as the cradle of an ancient black civilization that pre-dated white civilizations and, more importantly, has continued to this day. This is not to say that Hopkins's representation of Africa is uniformly positive. Like other intellectuals of her time, Hopkins believed in European definitions of civilization and progress. Her imagined city conforms to those definitions and she does not hesitate to represent the African world outside of Telassar as a semi-barbaric place. But, even though her representation of Africa is not uniformly positive, she does redraw the imaginative map of the continent in important ways that suggest that Africa may be a positive resource for diaspora Africans who are looking for a non-European location with which to identify.

In order to present Africa as a source of positive characteristics, Hopkins first reconfigures the imaginative map of Africa in her novel by diversifying its population, albeit in a

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troubling way. The expedition Reuel belongs to enters Africa through the northern port of

Tripoli, an Arab city, and their first trial is to gain a meeting with the Sheik who can help outfit

them for their trip to the interior. Hopkins is not completely complimentary to the Arabian

population of Africa (she praises the Sheik, but calls a later stop a "dirty Arab town" (526)), but

the fact that she does feature them at the entry point to Africa reminds her readers that Africa

contains more than a simple Manichaean population of black and white. Nevertheless, it is the

relationship between black and white populations that Hopkins focuses on rather than Africa as

a multi-ethnic area. Her primary concern is still the American race question and its relationship

to Africa's ancient past and colonial present. For that reason, she focuses most of her attention

on the elements of her story that will counteract perceptions of Africa as a continent whose

people exist in a pre-national state of barbarism – a state which formed the basis of excuses for

American slavery and ongoing racial oppression in that country.

Hopkins accounts for Africa's history of faded civilizations and colonial oppression by

turning to a religious explanation, rather than the kind of racial explanation espoused by

Haggard. According to Hopkins, the power of ancient Ethiopia was "destroyed and abased

because of her idolatries" with hope held out only to "the faithful worshippers of the true God"

whose descendants live in Telassar (547-548). Although the religion of Telassar pre-dates

Christianity by six thousand years, it is trinitarian and similar to Christianity in its description

(aside from a belief in reincarnation). It is similar enough that Ai, the prime minister and priest,

promises Reuel a swift conversion to Christianity by the country once he becomes king and

teaches them. This religious history also serves a political purpose in the novel. Because the fall

of the Ethiopians was caused by sin, "the white stranger was to Ethiopia but a scourge in the

hands of an offended God" (555). Colonialism, Hopkins suggests, is not a racial imperative due

to the superiority of Anglo-Saxons, but a divine punishment that is on the brink of being lifted. If

religion, not biology, is responsible for the current weakness of Africa, then there is no scientific

reason to oppress the African people, and no scientific or religious inferiority due to which

Christian Africans in the diaspora can be excluded from participation in the nation of their

choice.

This sense that Africa is on the brink of a revival sets Hopkins apart from Haggard and other

practitioners of the African adventure novel. Throughout the novel, she insists that Africa has a

future beyond colonization by Europeans, and that the seeds of its future lie dormant within it in

the hidden city of Telassar. This contradicts the stereotypical perception of Africa as an empty

and stagnant land. Hopkins expresses this perception through the character of Charlie Vance,

who reacts negatively to Africa:

> It was a desolation that doubled desolateness, because his healthy American organization
> missed the march of progress, attested by the sound of hammers on unfinished buildings
> that told of a busy future and cosy modern homeliness. Here there was no future. No
> railroads, no churches, no saloons, no schoolhouses to echo the voices of merry children,
> no promise of the life that produces within the range of his vision. Nothing but the
> monotony of past centuries dead and forgotten save by a few learned savans [sic]. (526)

In this passage, Charlie not only represents a white perception of Africa but also a specifically

American perception. Hopkins recognizes that America at the end of the nineteenth century is a

nation where continual movement and progress are noted as the greatest good and Africa's lack

of these things is perceived as a negative characteristic. Unlike Haggard in *Allan Quatermain*,

who has Sir Henry vow to keep elements of modern society ("gunpowder, telegraphs, steam,

daily newspapers, universal suffrage") out of Zu-Vendis, Hopkins looks forward to the spread of

progressive Americanized institutions in Africa which will come out of the hidden city of Telassar

once it is governed by Reuel. Whereas Haggard simultaneously desires an admirable militant

kingdom with which his heroes can be associated and a subservient African continent that will

passively submit to European penetration, Hopkins has no double standard when it comes to her hopes for African civilization. She wants the perfections of her hidden kingdom to spread throughout the continent. Her goal is to change the status quo through the medium of fantasy, not side-step it through fantasy.

Therefore, although Telassar shares characteristics with Haggard's hidden country of Zu-Vendis (it is hidden by impassable mountains and swamps and contains magnificent architecture), it is more complex than Haggard's feudal fantasy world. One signal difference is that Telassar is not cut off from the outside. On the contrary, members of the ruling council are trained to go out and observe the modern world. Though none have traveled to America, Ai is aware of American race prejudice and Reuel's consequent denial of his African heritage.

A second difference between Haggard's novels and Hopkins's tale is the continuity of culture represented by Telassar's continued existence, which is embodied in the form of the queen, Candace. Her position as queen of the hidden city is reminiscent of Ayesha in Haggard's *She*. However, Candace is not the singular, dangerous, white female threat that Haggard depicted. Instead, she is "a Venus" with "a warm bronze complexion" who represents continuity rather than absolute domination. Whereas Zu-Vendis descends into civil war due to its competitive sister-queens, Telassar is a manifestation of stability. Candace, the virgin queen, and by extension the city itself, stand for a hidden, secret self of Africa that is full of productive potential that is waiting to be unlocked. Hopkins tell us that the arrival of Reuel, the long lost king, is the key that will "restore to the Ethiopian race its ancient glory" (547). At the same time, Telassar restores Reuel to a sense of pride in his own African heritage, which he'd been resisting for so many years. In this way, the relationship between Reuel and Telassar suggests a larger mutually-beneficial relationship between members of the African diaspora and the people living

in Africa.

A third signal difference is that Telassar possesses advanced technologies beyond the

common architectural wonders (though it has those too – a "simple process" of construction

that the modern world has not discovered (562)). The most important of these is the art of

seeing the past and the future. This ability is partially genetic – Ai tells Reuel that they are both

descended from the Chaldeans and inherited occult abilities – but it is also the result of scientific

study. Seeing the past, present, and future is "one of the great secrets of Nature" that Ai has

"solved" during his life (574). Throughout the novel, Hopkins insists upon the scientific aspects

of occultism through its association with Reuel's medical profession, and she drives that point

home in Telassar where Reuel and Ai engage in "a technical conversation on the abstract science

of occultism" (574). This technology is significant because it reaches beyond the boundaries of

the kingdom to connect Telassar with the outside world, and it is the technology that drives the

rest of the novel's plot. This plot element also contributes to Hopkins's argument against the

root excuses for racism in America – the "scientific" hierarchical classifications of races - by

representing the people of Telassar as more scientifically advanced than the Americans.

Compared to the innovations of Telassar, American science (including scientific racism), Hopkins

suggests, is outdated and comparatively useless.

Although, as I have just shown, Hopkins reverses many of the stereotypical attitudes

and assumptions   about Africa in adventure novels of the period to create an Afro-centric

narrative, her text is a problematic one. Scholar Martin Japtok claims that Hopkins falls into a

"Darwinist trap" by making "material, technological accomplishments the standard by which any

people should be measured" (403). He is not the only critic to identify what Hopkins envisions

in this novel as essentially another form of Western imperialism that privileges Western values

and rejects contemporary African civilization in favor of ancient African greatness that will be revived with the help of a Westernized leader. John Gruesser calls this book "an Afrocentric fantasy for her black middle class audience" and points out that Hopkins fails to "produce a radical new way of looking at Africa and the West" (75). However, I would argue that it does not necessarily follow that her novel is merely espousing an African-American version of imperialism. Instead, I believe that she uses the relationship between the African adventure plot of the novel and the American events of the story to deliver a critique of one of the most fundamental elements of the African adventure novel genre: the absolute distinction that is drawn by authors like Haggard between the home country and the colonial space of adventure. Instead of adopting this model of storytelling, Hopkins turns to a hybrid of adventurous and domestic plots that is similar in many ways to the novels discussed in chapter three of this book. Like William Wells Brown and the anonymous author of *Adolphus*, Hopkins uses the domestic genre as a corrective to the hyper-masculine priorities of the adventure genre. That said, she takes her criticism of the adventure genre a step further by focusing on the effects of its decisive division between the home space and the adventurous spaces abroad.

Like Martin Delaney, Hopkins creates a novel that argues for the necessity of transatlantic connections among members of the African diaspora. However, she does so while presenting a more nuanced and troubling analysis of the domestic relationships in the story and their connection to adventurous constructions of identity than appears in Delany's work. Reuel, like real-life African Americans (for example, William Sheppard), travels to Africa in order to improve his economic circumstances and standing in America.[100] Although Reuel has been

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[100] There are many similarities between Hopkins's characters and William Sheppard and his wife Lucy. For a detailed analysis of the connections between the novel and the Sheppards' life, see Ira Dworkin "In the country of my forefathers" Pauline E. Hopkins, William H. Sheppard, Lucy Gantt Sheppard, and African American Routes" (2008).

successfully passing for white, Aubrey Livingstone covertly raises enough of a suspicion about Reuel's race that the African job is the only one open to him that will allow him to make enough money to support his wife and satisfy his own ambitions for upward mobility. However, because of the domestic relations that motivate his trip, Reuel cannot simply leave America behind in pursuit of this enhanced identity the way an ordinary adventurer would. In fact, the complexities of Reuel's life in America which make up the domestic plot break down the imaginative space between Africa and America and threaten to overwhelm the adventure plot, exposing adventure's flaws to Hopkins's readers.

The brief synopsis of the domestic plot of the novel is as follows: before his travels to Africa Reuel, in the company of a plantation-owning southerner named Aubrey Livingstone, has used mesmerism to save the life of a beautiful young woman named Dianthe Lusk, who was injured in a train accident. They recognize her as the light-skinned African-American soprano who had once performed with the Fisk University choir in Boston. However, she has lost all memory of her past, and so they allow her, and everyone else, to assume that she is white. Reuel falls in love with Dianthe and marries her before leaving for Africa, unaware that Aubrey has also conceived a violent passion for her. Once Reuel leaves for Africa, Aubrey murders his own fiancée, informs Reuel that Dianthe has died, and kidnaps her. After a long illness, Dianthe, who has regained her memory, is informed by Aubrey that Reuel has died. Sick and "weary of the buffets of fate" (597), she agrees to become Aubrey's wife and is taken to his plantation in Maryland, where she dies at the end of the novel.

Although these events are separated from the African adventure plot by an ocean, their effects follow Reuel on his journey. Aubrey, as part of his plan to possess Dianthe, orders his black servant, Jim, to accompany the expedition and to kill Reuel while he is there. The presence

of a traitor from home in the midst of the exploration party alters the reader's perception of the adventurous events of the trip. Jim's decision to ignore Reuel's cries for help when he is being attacked by a leopard transforms that moment from a stereotypical wild beast attack - repeated in countless African adventure stories – into a deliberate American attempt at murder. This theme of imported danger is a pattern much different from that adopted by most white novelists who, like Haggard, assume that danger is an inherent, rather than imported, aspect of Africa's landscape and people.[101] Jim's actions illustrate the ways that domestic events and relationships can, and do, follow adventurers on their travels.

Jim's confiscation of Dianthe's letters to Reuel and his attempt on Reuel's life are not the only ways in which the domestic plot impacts the adventure. When Ai shows Reuel the room that contains the tools to see the past, the present, and the future, Reuel idly wishes to see the face of Dianthe, his past love. Instead of appearing among the dead, she appears among the living, and in company with Aubrey. These visions awaken Reuel to the fact that he is still physically and spiritually tied to America as a homeland. At the same time, he realizes that "virtually he was a prisoner" in his new kingdom (579). This realization is followed by another disruption, when Reuel comes upon Charlie Vance and Jim, who have discovered the passage to the city. Jim, who is near death, confesses that he grew up on the Livingstone plantation and that he knows a secret: Aubrey, Dianthe, and Reuel are siblings. This second revelation effectively freezes the adventure plot and makes it necessary for Reuel to travel back to America to unravel the entangled relationships that bind him there.

These narrative entanglements, combined with a close examination of the American plot of the book, show just how aware Hopkins was of the pitfalls within the generic form she

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[101] For a complete discussion see Kuhne (1999) and Gruesser (1992).

had chosen to rewrite. Not because of the way the adventure genre privileges Western technology and modes of thought, but because of the way the form of the traditional adventure novel brutally cuts off from the action those who are left behind. In *Allan Quatermain*, Haggard kills off Allan's last living relative to free him from his obligations in England, while Sir Henry – who once traveled to Africa to search for his long-lost brother – is now happy to write that brother and tell him he is never returning home. England in Haggard's novels (and in the works of other adventure authors, like Marryat) is stuffy, slow, and easy to leave behind. Hopkins, embroiled in the traumatic struggle for racial equality during the nadir of race relations in America, could not believe one's home country could be left behind so easily. She makes this point primarily through the character of Dianthe Lusk. Dianthe is not presented as a very strong-willed or particularly admirable person. Hopkins often describes her in child-like terms, and the plot of the novel is conceived in terms of a struggle for control over her body and her mind. However, despite – or perhaps because of – her passivity, she is the central figure in Hopkins's deconstruction of the adventure genre. Hopkins is able to argue that the genre is flawed in part because it does not sufficiently address the problems Dianthe faces.

At first sight, Reuel's trip to Telassar seems like a straightforward narrative of return, much like Umbopa's in *King Solomon's Mines*. Like Haggard, Hopkins uses the plot device of the royal birthmark to naturalize Reuel's return to Telassar and paint it as destiny. However, Dianthe's accusations of abandonment complicate this narrative. During his African journey, Reuel receives a telepathic visit from Dianthe who asks him "Why did you leave me in the power of a fiend in human shape, to search for gold? There are worse things in life than poverty" (579). This question, which is never satisfactorily answered in the book, clearly stresses the vulnerable position Dianthe inhabits because of Reuel's decision to go abroad. Once she remembers that she has African ancestry, Dianthe realizes that she, as much as Reuel, is existing in a hostile

territory without family ties or support structure. The dramatic events of kidnapping and imprisonment that follow that realization are a distorted echo of Reuel's experiences in Africa. However, in an interesting twist on the traditional adventure plot, the American events prove to be much more threatening, and ultimately more deadly, than the African ones. This is a complete reversal of the traditional adventure story, and calls its basic premises – such as the definitions of "safe" "domestic" countries and "dangerous" "adventurous" countries – into question. In these ways, the American "home" portion of the novel clearly breaks with the trajectory of the traditional adventure story and also complicates Reuel's position as the new king of Telassar. These breaks signify that Hopkins, although she seems to embrace certain elements of imperialism, like Western ideals of education and technological progress, is uncomfortable with the fantasy that she's created. In fact, as an African-American woman she cannot tell this kind of story without questioning its basic foundations. The adventure model that she borrowed from white male authors not only failed to account for an Afro-centric view of society, but, more importantly, also failed to provide a paradigm for describing and understanding the connections between Africa and America, which imaginatively are both simultaneously "home" and "away" to her.

Reuel's easy recovery of his African heritage is derailed by the reminder of his mixed-race ancestry and his blood ties to Dianthe and Aubrey. He cannot simply adopt Telassar as a new "home" and detach it from his previous life in America. By constructing her story this way, Hopkins acknowledges that "the accumulation of years of foulest wrongs" (594), made concrete in the tortured relationship between Aubrey, Dianthe, and Reuel, has permanently changed the American-born descendants of enslaved Africans. These changes, along with distances of time and space, have created a separate African-American culture: one that is fraught with concerns and anxieties that are only partially shared by Africa. Because of this, African Americans cannot

be simply transplanted to Africa. When Reuel says to Dianthe upon parting from her to travel to Africa "I wish to God I could take you with me" he might have been speaking to the whole African American population (499). The fact that he cannot bring her to Africa – ever – suggests that there is an impassable gap for many African Americans between themselves and Africa. This conclusion places boundaries around the kind of broad pan-African identity urged by authors like Martin Delany. While there might be an affinity between members of the diaspora who have experienced similar types of oppression, Hopkins argues, there is no easy way to imagine a completely pan-African identity because of the particularity of the domestic experiences of various members of the diaspora.

How, then, can the two become connected? Augusta Rohrbach describes how Hopkins's use of supernatural and the occult transforms racial identity "into a mystical if not magical event" (492) that breaks away from an essential, singular, biological definition of racial identity. This metaphysical element also allows Hopkins to construct a web of connections between African and African-American cultures. Reuel's psychic abilities, which he uses to communicate with Dianthe and the ghost of their mother, are an inheritance from Telassar. In this way, Hopkins imagines a spiritual connection between Africa and America without losing a sense of the physical, spatial separation between them. This occult bond suggests that where particular experiences divide Africans from African Americans, intangible things, like dreams, aspirations, and desires may be able to bring them together.

The final problem that remains unsolved at the end of the book is how to forge and maintain physical connections between Africa and America that can reflect the spiritual web that Hopkins has imagined. Throughout the book, characters show concern about physical travel between the countries. Dianthe, foretelling that Reuel's spiritual connection with her would not

be strong enough to keep her physically safe while he traversed the ocean, pleads with him: "Reuel, if you knew how weak I am you would not leave me" (499). Later, the governing council of Telassar resists Reuel's projected return to America out of fear that they will lose their king, and they send an escort with him to assure his safe return. Hopkins never resolves this fear of transatlantic travel within the novel. Instead, the deaths of both Dianthe and Aubrey allow Reuel to transfer his official home from America to Africa (symbolized by the transportation of his African grandmother – his only living relative - back to Telassar). However, it also cuts off his access to African-American culture and issues that are based on that specific heritage.

Instead of maintaining positive connections with sympathetic outsiders, Reuel returns to an isolated kingdom to view "with serious apprehension, the advance of mighty nations penetrating the dark, mysterious forests of his native land" (621). This isolation marks an ominous return to the binaries of the adventure story that Hopkins attempts to deconstruct throughout the rest of the text. Reuel's apprehension is much more complex than Sir Henry's straightforward rejection of modern technology at the end of *Allan Quatermain*. Reuel has no desire to retreat into a medieval past. In fact, he desires to bring Telassar fully into the modern world, but he is incapable of articulating how this is to be done. Although Reuel marries Candace, Hopkins does not mention a child to carry on the traditions of Telassar. Instead the novel ends on a foreboding note with Reuel's final words on the march of colonialism: "Where will it stop? What will the end be?" (621).

Scholars who accuse Hopkins of an imperialist attitude towards Africa overlook the implications of the complicated structure of the novel and its foreboding ending. These two elements make it clear that, even while she was writing the novel, Hopkins recognized that the traditional fictional mode of colonial intervention portrayed in the adventure genre is not a

viable model for diaspora relations, even with the best intentions of African Americans towards

Africa. In *Of One Blood*, Hopkins acknowledges that there can be no simple return to Africa for

African Americans, even for one hailed as a long-lost king. Nevertheless, she is adamant that

African Americans have a responsibility towards Africa that cannot be denied. In 1905 she

described the type of relationship she had in mind in her work, "A Primer of Facts Pertaining to

the Early Greatness of the African Race and the Possibility of Restoration by its Descendants." In

that text, Hopkins states that it is the responsibility of African Americans to foster "an

international friendship with the Blacks of Africa" that will promote "Friendly intercourse and

mutual aid and comfort" (345). This type of relationship is clearly much more complex than the

self/other binary leading to colonialist intervention described by Haggard. Instead, Hopkins

posits a Pan-African identity that manifests in actions of transnational cooperation between

members of the diaspora who are also citizens of their individual nations.

National identity, Hopkins argues, is determined by a person's lived experience within a

nation, not by racial heritage. African Americans are not African, despite their shared past.

However, that shared past does give them access to a shared identity that transcends national

boundaries. The adventure genre at the end of the century was, as Brantlinger writes, the way

that Africa was written about and imagined in the popular consciousness. In order to engage

with her audience on the popular level (something that she firmly believed in) Hopkins had to

challenge the adventure narratives produced by authors like Haggard.[102] However, Hopkins's

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[102] In the Preface to her first novel, *Contending Forces*, Hopkins makes this claim for the
role of fiction: "Fiction is of great value to any people as a preserver of manners and
customs religious, political, and social. It is a record of growth and development from
generation to generation. *No one will do this for us; we must ourselves develop the men and
women who will faithfully portray the inmost thoughts and feelings of the Negro with all the
fire and romance which lie dormant in our history*, and, as yet, unrecognized by writers of
the Anglo-Saxon race." (13-14)

commitment to using the adventure genre to express her ideas about national and transnational identities comes at a price. Although the narrative in *Of One Blood* questions and disrupts the flow of the traditional adventure novel, its resolution retains the black/white, either/or, home/away absolutism that characterizes the genre, and from which Hopkins could not finally escape.

Sutton Griggs

Hopkins was not the only African American author who used elements of the adventure genre to try to articulate a relationship between Africa and African-Americans at the turn of the twentieth century. In the same year that Hopkins started writing *Of One Blood*, the African American minister Sutton Griggs published a short novel titled *Unfettered* that also incorporates a long-lost heir to an African kingdom. However, Griggs's approach to this plot element differs significantly from that taken by Hopkins. Rather than sending his protagonist to Africa, Griggs brings Kumi, the representative of the African kingdom to America. By reversing the traditional journey, Griggs removes the adventurous aspect of the long-lost heir plot element and makes the solution of the problem of racial oppression in America the primary focus of the text, which is a very different approach than the one Hopkins takes in her novel.

The hero of *Unfettered*, Dorlan Warthell, is portrayed as a political genius whose ambition is to solve the problem of racial inequality in America. In fact Morlene, the woman he loves, refuses to marry him until he produces a solution in writing (the solution is called "Dorlan's Plan" and is appended by Griggs to the end of the novel). As this premise suggests, the novel is focused on the many facets of racial inequality in America, and the plot combines representations of rural violence with urban party politics and labor problems in order to present these facets to the reader. Like other novels written by Griggs, *Unfettered* combines

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literary realism with a futuristic ending (in which the race problem is solved) and elements from

less-realistic popular genres. One such element is the long-lost heir element from African

adventure fiction, although in this novel the heir is discovered in America and never touches

African soil. This episode is notable for two reasons. The first is that it injects a sense of the

occult into Griggs's realistic urban world. Kumi addresses Dorlan in an African language that he

can mysteriously both speak and understand, and discovers marks on Dorlan's body that prove

that he is the long-lost king of an unnamed African country. As is the case in Haggard's novels,

this kingdom houses a fantastic treasure, which was gathered under the direction of a white

adventurer, though for the benefit of the African king. Unlike Hopkins, Griggs does not lead up

to this episode with other supernatural occurrences (in *Of One Blood*, Reuel sees a ghost and

brings Dianthe back from near-death before he discovers the hidden African city). Instead, he

introduces it suddenly, suggesting to the reader that this character from Africa is interrupting

the flow of African American life, rather than manifesting an essential link that is already there.

Kumi's abrupt entrance threatens to overset the political flow of the novel. However, the occult

nature of this episode (ancient languages, mysterious birthmarks) is counterbalanced by the

factual nature of Kumi's project: "We Africans are engaged in a sociological investigation of

many questions. We are seeking to know definitely what part the climate, the surface, the flora

and the fauna have played in keeping us in civilization's back yard" (165). Whereas Hopkins

contradicted authors like Haggard by imagining a glorious and technologically-advanced African

civilization waiting to spring on to the world stage, Griggs seems to admit the validity of the

Victorian biological and geological theories that formed the backbone of scientific racism and

the rationale for colonialism. Kumi does not describe his kingdom to Dorlan at all, nor offer any

benefits to him beyond the money that can underwrite their pursuit of European-American

scientific knowledge in order that "artificial appliances sufficient to counteract existing

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influences" may be discovered to help lift Africa to the level of other civilizations (167).

The second reason this episode stands out in the novel is that it is completely isolated from the rest of the plot. Kumi disappears as quickly as he appears, and Dorlan's project and his kingship are never mentioned again. Kumi's brief visit injects the topic of Africa into the novel, which is fitting considering the pan-African interests displayed by Hopkins and other prominent African Americans. Africa, Griggs acknowledges, is a topic that must be considered by any African American intellectual. However, Kumi's visit also serves to dismiss the topic of Africa from the novel as quickly as it is introduced. Instead of carrying Dorlan back to Africa to act as a king, he absolves him of any responsibility to visit his country. Kumi insists that he remain in America, "for our welfare, owing to our peculiar environments, depends, just now, as much upon what others think of us as upon what we ourselves may do" (167-68). This attitude is nearly opposite to that portrayed by Hopkins, who wrote of mutuality in the relationship between Africa and black America. Griggs argues that Africa's problems cannot be resolved until the problems of African Americans are resolved. His use of the long-lost heir motif in *Unfettered* highlights the differences between his nationalist sensibilities and Hopkins's internationalist agenda.

Dorlan's claim to American identity is not threatened or undermined by any suggestion that he belongs elsewhere; the novel's focus is on the here and now. That is not to say that Griggs dismissed international concerns from his novels. Instead, he focuses on international concerns linked to American, rather than African, issues. American imperialism - particularly the occupation of the Philippines – is an important topic in the novel. Dorlan's perspective on the subject wavers. At one point he proclaims, "Should our nation, by the force of arms and without the promise of ultimate political liberty, impose its will upon the Filipinos, the weaker peoples

the world over will lose their only remaining advocate in the white race, namely the people of the North" (89). However, he later decides that America's goals are to "actually lift the Filipinos to such a plane that they would not only have freedom, but the power to properly exercise and preserve the same" (155-156).

Dorlan's vindication of American imperialism exposes Griggs's optimism about the fundamental values of American democracy. Griggs rejects the adventurous element of the perfect (or perfectible) hidden kingdom and instead focuses on America as a perfectible nation through African American political action. Thus, the message in *Unfettered* reflects the inward focus of Griggs's earlier novel *Imperium in Imperio* (1899), which transposes the concept of the hidden African kingdom into that of a secret black government existing within the American nation. Griggs only slightly mentions Africa itself in that novel.[103] Instead, Griggs presents an intellectual battle between black separatists who – as in Martin Delany's *Blake* – suggest seizing the state of Texas in military action as the site for an independent black nation, and black conservatives who believe in the founding principles of the United States and wish to continue to push for the American citizenship rights of African Americans. Although Griggs does not demonize the separatists, it is the influence of the conservative Belton Piedmont that succeeds in the end. The final betrayal of the Imperium to the white American government represents the failure of this kind of adventurous conspiracy as a viable means of uplift. Although Griggs, like Delany and William Wells Brown before him, does not hesitate to present the American South as dangerous landscape full of murdering cannibal-esque whites (for example, the doctor who almost carves up Belmont on the dissecting table), he argues that reason rather than physical action is the solution to the race problem. Thus, the action within his novels is almost inevitably

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[103] Emigration to the Congo is one of the several options for racial improvement offered by members of the Imperium, but it is an option that is quickly and quietly dismissed.

transferred from the traditional sites of adventurous conflict to the court room, where

judgments are passed that have the power to legitimate black violence and acknowledge black

heroism in the battles of the past. This approach to constructing an African American identity

that is a part of a larger American identity shares some characteristics with older authors, like

Frederick Douglass and William Wells Brown, who argued for African American citizenship using

the legal language of America's founding documents. However, Griggs pushes their logic a step

farther by advocating for African American organized political action without collaboration from

whites. Yet, despite his focus on black unity and black leadership, Griggs rejects a pan-African

approach to racial uplift and focuses almost exclusively on a national approach.

Griggs's attitudes towards Africa and the emigration or outreach of African Americans to

Africa are explained most succinctly at the end of his novel *The Hindered Hand* (1905), which

features a character who chooses to work for the improvement of Africa. This portrayal is

sympathetic; however, in the "Notes for the Serious" that follow the novel, Griggs makes the

following statement:

> The overwhelmingly predominant sentiment of the American Negroes is to fight out their
> battles on these shores. The assigning of the thoughts of the race to the uplift of Africa, as
> affecting the situation in America, must be taken more as a dream of the author rather
> than as representing any considerable responsible sentiment within the race, which, as has
> been stated, seems at present thoroughly and unqualifiedly American, a fact that must
> never be overlooked by those seeking to deal with this grave question in a practical
> manner. (297)

To Griggs, Pan-African uplift is subsidiary to African American uplift, just as a Pan-African identity

is subsidiary to an American identity. In order to express that kind of nationalism, Griggs adopts

in a limited way the characteristics of the adventure genre and turns them inward upon

America, only to acknowledge that in a post-Civil-War era the possibilities for physical action for

the greater good of the nation are limited by the legal strictures that manipulate the country

and its constitution. To go adventuring is to step outside of the nation and that, Griggs argues, is the last thing that African Americans should do.

Courtroom scenes were not new inventions when Sutton Griggs adopted them in his novels. They were stalwart components of Victorian melodrama that also made appearances in hybrid domestic/adventure novels like Mayne Reid's *The Quadroon*. The central mystery in Pauline Hopkins's second novel, *Hagar's Daughter* (1901-1902), is unraveled in a dramatic court trial. In fact, I would argue that the waning of the adventure genre at the end of the century, noted by scholars like Brantlinger, coincided with the rise of the mystery genre with its courtroom trial scenes. This is not accidental. The unexplored world, as Haggard had pointed out, was disappearing, and the territories that were once mapped physically by the actions of adventurous men (and women) were being re-mapped by the legislative actions of the governments that claimed them. Sheppard's career, which opened with the exploration of the Congo and closed shortly after the libel case brought against him by the Belgian Kasai Company, shows as much. Sheppard's experiences both affirm and contradict the opinions set out by Griggs in his novels. The trial does prove Sheppard's importance as an American citizen – shown by the presence of government officials and the press coverage of the trial in the United States. However, that importance was related to his role as a missionary in Africa. Sheppard, in contradiction to the path set out in Griggs's novels, gained his importance as an American only by going abroad as an adventurer.

In the concluding section of this work, I will examine the novel *Rupert Gray* by Afro-Trinidadian author Stephen Cobham. Written in 1907, *Rupert Gray* is definitely a post-Victorian work that proposes new strategies for imagining national identity in the modern, post-adventure world. Like Pauline Hopkins, Cobham believed in Pan-African ideas; however, he

expresses those ideas in very different ways. Rather than re-writing the adventure genre,

Cobham produces a novel that contains only slight references to Africa. Instead, he transforms

the elements of the long-lost heir and hidden kingdom into a domestic melodrama that

culminates in a courtroom battle and the founding of a new, integrated British family.

Conclusion: Looking Forward

As this project has demonstrated, the adventure genre in the nineteenth century was a vehicle for debates over how national identity was defined in regards to race in the British and the American world. Throughout the century, both black and white authors used and reused the conventional plot elements o f the genre – such as pirates, runaway slaves, and long-lost princes – to reflect their own definitions of the ideal national citizen. However, by the end of the century the geographical frontiers that played a key role in the imagination of this adventurous national identity were close to vanishing. As H. Rider Haggard foresaw, the adventure genre could not retain its Victorian character once the frontiers disappeared and the erstwhile empty spaces on Western maps of the world were filled in.[104] Like Haggard, many authors of adventure transitioned from novels about earthly nation-building to novels focused on building fantastical realms on other worlds.[105] Twentieth-century adventure stories either transfer their geographic focus to otherworldly spaces or abandon the geographic focus of the Victorian adventure in favor of "crime and its pursuit, war . . . international espionage, sports" (Cawelti 41) or other contemporary scenarios that fit more closely with the politics, interests, and priorities of the evolving modern world.

In this final section, I will look closely at a work that celebrates the advent of this

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[104] See my discussion of Haggard's essay "'Elephant Smashing' and 'Lion Shooting'" on page 28 of the previous chapter.

[105] This transition can be seen in the career of the American author Edgar Rice Burroughs, who was famous for both his African *Tarzan* series and for his books set on the planet Mars.

modern world and the consequent decline of the nineteenth-century style of adventure. The novel is *Rupert Gray; A Study in Black and White*, which was published in Trinidad in 1907 by mixed-race author, teacher, and intellectual Stephen Cobham. In his novel, Cobham engages with the most common tropes and elements of the adventure genre of the past seventy years (the span of this study). Instead of reusing the plot elements discussed in the previous chapters of this work, Cobham dismisses them and replaces them with his vision of a modern society in which the parameters defining national identity have been changed from a focus on physical action (exploration, violent conflict, conquest) to a focus on intellectual achievements and affinities between groups of people. Through his fiction, Cobham destabilizes old definitions of British citizenship and national identity that rely upon racial distinctions. Although he favors black rights and a pan-Africanist sensibility, Cobham does not desire the destruction of the British empire. On the contrary, his goal is to build a more inclusive definition of British identity that will strengthen, rather than weaken, the British empire in the new century.

Cobham's novel is a new attempt to answer the vexed question of British identity in the age of empire with which I started this study, phrased by Ian Baucom in his 1999 book *Out of Place* as this: "Were all the individuals born in the diverse places over which England claimed sovereignty to be considered identically and interchangeably British?" As scholars like Baucom and Rieko Karatani have discussed, people born within the British empire, regardless of color, were considered British subjects throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, that legal designation was frequently negated by the deeply-entrenched racist attitudes that developed throughout the nineteenth century and defined Black British subjects as childlike beings who required the permanent paternal guidance of white subjects of the empire. Cobham uses his fictional work to argue for the interchangeability of black British subjects with white ones in the modern, post-Victorian world. He does this first by

deconstructing Victorian definitions of black identity as inferior by invoking and critiquing

familiar elements of racist discourse found in Victorian popular fiction, particularly the

adventure novels addressed in this project.

Balanced between the Victorian and Edwardian periods, *Rupert Gray* provides an

illuminating view of Victorian discourses on race and citizenship at the same time that it rejects

those discourses in order to suggest a new model of citizenship for the post-Victorian world.

Cobham constructs this new model by drawing on the pan-Africanist ideas espoused by men like

Henry Sylvester Williams, highlighting "white" diversity within Britain, and contrasting British

and American notions of attachment and belonging. Combining these themes with a sensational

plot that centers on the scandalous marriage between Rupert ("a full-blooded negro" (18)) and

the white Englishwoman Gwendoline Serle, allows Cobham (like the African American and Afro-

Caribbean authors I've previously discussed) to reach out to the wide audience of popular fiction

while carrying a meaningful message.[106]

In his novel, Cobham revises or discredits many of the less-sensational elements that were

used by popular authors of the nineteenth century – authors like Frederick Marryat, Mayne

Reid, Mary Elizabeth Braddon, Marcella Fanny Noy Wilkins, and H. Rider Haggard – negatively to

depict characters of African descent. Some of these elements are stereotypical character

descriptions, while others portray the settings in which those characters are found. As Cobham

acknowledges through his revisions, it is this potent combination of character description and

setting that created the negative perception of black characters in the colonies. One such

element is the stereotypical representation of black men as suited only for basic physical labor

(the founding principle of plantation slavery) or life in the "natural" world as hunters or outlaws.

Examples of this stereotype are Gabriel and Cubina from Mayne Reid's novels *The Quadroon*

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[106] All citations for *Rupert Gray* are from the Selwyn Cudjoe edition, unless otherwise noted.

and *The Maroon*, both of whom are primarily known for their mastery of outdoor life. The

African servants in Haggard's novels, including Ignosi and Umslopogaas, also reflect this

stereotype. Cobham is careful to present his hero, Rupert, as the opposite of this type:

> One look at him sufficed to tell he was a man who earned his bread at in-door work. There
> was character in that face of his, shaded underneath his panama. He stood tall and athletic.
> His manner bespoke refinement and habitual self-respect. He wore a tweed suit of sombre
> grey, and the rubber heels of his glossy tan boots yielded noiseless footfalls . . .(18)

This description is a significant departure from the black male characters featured in the colonial

novels I discussed in chapter two. Like the author of *Adolphus*, Sutton Griggs, and other black

authors, Cobham makes a point of his character's respectability and his white-collar job.. In fact,

Rupert may well be the first black accountant to appear in literature, especially as the hero of a

novel. Although Cobham notes that Rupert is "athletic" and physically strong, he notes later in

the book that it is the kind of strength gained by leisure pursuits – fencing and boxing – rather

than strength developed through everyday physical labor.

That is not to say that Cobham devalues physical work. Francois Pierre, a boatman for

Rupert's employer, Mr. Serle, exemplifies the honest physical labor that is the counterpart of

Rupert's mental labor. By pairing the two, Cobham rejects the assumption that color determines

occupation, while also arguing that such an assumption is driven by the black population as well

as the white. Early in the novel, a black Trinidadian laborer suggests to Pierre that Rupert should

be fired, saying "Serve he right. Have fo' haul molasses fo' a livin' now." Pierre's response,

delivered in his customary stammer, addresses the assumption that desk work is not real work,

at least for a black man: "D-d-de boy know 'wuk. Is because he black. Au-au-all you nigga cuss"

(24). Through Rupert's relationship to Pierre and to the villain of the novel, the black man Jacob

Canaan Clarke, Cobham rejects the stereotype of black physical labor (Rupert and Jacob are

both desk men) while also suggesting that honest labor – physical or otherwise – is superior to

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dishonest labor and the back-biting represented by Jacob. At the same time, Cobham represents

positive cross-class relationships within the Afro-Trinidadian community through the friendly

relationship between Rupert and Francois.

A stereotype frequently paired with the portrayal of the black man as laborer is the

stereotype of the black man as violent. Mesty and Vincent in the works of Marryat addressed in

the first chapter, Gabriel in *The Quadroon*, and Umslopogaas in *Allan Quartermain* are all

examples of violent black masculinity that differs significantly from the violence manifested by

the white adventurers in these novels because it is not harnessed in the service of a national

goal. In Vincent's case, the violence is anarchic, while in the cases of the others, their violent

actions are either personal (Gabriel) or in the service of an individual (Mesty and Umslopogaas

who are the loyal servants of Jack and Allan). Rupert, in contrast, is notably passive throughout

the text. Bridget Brereton, in her introduction to the novel, points out that Rupert is compared

to Othello throughout the novel, yet lacks Othello's violence: "If, as it seems, the *Othello*

references are in the book to lend cultural authority to *Rupert Gray*'s problematic interracial

love affair, Cobham would naturally want to use them so as to avoid any suggestions of violent

propensities in Rupert – a desire that may also account for Cobham's leaving him silent and

largely passive in the shooting scene" (xxxv). Mr. Serle himself ridicules the comparison between

Othello and his accountant: "'Othello was a soldier, Gwendoline, an exponent of strength,' he

reminded her, laughing" (33). Cobham's choice to make Rupert an exponent of intellect instead

of strength not only runs counter to the stereotypical black characters in Victorian fiction, it also

defuses any accusations of aggression in his pursuit of Gwendoline. Instead, unreason and

violence are attributed to Mr. Serle, who nearly kills both Gwendoline and Rupert after the

treacherous Clarke reveals their meeting in the garden.

Cobham does more than address the stereotypical depictions of black men within his novel. He also invokes some of the elements of the adventure genre that have a more indirect impact on the portrayal of race and its relationship to the nation. One such element, which he makes central to his plot, is a fascination with botanical studies and botanical descriptions of the settings of adventure novels. Descriptions of botanical and zoological wonders were common in adventure novels (see, for example, the descriptions of the landscapes I reference in chapter two). They had the benefits of making the novels appear grounded in a realistic landscape and of appealing to those adults who wished to view literature as educational as well as entertaining. However, botanical themes also had a larger impact on the genre and its role as a nation-building tool. Selwyn Cudjoe, in his study of the nineteenth-century literature of Trinidad and Tobago, writes that "Undoubtedly, the need to possess this new geographic space in all of its complexities became the object of those scientists and visual artists alike who came of age in the 1850s and 1860s, a part of the project of Nationness that possessed the writers and thinkers of the period" (*Beyond Boundaries* 144). The detailed descriptions of plants (and animals) found within adventure novels demonstrate the perceived importance of botanical knowledge for the imperial adventurer, and also express the anxieties surrounding the lack of control over botanical resources.

The plantation fictions of Mayne Reid and Mrs. Wilkins, discussed in chapter two, contain references to the botanical wonders of the Caribbean and the American South, but also suggest that those wonders are dangerous if exploited by slaves who know more about their uses than their white masters. This idea of Caribbean nature as fundamentally dangerous was reiterated by James Anthony Froude in his 1888 travel book *The English in the West Indies*. In it, he describes Trinidad's Botanical Gardens as beautiful but deadly: "We had to be careful what we were about, for fruits of fairest appearance were tempting us all round. My companion was

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preparing to eat something to encourage me to do the same. A gardener stopped him in time. It

was nux vomica" (70).

BLUE BASIN, TRINIDAD

9. Illustration of Trinidad from Froude's *The English in the West Indies*, page 82a. Like his text, this image focuses on wild vegetation that overwhelms human visitors, in this case the small figures in the foreground.

Cobham, on the other hand, steers his novel away from this sensational portrayal of Caribbean flora as an exotic and dangerous element to be mastered. Instead, as Brereton argues in her introduction, Cobham draws on more recent attitudes:

> By the end of the nineteenth century, new publications by a younger generation of botanists and evolutionary theorists, as well as new uses for agricultural products like vegetable oils, plant fibres and rubber – as lubricants and insulation for modern technology – had secured a niche for the scientific study of plants within British industry and academia. Rupert's knowledge of plant diseases and his familiarity with esoteric botanical debates is a testament to that new scientific and economic order. (vcli)

In Cobham's novel, the economic aspect of botany is stressed. Nearly all of the plants he mentions in the Botanical Garden – fruits, spices, coffee – are cultivated for human consumption, and he goes so far as to mention a particular fungus which is believed to attack coffee crops. At no time, does Cobham draw attention to a dangerous plant. Rupert's botanical knowledge is productive, rather than dangerous. His matter-of-fact approach to botany sets this aspect of the novel apart from the exoticized depictions of the Caribbean landscape that populated British adventure fiction and made its settings seem so distant and alien from the British isles. By representing Caribbean plant life as safe, neatly-contained, and productive, Cobham argues by extension for the respectability and productivity of the region's inhabitants, black and white.

Rupert's partner in botanical explorations is Lady Rothberry, a British noblewoman and member of the (fictional) Linnaean Society, traveling incognito in Trinidad in order to study the local plants. This encounter, which is interrupted by an extensive lineage of Lady Rothberry's distinguished family, models for the reader how even the highest class of British subject could realize the value of Black British intellect through a shared intellectual interest. In their encounter, as Cobham writes, "West Indian native and English noblewoman meet, face to face, on the common ground of science" (73). Common ground is an ideal phrase to describe one of

the goals Cobham is attempting to achieve in his novel. Through his portrayals of the botanical garden's edible specimens and the cheerful sunflowers of Gwendoline's garden, Cobham suggests that Trinidad is no longer a land of adventure, and that the power structures devised for plantation slavery on the frontier of the empire are no longer necessary. While Froude described Port of Spain, Trinidad's capitol, as "a large foreign-looking town" (64), Cobham describes it as a fairly common modern city. Like London itself, Port of Spain is a city where botanical and personal gardens are oases of cultivated green space in a bustling urban area, the wharf features merchant shipping and "Locomotive engines," and the skyline is topped by a "stupendous crane" while the sun "in all his torrid majesty, [softens] the asphalt between the tram lines" (29, 30). Thus, Cobham maps his Trinidad as a modern, technologically-advanced, metropolitan, civilized space – the opposite of the dark and dangerous swamp-bordered plantations featured in the adventure novels of the Victorian age and the beautifully menacing "foreign" nature described by Froude.

The last adventure element that Cobham revises in his novel is the relationship between the colony and its metropolitan center. This novel stands out from others discussed in this work because it does not posit a return – physical or emotional – to Africa. Instead, Rupert's symbolic homecoming is his trip to Britain:

> "He arrived in Britain. At last, at last! The dream of boyhood realised – an ambition capped – hope crowned. Every black man in the West Indies expects to see England some day." (129)[107]

England in *Rupert Gray* is never very distant. Characters frequently travel back and forth between the two islands, and British culture and knowledge are omnipresent in the text. Africa, on the other hand, is mentioned only briefly. Rupert speaks generically of the "sons of Africa"

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[107] A contrast to Rupert's rapturous approach to England can be found in the deeply ironic poem "Old England" published by Jamaican poet Claude McKay five years later in his book *Songs of Jamaica* (1912).

(133), but Africa as a concrete place makes no appearance in the novel. Cobham's pan-African

ideas, unlike those of Hopkins, revolve around the relationship between Africans in the diaspora

and the European countries that govern them, not their relationship with Africa.

Rupert Gray's orientation towards England as a beacon of hope for the black Trinidadian

reflects the variety of pan-Africanism espoused by Henry Sylvester Williams. Williams, a

Trinidadian, founded the African Association while studying for the bar in London and helped

plan the pan-African Congregation meeting that took place there in July of 1900. The goals of

the Association were:

> To encourage a feeling of unity; to facilitate friendly intercourse among Africans in general; to promote and protect the interest of all subjects claiming African descent, wholly or in part, in British Colonies and other places especially in Africa, by circulating accurate information on all subjects affecting their rights and privileges as subjects of the British Empire, and by direct appeals to the Imperial and local Governments. (qtd. in Esedebe 47).

Cobham met Williams in 1901 while Williams was touring Trinidad to set up branches of his pan-

African Association. During Williams's last meeting in Port-of-Spain, Cobham gave a speech in

which he "expressed the hope that Williams would return with a charter of liberty from King

Edward VII for all blacks in the British empire" (Mathurin 98). Although their association was

brief, Williams's philosophy clearly had an impact on Cobham's ideas, particularly his

relationship with colonial power. As Esedebe writes in *Pan-Africanism*, "By including colonial

reforms in their resolutions the London Congress implicitly accepted the new order of European

domination as a *fait accompli*" (57). Williams's goal was not to create a new African nation, but

to agitate for full and equal British rights for people of African descent living within the British

empire (and, by extension, full American rights for African Americans, and so on). This goal is

dramatized by Cobham in *Rupert Gray* through Rupert's journey to Britain and his successes

there.

Altogether, Cobham paints a positive picture of Britain as a country of opportunity for

men like Rupert. The existence of racial prejudice in Britain is hinted at, rather than discussed,

and it is presented as a result of ignorance and misinformation. Lady Rothberry, during her trip

to Trinidad, confesses to Rupert that she "was under the impression the natives were savages" –

an impression that is erased through one meeting with Rupert (74). Lady Rothberry's

misinformation comes from a colonial contact in New Zealand, which suggests that simply

inhabiting a British colony somewhere in the empire, or visiting one (as Froude did), does not

make one a credible source. Another source of misinformation, Cobham hints, is the United

States of America. When Rupert is introduced to the very young son of Lord Askingall in London,

the toddler is fascinated by him and exclaims to his mother "Want see the true, true Yankee,

mummy, dear, want play with the darkie what's black all over" (131). The child's assumption

that all black men are Yankee "darkies" who are meant to be played with reflects the destructive

stereotypes of the blackface minstrel shows that were popular in Britain during this period (in

which the men were typically not "black all over").[108] Rupert, who describes himself as "a living

sample of what the negro can become" (133), stands as a genuine physical corrective to this

misinformation. As in the case of Lady Rothberry, meeting him can be enough to change white

people's minds.

Rupert's journey to Britain serves two purposes. One is to demonstrate to the British the

intellectual skills of the Afro-Caribbean population and their ability to integrate into the modern

world. The other is to connect Rupert (and through him the Afro-Caribbean population) more

closely to Britain as a homeland. One of his first tasks upon reaching London is to give a speech

at the unveiling of a statue of Lady Rothberry (who dies shortly after her visit to Trinidad) at the

Home for Stranded Natives which she helped to found. The Home was meant to provide shelter

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[108] For more on minstrel shows in England see *Blackface Minstrelsy In Britain* (Pickering).

for "stranded natives from the colonies and Africa" who found themselves in London (105).

Although the Home is an invention of Cobham's, it gestures to the real issue in nineteenth-

century Britain of what to do with Asian or African itinerant workers (usually sailors or domestic

workers) who were brought into Britain by employers and then left without work or any kind of

support structure. Like the real-life Strangers Home for Asiatics (Nijhar 348), the Home for

Stranded Natives is an institution that exposes the double standards of the British empire.

Rather than providing an actual home, these institutions provided a temporary living space for

the "natives" that kept them segregated from the indigenous British population. Such "homes"

were geared towards the eventual repatriation of their inhabitants, not their integration into

Britain.

Although Cobham doesn't speak out explicitly against this process in the novel, the

language of Rupert's speech at the unveiling presents an alternative to the problem:

> I call on you to emulate your dead country-woman in drawing aside prejudice and disability
> – as now I do these curtains from round her monument. Then you will have found true
> imperialism the best earnest of the immortality of empire – the first empire with an out
> and out Christian soul – a soul whose breadth of view ought to exclude inequality among
> the races which comprise the body it keeps alive. You, descendants of the sea-kings, accord
> the sons of Africa fair field and no favour. Have no upper storey and lower storey of
> chances and preferment. Looming down the avenue of years to come, see a multitude of
> dusky peoples, under the banner of the arts of peace, pressing forward in loyal phalanx to
> encircle altar and throne. Hear each unit mingle, as I do now, in the federated boast,
> drowning the voices of your enemies – *Civis Romanus sum* [I am a Roman citizen]. (133-
> 134)

Though he praises the work of Lady Rothberry, Rupert channels his speech in a different

direction, arguing for integration rather than segregation. He bases this argument on traditional

imagery (the empire as a body) and on legal precedent by concluding with the Latin quote made

famous by Lord Palmerston in an 1850 speech before the House of Commons. In that speech,

Palmerston (then the Foreign Secretary) argued that "a British subject, in whatever land he may

be" was entitled to British protection "against injustice and wrong," using as his example the case of Don Pacifico, a Jewish man of Portuguese extraction born in the British territory of Gibraltar, who was asking for British aid in his legal battle with the government of Greece.[109] By invoking this famous speech, Rupert both demonstrates his familiarity with British legal history and lends authority to his own argument in favor of equal rights and protections for all people born within the territorial confines of the British empire. These rights and protections, he suggests, would be repaid by these subjects in loyalty to the empire. He himself is a living embodiment of this loyalty, as he demonstrates when he refuses to leave Mr. Serle's company for a higher-paid position in America. The American businessman scorns the "sentiment" (45) that he believes causes this refusal, but Rupert is ultimately rewarded for it by receiving a partnership offer from Mr. Serle and Lionel Murchison. Cobham uses this moment to model what he sees as a desirable element within the empire: its ability to create and reward affective ties between its inhabitants that can counteract the class-consciousness and greed of the modern world.

Cobham uses Rupert's speech and his subsequent experiences in Britain to reconfigure the conceptual map of the British empire for his readers in a way that destabilizes the imperial hierarchies of location. After Rupert completes his law degree, he joins the young Earl of Rothberry for a world tour. The first section of this tour encompasses "the British Isles" which Cobham describes in a flurry of names organized in no particular geographical fashion. The list moves from Ireland to England, Scotland, England, Wales, Scotland, England, and Gibraltar. From Gibraltar, Rupert and the Earl travel on to Europe and beyond. This list, which breaks the United Kingdom into fragments and reassembles it as a geographical hodge-podge of names,

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[109] The full text of the speech made by Viscount Palmerston (Henry John Temple) can be found on *The Peel Web* managed by Dr. Marjorie Bloy (http://www.historyhome.co.uk/polspeech/foreign.htm). This speech is still referenced periodically in British parliamentary debate, most recently in 2006 according to the current Hansard index online (http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/pahansard.htm).

verbally erases the boundaries between England, the other members of the Kingdom, and the territory of Gibraltar and represents them as coequal spaces that are easy to negotiate for the British subject (134-135). The distance between England and Trinidad is likewise shortened at the end of his trip; it is described merely as "the run over" (136). Modern travel and the stability of the British empire have united to shrink the distances between these places and, in Cobham's mind, shrink the differences that may once have made the Africans and Asiatics strangers in the British empire instead of equal subjects.

Rupert's experiences in Britain highlight this novel's stance as a post-Victorian and post-adventure imperial work. Victorian solutions to the "problem" of a multi-racial empire – like the Home for Stranded Natives – belong to an era that passed away with Lady Rothberry. The modern solution is to erase the inequality that makes members of the empire feel stranded in the empire's capitol, thereby reimagining London as the warm heart of an imperial body, rather than the cold head at the top of an imperial pyramid. This solution is made possible, the book implies, through the modern convenience of travel that minimizes the distance between Home and Away that determined the plots of so many racist imperial adventure novels. Rupert's journey to Britain and his continuing journey around the world (encapsulated in one page of text) are proof of that. Trinidad, in this text, is no more distant than Scotland or Ireland, and should (the novel's logic suggests) play an equal role in the empire.

Africa is notably absent from this book. During his travels, Rupert visits Egypt, but Africa as a place and a concept, as it has been discussed the previous chapter, does not appear. Cobham may have chosen to leave Africa out of his story in order to strengthen his hero's identity as a British subject. The absence of Africa as a space – real or hypothetical – means that Rupert and the other black inhabitants of Trinidad appear to be more closely aligned with Britain. Its absence also helps distance this work from the adventure genre. Exploration and

conquest do not exist in the modern world of this book, and that removes the action-oriented argument for Anglo-Saxon superiority found in so many other works. Nor is there a long-lost treasure or a hidden source of pride for the black characters in this novel. Rupert's only advantages are his inborn talents and his capacity for hard work. Africa has no mystical meaning for him; it is just one of the many places on the globe where darker skinned people are discriminated against by the whites who control their territory.

By taking this approach, Cobham appears, on the one hand, to be blind to the exceptionally destructive form of colonialism that was taking root in Africa and its potential to jeopardize the advances made against racism in older colonies like Trinidad. Although technically there was no slavery in these new colonies, conditions in places like the Kimberly diamond mines in South Africa reflected the same rampant disregard for African rights and freedom.[110] On the other hand, by leaving Africa out of his novel, Cobham avoids representing it as either a fantastical realm or as a backwards continent consumed by savagery. As scholar Dave Kuhne has argued, the popular conception of Africa as a fantastical, savage, spiritualized landscape was (even recently) one of the primary stumbling-blocks to imagining progressive and realistic solutions to the problems created by centuries of colonial oppression and violence. Though Cobham did not speak out as forcefully against the exploitation of Africa by the British and other imperial powers as some of his contemporaries, we should acknowledge the value of his pragmatic approach to reform and his refusal to participate in the romanticization of Africa as a counterbalance to the extremes found in many of the other novels of the period.

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[110] In a private letter, British politician and South African administrator John Merriman wrote "I verily believe that never was there a labouring population so utterly debased or treated with such complete disregard of their moral and physical welfare. No, not the slaves in the Southern States!" (qtd. in Marks and Rathbone 13).

The proper means of reform was for Cobham, as for other black novelists of the time, a question of primary importance. To answer this question, Cobham turned for examples to the United States, and particularly the work of Booker T. Washington. Washington is referenced several times in the text. In fact, the narrator describes how Rupert and the Earl were "banqueted in the black belt of the South by the following of Booker Washington – black professors, judges, capitalists and authors" (136). It is easy for readers to connect Washington's philosophy of self-help, practical education, and economic improvement to Rupert's life story. Through hard work he raises himself to a position of respect in Mr. Serle's firm and attains a law degree. Like Washington, he seeks to spread that opportunity to others by offering an entry-level job to Jacob Clarke, though Clarke rejected his model of steady upward progress in favor of a series of underhanded schemes to better his circumstances. The end of the novel holds out the promise of a more sustained imitation of Washington's philosophy in the West Indies through the creation of a Negro Industrial Institute that will focus on practical pursuits (the money given to prize-winning graduates is to go to "the purchase of free-hold farms") and the inculcation of racial pride ("a day in each week will be set aside for negro literature . . . The staff will consist of entirely black professors") (161). Cobham's adoption of Washington's educational system in the novel reflects the transnational exchange of ideas that was one of the most important aspects of pan-African philosophy. While Cobham may have ignored Africa in his novel, he clearly is not ignoring the larger community of African-descended people on the western side of the Atlantic. At the same time, Washington also represents the modern, business-oriented image that Cobham is promoting to replace the heroic ideal of the adventurer.

However, Cobham's adoption of Washington's philosophy is not complete. Although he approved of self-help and a practical education, he disagreed with Washington's approach to

social relations between the races. Washington's position is outlined by Mr. Serle at a dinner party, where he quotes from Washington's famous 1895 Atlanta Exposition speech: "In all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers" (78). Far from endorsing this position, Cobham centers his book on the love affair between Rupert Gray and Gwendoline Serle, who pledge their love the night after Mr. Serle's dinner party tirade against the social mixing of the races.

The intermarriage plot is one of the things that makes this book stand out from other turn-of-the-century novels by black authors. Through it, we can again see Cobham's negotiation between the Victorian past and a progressive future. Miscegenation was a common plot element in Victorian adventures and romances that took place in the Caribbean and the American South (it is found in every work I've discussed except those by Marryat and Douglass). These plots mostly followed the lines mapped out in the novels showcased in chapter two of this work: a woman who appears white falls in love with a white man, only to discover that she is of mixed race. She would either be granted the man's acceptance and love and live a happy life in Europe or some other free area, or she would die tragically as a result of race prejudice. This "tragic mulatta" plot remained in vogue up through the end of the century as one way of expressing the destructive nature of institutionalized racism.[111] Cobham takes this traditional plot element and revises it. The woman is still the victim of a tragic fate, but in this case she is white, the hero is black and there is no case of mistaken identity, just straightforward race prejudice on the part of Mr. Serle, who attempts to murder Rupert and shuns Gwendoline for the rest of his life.

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[111] One late-century example of the "tragic mulatta" plot element is William Dean Howells, *An Imperative Duty* (1892). African American authors frequently adopted and revised the plot element as well: see Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, *Iola Leroy* (1892); Charles Chesnutt, *The House Behind the Cedars* (1900); Pauline Hopkins *Contending Forces* (1900).

Mr. Serle's attempt to murder Rupert is presented to the reader as a throwback to the Victorian way of handling such situations. When Lionel Murchison holds him back, Mr. Serle invokes the past: "Knew your father before you – think Tom Murchison would hinder me from shooting a d—d nigger?" (92) In this moment, we can clearly see what Cudjoe, in his introduction to the text, calls "the monster of racism that distorts the human personality" (13). Racism transforms the peaceful suburban garden of the Serle residence into a realm of danger that comes closer than any other place in the book to the adventure fiction that had saturated the publishing market for the past seven decades. Cobham writes that "The old man peered into the face of the accountant, who fixed him steadily as a traveler does a lion" (90). At this moment of confrontation Rupert becomes, briefly, an adventurer, while Mr. Serle becomes the savage beast bent on destruction. However, Cobham ascribes to Rupert a manliness that transcends nationality by characterizing his opponent as not an Englishman or a white man, but as an animal. By focusing on Rupert's humanity at this point, not his national identity, Cobham rejects the adventure genre tradition that links such moments of action with the performance of a British identity. Rupert's British identity is signaled by his intellectual achievements, his business sense, and his moral rectitude, not by the kinds of violent actions celebrated in Victorian adventures. Likewise, Mr. Serle's national – and even human - identity is lost at the moment when he tries to enact this racist revenge plot.

The confrontation between Mr. Serle and Rupert is violent, but brief. Lionel, who represents the next generation of white businessman on the island, cannot deny that white public opinion would be on Mr. Serle's side, but he does convince him to step away from the gun (after he has wounded Rupert) and let matters take their course. In an even further revision of this traditional plot point, the tragic victim of this intended marriage is Mr. Serle himself, who spirals into alcoholism and dies "over the bottle" some time after the supposed death of his

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daughter (139). Gwendoline, on the other hand, only fakes her death and instead leaves for

Scotland to join her friend Florence. Both she and Rupert go through a period of renewal and re-

birth – Gwendoline regains her health and Rupert travels to England and earns his law degree –

before returning to Trinidad for the conclusion of the novel. There it is revealed to Rupert and

the rest of the world, through a sensational trial to contest the will of her late father (made in

the favor of Jacob Clarke), that Gwendoline is still alive. This ending reverses the traditional

expectations of interracial romance at the time – expectations that had been fulfilled in the

(premature) British newspaper article that announced the "death and tragic love-story" of

Gwendoline (130).

By replacing the pretended death of Gwendoline with the actual death of her father,

Cobham symbolically leaves behind the Victorian past and looks forward to a future where a

love affair like Rupert and Gwendoline's can end in other than tragedy and/or exile for its

participants. Although physical violence intrudes into the story, the "battle" of the novel takes

place in a court room and is fought with words by the "three gladiators of the Trinidadian Bar",

not with firearms (144, 143). This legal battle is meant to model an alternative method of

disputation and resolution to replace the outmoded (according to Cobham) individual violence

embraced by Mr. Serle. In this sense, the intermarriage plot is not only a way for Cobham to

push beyond the boundaries of Booker T. Washington's philosophy of racial uplift, but also a

way for him to move fictions about race beyond the tropes of the past and into a more

equitable future.

That said, Cobham does not unilaterally endorse intermarriage in the novel. Rupert and

Gwendoline successfully marry, settle down at her father's house, and have children; however,

they "live in the splendour of loneliness," presumably because both the black and white

communities are uncomfortable with their union (161). Furthermore, the final page of the book

is given over to a speech given in London by a "black bishop from the West coast" who argues that:

> "Miscegenation would soon obliterate the strongest traits of race. West Indian negroes, be proud to perpetuate your seed unmixed. Fraternize and hold your heads up. Variety is a law of nature. You represent one of the four ruling colours in mankind. Nature brought you nature bred you. 'Nature does nothing in vain.' Why vex your souls when called negro? Which white man, or yellow man, or red man does that? Turn to this scripture and 'smoke your pipes' over it: 'I am black but comely, O ye daughter of Jerusalem. – As the tents of Kedar as the curtains of Solomon.' So long as you fret and chafe and disrespect your own because 'the sun hath looked upon you, your own vineyard never shall you keep.'" (162)

This argument against intermarriage provides a startling conclusion to a novel based on a successful interracial romance. The speech highlights a much-contested question within pan-African politics of the period that can also be found in the works of the turn-of-the-century African American authors Sutton Griggs, Charles Chesnutt, and Frances Ellen Watkins Harper: should people of African descent avoid intermarriage with the white race in order to prove their own capabilities? While the plot of Cobham's novel answers this question in the negative, the presence of the bishop's speech shows that the question was on his mind.

As Edmondson writes, we can interpret the speech as Cobham's way of reassuring his audience that Rupert's marriage to Gwendoline is not founded on a simple desire for the white Other, and that "the marriage of a proud black man to a member of the ruling elite does not signify the self-hatred [of the colonized] the novel has gone out of its way to depict" (76). The speech suggests that the interracial love story of Rupert and Gwendoline is meant to function as a symbol of progress that departs from the generic narratives of the past (either a relationship driven by self-hating desire of the colonized for the colonizer or strict racial segregation that forbids such unions) rather than as a practical solution to the problem of racism. Nevertheless, the marriage of Rupert and Gwendoline implies a criticism of Washington's doctrine of social separation, while their consequent "loneliness," despite the fact that Rupert "lives for the good

of his people, entering without fear of contamination into their every phase of social life; identifying himself with their sorrows and their joys" (162),suggests a criticism of attitudes within the black community that would cause Rupert's isolation, despite his commitment to their struggles, because of his personal choice to marry outside of the group.

Given the story's conclusion, it would be easy to say that Cobham's novel is less of a rejection of the adventure genre than a replication of the domestic romance that was also popular in nineteenth century fiction about race. However, the way that Cobham intentionally reconfigures elements of the adventure genre in his novel while also rewriting the "tragic mulatta" plot that was the cornerstone of so many domestic romances suggests to me that his intention was to imagine a new genre that would depart from the prejudices inherent in both of those older genres. Like previous black authors, he achieves this goal by remapping the spaces within his narrative in order to re-cast the power dynamics related to them. Cobham replaces the Trinidad of plantations and maroon camps with an urban landscape of trams, cranes, botanical gardens, and asphalt. In this modernized form of the nation, the activities of the adventure genre lose their potency and an alternative image of masculine nationalism appears. Cobham's anti-imperial yet solidly middle-class nationalism replaces exploration, conquest, and exploitation with intellectual activities, legal pursuits, and regulated business dealings that are adapted for a world where the extreme barriers that provoked exploration and conquest have vanished.

Cobham suggests, through his revisions of elements of the typical Victorian adventure tale, that the form of the adventure genre developed during the Victorian period to define British identity for a popular audience presents an outmoded and inaccurate picture of Britain's colonies and their non-white inhabitants. He specifically argues that the Caribbean colonies, like Trinidad, deserve recognition as modern centers of commerce and culture rather than

continued portrayal as exotic and dangerous outposts of the empire. Racism, Cobham points out, is encoded in the elements of Victorian adventure fiction; therefore, it is necessary to look to new textual forms in order to present an affirmative picture of black people and their contributions to the empire.

While the textual form of the imperial adventure did start to disappear, a replacement form that would present a balanced, integrated view of both the spaces of the empire – colony and England – and the people of the empire, like that modeled by Cobham, did not emerge automatically. The barriers placed between British subjects of different races, originally reinforced by the marginal spaces of the adventure genre, were too well-entrenched and too well-supported by legal and economic practices to disappear when the genre as it existed in the Victorian period vanished. While in Cobham's model of the new colonial novel, ease of travel helps break down the xenophobic reaction to the Afro-Caribbeans as strangers from a distant land, in reality increased global mobility did not necessarily produce a less hierarchical and less xenophobic atmosphere within the British empire. In fact, as ongoing (and sometimes violent) debates over immigration in countries around the world show, increased global mobility can heighten racial tensions and promote definitions of national identity that are intensely ethnic. Nevertheless, Cobham's novel succeeds in identifying the key differences between the Victorian world (and Victorians' perceptions of the world) and the modern world and suggesting how fiction could play a part in leveraging those differences to change the racial dynamics of the empire, though fiction alone cannot solve the complex problems engendered by centuries of racial oppression.

Although the Victorian incarnation of the adventure story largely disappeared after the turn of the twentieth century, many of its emotional and imaginative elements still survive. We can see them in the distillation of conflicts into a binary of "us" versus "them," the simplification

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of geographical spaces in our imaginations to match our world views, and the perpetuation of the idea that violent action is the most effective way to demonstrate and perpetuate national identity. Popular British and American cultural narratives in the twentieth century gravitated towards events that lent themselves to these simplified plots: for example, World War II (the Indiana Jones movies) and the Cold War (James Bond). By looking back to the roots of the contemporary adventure genre in the nineteenth century, we can see clearly why these modern narratives appeal to us so much. Like the plantation adventures of Mayne Reid, they are exercises in historical nostalgia. Like those novels, they represent an imagined world (both physical and cultural) that was never as simple as it seems. Reading these novels shows us how history can become narrativized, as can concepts like national identity, and how in narrating these concepts we run the risk of naturalizing them beyond the point of easy examination. As this study has shown, even participating in this narration with the goal of rewriting the script, attempted by many African American and Afro-Caribbean authors, can pose difficulties.

The adventure genre is only one of many popular genres that have played a role in building both Britain's and America's cultural imaginations of themselves. Its action-oriented focus makes it one of the most exciting genres that we have, but it's divisive portrayal of the world (or other worlds) and the limits it places around who gets to be the action hero (or heroine) makes it potentially one of the most destructive genres as well. Finding a genre like the adventure that can construct a popular national narrative and national identity while honoring the narrative and identity of another nation or people remains a challenge. Serious interrogations of the narratives of nationalism and the relationships between race, ethnicity, nationality, and personality occur in a variety of contemporary popular genres (science fiction, fantasy, romance, mystery). The most interesting are often those works that create hybrids of various genres (similar to the hybrids of the adventure and domestic genres that I discussed in

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this dissertation) in order to explore new narrative possibilities, sometimes in a dystopic

future.[112] The goal of this dissertation has been to propose a framework for understanding the

texts that formed the bedrock of this popular tradition, using as examples some of the most

noteworthy texts from the century that saw the explosion of print popular literature. The

narratives – sensational, melodramatic, emotional, action-packed, and breathtaking – examined

in this study, though quaint or even clichéd to us today, still play an important role in both our

cultural and political lives that needs to be fully excavated as well as acknowledged.

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[112] Consider, for instance, the works of Octavia Butler (*Kindred*, *Fledgling*) and Lois McMaster Bujold (*Shards of Honor* and the rest of the Vorkosigan series) or films such as Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner*.

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