Anxious Records: Race, Imperial Belonging, and the Black Literary Imagination, 1900 – 1946

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation excavates the print and archive culture of diasporic and continental Africans who forged a community in Cape Town between 1900 and 1946. Although the writers I consider write after the Victorian era, I use the term “black Victorian” to preserve their own political investments in a late nineteenth-century understanding of liberal empire. With the abolition of slavery in 1834 across the British Empire and the Cape Colony’s qualified nonracial franchise of 1853, Cape Town, and District Six in particular, took on new significance in black radicalism. By writing periodicals, pamphlets and autobiographies, black Victorians hoped to write themselves into the culture of empire. These recovered texts read uncannily, unsettling the construction of official archives as well as contemporary canons of South African, African and diasporic African literatures. By turning to the traffic of ideas between Africa and its diaspora in Cape Town, this dissertation recovers a vision of (black) modernity that had not yet succumbed to the formulations of anti-imperial nationalisms.
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In many ways this dissertation began over two decades as I watched Nelson Rolihlala Mandela freed from prison in apartheid South Africa. Glued to the television screen when Trinidad and Tobago still had only one television station, my family and I rejoiced at what felt like our uncle’s release. In another six months, two more stations would join the fold, with cable and satellite TV following quickly on their heels. Perhaps because he was freed before Trinidad and Tobago jumped off the precipice of multimedia communication, but something about Mandela, and the dream of black liberation in South Africa has always animated my intellectual curiousity. My generation of Trinidadians still remembers where we were when the Chaka Zulu miniseries aired. South Africa here denoted whether or not you had access to a TV. It represented a reconnection with our ancestral African ‘roots’ as a nation. At coolers and standpipes, during recess and lunch, we whiled away our time mulling over the scenes of that week’s installment. (Who saw how Chaka betrayed his mother?) Those born that year and several thereafter carry our investment in that South Africa with their names. It is not uncommon to meet Trinidadian boys and men by the name of Shaka, or girls and women called Nandi. In what might elsewhere be a
problematic attachment to national sentiment, I thank my nation for being what it was in my youth. And hope you will be that kind of nation again.

I thank my parents for letting me stay up to watch both events and pushing me to discuss them as though I were already a scholar-in-residence. You remain my best teachers and mentors. Thank you for life; thank you for nursing us through this degree. Thank you for unpaid hours of childcare. This dissertation is more yours than it is mine. All words seem to diminish what you’ve given me.

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My daughter Cate braved ten transatlantic flights in two years so that I could finish my dissertation. She came to know the ins-and-outs of dissertation production as though it were hers. And in that way it is. One day I hope she will read the love for her woven into each line. I looked back at Diaspora-Africa crossings to make sense of what her world will be. Yet as I write this I can hear her saying: “Stop Mama. I don’t need your help. I can do it for myself.” I have no doubt that she will.

Mbongiseni has walked with me every step of the way. He has read my work without complaint, with genuine interest, sure to show me when I need to re-examine an argument. He is a reservoir of South and southern African history. My scholarship is enriched by him; my life has grown bigger for his arrival in it some nine years ago. Ngiyakuthanda kakhulu umkhwenyana wami.
For my parents,
Glenda Victoria Collis and Valentine Kenneth Collis
nomkhwenyana wami
nomtwana wethu
On November 30, 1902, Fanny Jackson-Coppin docked at Table Bay, Cape Town. A teacher at the Institute for Colored Youth in Philadelphia for nearly four decades, Jackson-Coppin was active in race work—endeavors undertaken by black men and women toward the uplift and progress of the black race. She arrived in Cape Town eager to teach and proselytize amongst members of the race resident in Africa. Her husband, Bishop Reverend Levi J. Coppin of the AME Church was assigned to South Africa. Thus “thru marriage,” Jackson-Coppin writes in her memoir, she was able “[t]o go to Africa, the original home of our people, see them in their native life and habits, and to contribute...toward the development, civil and religious that is going on among them” (Jackson-Coppin 122 – 123). At Cape Town, “a new world seemed to rise before me,” she declares, “...a new vision.” Of the city she writes: “[it] is...a modern city...occupied a long time by the English, and such sanitary conditions obtain as might be expected of a city under English rule” (122 – 123).

An obscure piece of black life writing from the fin de siècle, Jackson-Coppin’s memoir reveals a relatively understudied aspect of global black experience at the time. Published in 1913, Reminiscences of School Life, and Hints on Teaching is a late slave narrative. If we chart the trajectory of Jackson-Coppin’s life as it unfolds in Reminiscences, her life begins in slavery in the American

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1 For more on the unique and powerful role of the AME Church in South Africa see Campbell; Vinson, *The Americans Are Coming!*

2 An excerpt from Reminiscences of School Life, and Hints on Teaching appears in *Stranger in the Village: Two Centuries of African American Travel Writing,* an edited collection of African American travel writing compiled by Farah J. Griffin and Cheryl J. Fish. See Griffin and Fish.

3 The inscription of the book reads: “[t]his book is inscribed to my beloved aunt Sarah Orr Cladk who, working at six dollars a month saved one hundred and twenty-five dollars, and bought my freedom” (Jackson-Coppin 5).
South and her race work culminates at Cape Town, “a modern city...under English rule,” where “a new world” and “a new vision” appear to her. If the migration narrative is a vital part of the African American literary tradition, it has always been assumed to detail the movement of enslaved Africans to the Americas and the movement of their descendants to the American North.⁴ There, Harlem epitomizes the “objective destination.” But Reminiscences remaps the traditional routes of the genre. Cape Town is the possible site of utopia for the black man or woman. For Jackson-Coppin and her husband, Cape Town “under English rule” is “the objective destination” (Jackson-Coppin 122 – 123). What did this British colonial port city signify for race men and women at the fin de siècle?

This dissertation, Anxious Records: Race, Imperial Belonging, and the Black Literary Imagination, 1900 – 1946, grapples with Cape Town’s meanings for black people dreaming of freedom at the close of the nineteenth-century. In so doing, I plot the loss of this “new vision” of the city and its effects on black thought into the twentieth-century. The print culture that accompanied this vision has been culled from archives in South Africa, the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Caribbean. But it offers more than proof of its existence. It also bears witness to the ways in which the printing press allowed black British subjects and subjugated peoples to imagine themselves as part of a British imperial body politic that increasingly conceived of itself as a nation. The pamphlets, magazines, journals, autobiographies, and novels that I read here, are examined as much for the evidence of this lost moment in the history of Cape Town that they yield as for the ways in which they trouble some of our received notions about genre, print, and the literary at the fin de siècle in African, African Diaspora, and English literary studies.

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⁴ See Griffin, Who Set You Flowin’?. Sometimes this does include movement to Europe, but generally, these are migrations to other parts of what we now call ‘the Global North.’ Examples of this kind of migration narrative are: Nella Larsen’s Quicksand (1928) and Claude McKay’s Banjo (1929).
To fully attend to what this meant and means we need to attend to the political realities under which such a community was to be realized. My point of departure is that empire held purchase for black people looking to Cape Town at that time. As Jackson-Coppin’s memoir suggests, Cape Town was seen as an “objective destination” for African American missionaries and activists not only because it was in Africa and the home of their ancestors (though this was important), but also because it was under “English rule” (Jackson-Coppin 122 – 123). If Cape Town engendered “a new vision” of community, it was not “conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship,” as the Benedict Anderson argues the nation “always” is (Anderson 7). Rather it was one that—however the (racial) community was imagined to engage within itself—existed under the patronage and protection of the British Crown. As such I call its constituents black Victorians to hold before the reader their dual commitment to their race and the empire as the ultimate home of that community.

To write of the global black experience at the fin de siècle is often to write of a kind of nascent radicalism. We apologize for those who were before cultural (or black) nationalism and widespread anti-colonial resistance. They were mimics.⁵ Certainly, as the nineteenth-century drew to a close some black intellectuals from across the African Diaspora and the African continent

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⁵ I am playing on the two ways of using “mimicry” that has emerged in postcolonial literature and theory. The first stems from V. S. Naipaul’s 1967 novel, The Mimic Men in which the people of the newly independent island of Isabella find themselves mimicking their former colonizers. Mimicry equals the definitive mode of postcolonial existence here. See Naipaul (1967). The second is taken from Homi Bhabha theorization of mimicry “as one of the most elusive and effective strategies of colonial power and knowledge” (Bhabha 122). Here mimicry is a mode of colonial power exerted over the colonized and the colony to (re)make them in the image of the colonizers and the colonizing state (Bhabha 85 – 92). My use of “mimic,” “mimicking” and “mimicry” throughout this dissertation plays on this double-use of it as a definitive way of being postcolonial (or more apt for our purposes colonized) and colonizing.
railed against imperialism. They saw it as nothing more than a thin veneer for oppression and exploitation that entrenched social engineering and a blueprint for racial, class, and gender inequities that continue to plague us today. But others still, though critical, were not against empire as a structure of political belonging.

As Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper explain “empire was a remarkably durable form of state” (Burbank and Cooper 2). The modes of imperial power in the nineteenth-century varied from brute force to semi-public education and the novel. In Masks of Conquests: Literary Study and British Rule in India, Gauri Viswanathan contends that English literary studies in India was part of a curriculum meant to make Indian ‘natives’ Englishmen (Viswanathan). The Indian Mutiny of 1857 shook British colonial administration’s belief in literary education and the efficacy of direct rule. By the time European colonialisms took root in Africa in 1884, the dominant colonial enterprise was no longer the “civilizing mission,” but the maintenance of law and order (Mamdani 49 – 50).

But the Cape had been under European influence since the seventeenth-century and British rule since the early 1800s. Along with parts of West Africa and the Caribbean, black people in the Cape experienced this earlier phase in British colonial rule. They were the direct beneficiaries of the British liberal abolitionist movement. While for many African Americans, England was a place of refuge, before and after the American Civil War (1861 – 1865). The discourse of human and civil rights enshrined in this older British imperial order appealed to

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6 These include: (Samuel Jules) Celestine Edwards and Anna Julia Cooper. Born in Dominica, Edwards sailed the world before settling in Edinburgh and taking on temperance work. Relatively unknown today, Edwards was a staunch anti-imperialist at the close of the nineteenth-century (Schneer 208). See Jonathan Schneer, London 1900: Imperial Metropolis, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999). The African American feminist and race woman, Cooper penned A Voice from the South. In it she famously claimed that “[o]nly the BLACK WOMAN can say ‘when and where I enter, in the quiet, undisputed dignity of my womanhood, without violence and without suing or special patronage, then and there the whole Negro race enters with me’” (Cooper 31). Cooper was one of the attendees of the 1900 Pan-African conference.
them. If the first half of the nineteenth-century was marked by the transition from slavery to
subjection, the British were understood to be the protectors and progenitors of such freedom.

It was at Cape Town in 1858, that the British colonial state and the Anglican church
opened Zonnebloem College. Originally called 'the Kaffir College,' Zonnebloem was intended to
educate the children of the native elite of the Eastern Frontier. Its graduates were meant to be
black Englishmen who could ease tensions between white settlers and the British colonial state and
the newly conquered black subjects of the empire. By 1861, Zonnebloem, as other black schools in
South Africa, took on a more vocational curriculum. But such institutions remained important
vectors of black aspirations. My aim is not to unpack British colonial education policy in South
Africa, but to make plain the significance of such institutions to our understanding of how the
Cape and the British imperial project there came to be read as an opportunity for black uplift
through empire. For each writer explored in this dissertation, education was central to any
liberation project. Only through education and the acquisition of property could black men hope
to enter the imperial body politic. If the colonial government sought to educate a select few, across
the globe black people strove to educate a critical mass. Education was championed with equal
fervor by diasporans (such as Henry Sylvester Williams, Harry Dean, and Pauline E. Hopkins) and
continental Africans (such as Francis Z. S. Peregrino, Allan Kirkland Soga, S. M. Bennett Mcwana,
and Clements Kadalie) who feature in this dissertation.

The debate between literary and industrial education that unfolded in African America,
with W. E. B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington as the respective mascots of each, was also of
interest in the Cape at the fin de siècle. With its qualified nonracial franchise, the Cape promised

7 This includes modern day Lesotho and the Eastern Cape (dominated by the Xhosa people).
black men and women that if they gained the accoutrements of civilization, they would be equal before the law. Even if this equality did not always bear out in practice, many believed that they had only to bide their time. If more of their race gained education and the vote, eventually all would come right. Education was essential to gaining the vote as a black man in the colony. Thus, both DuBois and Washington became important intellectual anchors across South Africa. The deescalation of the civilizing mission after 1884, seemed to make literary education imperative to the black Victorian efforts to reject the turn toward indirect rule, customary law, and the communalization of black subjects in the British Empire. If English literature was an arm of the colonial state, literary education became a counter-discursive site. Through empire black British subjects could claim individual, rather than communal identities. The state would have to recognize them, not as members of tribes, but urban dwellers and property owners. Tribal identity should not be a matter of legal, public discourse, but private. If they were to be marked as different in the law, let it be in terms of their race, which did not render them un-British, but rather not white.

If the Scramble for Africa was a harbinger of this shift in colonial policy, it was in the aftermath of the Anglo-Boer War (1899 to 1902), that their marginalization became clear to black people who hoped to access modernity through empire. As the British and the Boers fought most of the Queen’s black subjects believed that British victory would mean the extension of the qualified Cape Franchise not only throughout the region, but across the Empire. African Americans mourned Queen Victoria’s passing. In the Caribbean, black men tried to volunteer to fight in her Majesty’s army. Henry Sylvester Williams, convener of the 1900 Pan-African Conference was among them. South Africa and the treatment of black mineworkers dominated
Williams had been roused to start the African Association and host the conference because of the atrocious working conditions at the diamond and gold mines in Kimberley and on the Rand. But loyalty to the queen and crown was not simply a matter of indoctrination. For many, true freedom, the completion of the liberation project begun with emancipation, could only be wrought through the British Empire. They denounced the worst excesses of colonial governance, but did not believe their freedom to be tethered to political independence from the mother country. Rather as race men and women they saw the realization of a racial identity as the best way into modernity. Within which they could claim equality. The raced self was only possible through empire. Empire afforded them the opportunity to articulate their racial difference while claiming equal rights. It allowed them to contrive a common language, legal and moral code, and cultural texts through

My aim in this dissertation is fourfold. First I want to trouble the presumption that black radicalism after emancipation was always already nationalist in its orientation. By doing so I do not wish to recuperate empire, but to acknowledge that there were modes of resistance that were not anti-colonial and that the postcolonial nation-state was not a given. As I will demonstrate over the course of *Anxious Records*, belief in the empire was neither valiant nor profane. It was rooted in a particular social, historical, and political context. To fully understand black cultural production at the fin de siècle, we need to free ourselves to acknowledge empire as a viable option to several of the most prolific black writers and intellectuals of that period. As such we might begin to think of the postcolonial condition, at least in part, as one of mourning. Second, I seek to show that these other possible futures often mapped onto particular landscapes. Black modernity then cannot only be understood by looking at Harlem, Paris, London, Chicago or any other cities of the Global
North. We need to cast our gaze elsewhere, so that we might better understand what transpired on a global scale. Third, if black modernity extends beyond these geo-political coordinates, the fields in which it is studied need to take comparison seriously. From literary studies that means working across languages. Certainly that includes the languages of European empires such as English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese, but also Zulu, Xhosa, Afrikaans, Yoruba and other indigenous languages. Peoples of African descent met in the cities of the Global North, but they also collided in the Global South. The Cape is only one such site. Certainly English was the lingua franca of the exchanges that unfolded there and elsewhere among black peoples. As with any point of contact, there many Englishes have arisen, but there were also attempts to engage in the local languages of those considered to be part of the black race. In fact, some of the debates around who was black were tied to this very problem of language as a mark of authenticity and the anxieties around translation. Finally, with this question of language and the local, I hope to trouble some of the invisible boundaries that have sedimented between African Studies and African Diaspora Studies.

As the American academy reconstitutes itself, scholars of both fields have had to articulate how their mutual projects and areas of study relate to each other and where they diverge. While African Studies has privileged an Area Studies model, African Diaspora Studies has focused on what the diasporic experience as the archetypal black modern experience. Custom and tribe have ascended in African Studies, while hybridity (presumably the intermixing of black and white cultures) and New World dominate in the study of the diaspora. But at the dawn of the twentieth-

8 I use this to refer in the main to African American Studies and Caribbean Studies, although the latter has also been annexed to Latin American Studies in the American academy, and sometimes both African American and Caribbean Studies are housed under the umbrella rubric of American Studies. What I am interested in is the comparative possibilities of what is often called Africana Studies—that of the African diaspora and the continent. But I wish to emphasize the literary and linguistic element of that kind of comparison in both European-derived and indigenous languages.
century the Cape was not-yet South African and not-fully customary/tribal. It was a hybrid space, and if Fanny Jackson-Coppin is to be believed, it was certainly a new world. I do not refute the importance of any of these terms to their particular fields of study or the singularities of African and African Diasporic experiences. Rather in an effort to think of each as increasingly mutually constituted I turn to this period when the vibrant dialogues in which black peoples around the globe were engaged demand that we enter the frontier zones between the two fields of study.

‘The Objective Destination’: Period and Place

Since Paul Gilroy groundbreaking exegesis on black modernity, The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness, the Black Atlantic has come to represent the ways of being black and modern associated with transatlantic slavery and its afterlives as well as those geo-political spaces around the Atlantic Ocean. Several critics have rightly argued that as Gilroy gives voice to this unique experience and peculiarly modern space, he renders voiceless blacks who live outside of “the West.” This is perhaps a function of the the specific time and space in which he wrote—the late 1980s and early 1990s and the problems faced by the “contemporary black English” in the metropole (Gilroy, The Black Atlantic 1). Despite the continued movement of peoples between the continent and the diaspora, the dominant narrative of circulation that has come to typify the transatlantic region post-slavery is one of the movement of ideas from black America or the African Diaspora to Africa. New African immigrants are swelling the diaspora as they flee war-torn countries, drought, and economic deprivation in search of opportunity. Presumably, when diasporans travel to Africa it is to make a return to the place of their African ancestors’ origins. Overwhelmingly this is often somewhere in West Africa. This kind of retour has become important to diasporic imaginings of
past and ancestry. I want to cast our attention on the kinds of retour that were not so much much about Africa as a source of pastness, but Africa as a site of coeval modernity.

Not surprisingly, Gilroy’s Black Atlantic privileges Africa as a place of origin. It is somewhere outside of modernity. In describing Martin Delany’s *Official Report of the Niger Valley Exploring Party*, Gilroy explains Delany’s report as an “outlin[e of] his vision of a dynamic alliance...between English capital, black American intellect, and African labor power” (emphasis added; Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic* 23). Africa never quite gets beyond being a source of “labor power” in Gilroy’s black Atlantic either. When Africa enters as something other than the source of raw material, of the kind of hybridity that is black modernity, the emphasis is on “Liberia and Sierra Leone” (15). This construction of Africa and Africans tells us something about the ways in which we understand black modernity from the viewing decks of African and African Diaspora studies.

One of the most interesting slippages of *The Black Atlantic* is in the referents used to denote black modern subjects. They are “blacks in the West” and “blacks of the West” (emphasis added; 17). We know that the West is not a real place, but a construct. Yet when one hears the term “the West” instantly tree-lined city streets in Paris, London, and New York, erupt before the mind’s eye. The West is someplace where the systems of Swiss banking and international finance are based. We know the West when we see it. Africa is not the West. Blacks who live in Africa cannot simultaneously be understood to live in the West. Even more than this, their location outside of the West is seen to make them not of it. But if being of the West is “striving to be both European and black” (1), in 1900 many blacks resident in the Cape were.

Arguably, there are other ways of being black and being modern that have little or less to do with straddling the double-bind of one’s racial identity (black) and one’s intellectual inheritance
(Western). If we only extend being “of the West” to being pulled into a double consciousness whereby one has to negotiate European Law and black custom, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and even Cape Town, were not the only spaces in which black people came to be “of the West.” Mahmood Mamdani’s central argument in Citizen and Subject—that custom and the tribal were conscripted, reconfigured, and codified by the very modern machine of late colonialism—means that the tribal and customary law are not pure, but “creoliz[ed] and syncret[ic],” to borrow from Gilroy. The choice for black Victorians living in Africa was not between hybridity (read black modernity) and authenticity (read African tradition). The choice was between a predominantly urban creolized culture that often allowed them to claim rights as individuals, and a largely rural hybridity that acknowledged the tribe as the arbiter of the members of the tribe’s collective destiny.

While some of the writers I explore in this dissertation try to accommodate the latter, overwhelmingly they chose the former. With the black family as the primary site of community. At the heart of their writing is a desire to be both black and English. Thus in 1902, Francis Z. S. Peregrino responded to white fears of a “black peril,” that if the black man in Cape Town appeared happy, it was not that he hoped to overthrow the white man. It was that in British victory over the Boer, “the year of the Jubilee” had come because the black man understood the “the superior value...of British citizenship over that of all others, whether tribal, European, or, Trans-Atlantic ...” (Peregrino, “Is There a Black Peril?” 4).

In Black Empire: The Masculine Global Imaginary of Caribbean Intellectuals in the United States, 1914 – 1962, Michelle Ann Stephens uses Paul Gilroy’s emphasis on modernity as “space” rather than “period” to attend to the exclusion of Caribbean and black intellectuals from the “current revisionary takes o[n empire]” following the first World War. I share Stephens’ concern about such
exclusions and the gaps that they leave in our conceptualizations of modernity. But if we allow for
the importance of “period,” we see the centrality of the South African war to black notions of
freedom and utopia at the close of the nineteenth-century and the start of the twentieth. This shift
in “period” opens our purview to another “space.”

The cartography of black utopia outside of the United States typically includes islands like
Haiti (sometimes Cuba), cities like Harlem (sometimes Paris or Marseilles), and the presumed
places of origin of the African ancestors of the descendants of transatlantic slaves like Ghana
(sometimes Nigeria or Senegal). Haiti and Harlem are perhaps the two most well-known sites of
imagined utopia for the African Diaspora. Between 1859 to 1862 Martin R. Delany, one of the
first black Harvard medical students, wrote into being a kind Haiti-esque island space, “a nation
within a nation,” in his serialized novel, *Blake; or the Huts of America*. In 1928, Claude McKay
offered Harlem in *Home to Harlem*. Paris too has been considered in this way, though McKay sets
his 1929 tour d’force, *Banjo*, in Marseilles.

A cursory glance at these two novels reveals that period is as important to any mapping of
black modernity as place. Haiti has often been important as a site of imagined utopia and
liberation during the Haitian Revolution (1791 – 1803). Figures like Toussaint L’Ouverture,
Dessalines, and Henri Christophe recur in the fiction, histories, and biographies written by black
writers; C. L. R. James’ *The Black Jacobins* (1938) being one of the most timeless literary histories of
the Revolution. The emphasis on Harlem, is often on Harlem of the 1920s. The masterful work of
scholars like Brent Hayes Edwards has shown the transnational registers of what we call the
“Harlem Renaissance.” In *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black
Internationalism, Edwards uncovers the rich exchange that transpired between writers and intellectuals of what is conventionally spoken of as the Harlem Renaissance and Paris Noire.

In the African American context, the decades between Reconstruction and the Harlem Renaissance are often referred to as the nadir. The argument goes that this was a time when, despite huge sacrifices and perseverance, not much happened to propel the progress of the race forward. With the rise of Jim Crow, indeed it was a bleak period in race relations in America. But I want to extend the term “nadir” to include other black peoples around the world. In Anxious Records this includes peoples of African descent from the Caribbean, the African continent, and black people from South Africa. Outside of this project we can extend this beyond these particular places. My argument is that the central feature that made the fin de siècle a dismal period for black people living in America—a surge in white supremacy—was also a feature in the lives of other black peoples. Given a more international scope, we might not only consider why African Americans turned to Liberia or the Philippines, but why black people had such hope in the British Empire.

In 1900 the Caribbean was not only caught between European decline and American ascendance as Stephens tells us of the period between 1914 to 1962 in Black Empire, but also between competing discourses of British imperialism. For black Caribbean intellectuals British victory in South Africa threatened a return to naked commercial expansionism all too familiar to the region, itself one of the oldest contributors to Britain’s wealth. When, for instance, the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection societies drafted resolutions against forced labor in post-war South Africa, it was Pan-African activists, such as the Afro-Caribbean J. E. Quinlan, who pressed for clear language against the conscription of ALL peoples of African descent within the British
Empire. While others asked the Crown not to provide inducements “for labour to migrate to
South Africa from Central Africa under British protection, or from Jamaica” (Sherwood 137),
Quinlan implored that they add “or other West Indian colonies.” What was often called the
“native question”9 in South African and British administrative circles, also crystallized for black
subjects throughout the Empire their own vulnerability.

For US-born blacks the South African question was not one of how they would be
governed or their labor possibly exploited in post-war South Africa, but it evoked a sense of racial
solidarity in some of them. Quinlan was seconded by the African American D. E. Tobias, the other
Pan-Africanist present. The first to abolish the slave trade (1806) and slavery (1833), England
sometimes served as a refuge for fugitive slaves from the US. One of the most famous examples of
this was the African American novelist, abolitionist, and runaway slave, William Wells Brown.
After the passing of the Fugitive Slaves Act in 1850, Brown remained in England until an English
couple purchased his freedom in 1854.10 So too in 1893, England again proved a source of refuge
and moral suasion. Appalled by the gruesome lynching of Henry Smith, two liberal reformers,
Isabelle Mayo and Catherine Impey, invited Ida B. Wells to give a lecture tour on lynching in
America.11 “English opinion [on lynching] brok[e] the silence of many prominent American
leaders” and forced them to come out against it. From 1893 onward, the number of lynchings

9 In Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism, Mahmood Mamdani explains that the
“native question” was the polite term of reference “[i]n colonial discourse, the problem of stabilizing alien
rule” (Mamdani 3).

10 Brown had travelled to England to do a speaking tour. Once he learned of the passing of the Fugitive Slave Act, he
feared that if he were to return to the US he would be captured and returned to slavery.

11 See Paula Giddings, When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America, (New York: Quill
William Morrow, 1984), 89 – 93. Mayo and Impey were Scottish reformers. Incidentally at least one of them, Impey,
was affiliated with Henry Sylvester Williams’ African Association and the Pan-African Conference of 1900.
decreased. The fate of peoples of African descent in South Africa could mar Britain’s reputation as the conscious of (white) America.

The South African question in 1900 was of concern to the black world for three reasons. First, it threatened the well-being of their brethren in South Africa. Second, it portended the erosion of civil liberties gained by the previously enslaved around the empire. Third, it tarnished the image of Britain as the protector of black people across the globe and the moral torchbearer for the rest of Europe and America. For at least a fleeting moment at the close of the nineteenth-century and the opening of the twentieth, for some black intellectuals of the Anglophone Caribbean, Cape Town and South Africa were pivotal nodes of black emancipatory hope and anxiety. This shift in period and place push us to refigure our received histories of black literary and political modernity in relation to terms like diaspora, nation, and empire.

Like Harlem in the 1920s, Cape Town drew black migrants hoping for better lives at the close of the 19th-century. The bulk of the black immigrants to Cape Town were, in fact, recruited from the British West Indies to work on the docks. Other West Indians, like Henry Sylvester Williams were professionals hoping to accumulate wealth while serving the “large and varied coloured community,” as Williams identified it in a 1904 meeting in South Africa protesting the Education Bill. “Africa was the coloured man’s home,” he proclaimed, “he intended to live here and die here, and to assist in making it better morally and otherwise” (Sherwood 147). In her recent and capacious biography of Williams, this leads Marika Sherwood to conclude that Williams focused exclusively on the coloured community as we understand it today and ignored black Africans. But “large and varied” suggests to me that Williams conceived of this community in terms of the federation of all non-Europeans that he spoke of when interviewed by W. T. Stead,
the Editor of the Review of Reviews. The dream of this kind of polymorphous, multiple, modern African identity can be seen in all of his surviving publications: the first issue of the Pan-African journal published at the end of October in 1901 and The British Negro: A Factor in the Empire in 1902. In 1904, Williams would defend Moshehe's son at trial.

But there was also a number of US-born blacks in the Cape. Captain Harry Dean was one of them. Dean’s autobiography offers us a window into the diverse black communities living in the city, the Cape Colony, and the region. It is here that we see the kind of polymorphous African identity for which Williams longed in action. While Williams himself was not in South Africa at the same time as Dean, other figures were, many of whom Williams would be in close contact with once he moved there. The West African Francis Z. Peregrino whose journal, The South African Spectator. So was King Moshoeshoe with whom Dean traded and tried to build AME schools.

If we start with 1900, rather than 1914, it is not the first World War that casts its shadow, but the Anglo-Boer War. As the imminent Caribbean man of letters, C. L. R. James, reminded his audience at the All African Writers Conference in Dakar in 1976:

There was taking place in 1900 one of the first great wars for independence of a colonial people...fought by the Boers against the British for freedom and independence: the first of the colonial peoples to fight an open war in order to maintain their independence...all these events were moving towards a change in the general social structure, and Sylvester Williams was part of a world-wide movement. I want you to remember that...These Pan-African congresses all have their particular place in a particular history. (James, “Towards the Seventh” 238)

The 1900 Pan-African Conference was not only part of the same push toward change that the South African war was, it was also informed by an interest in the war and the situation on the ground in the region. The conference and the Anglo-Boer war were conscious attempts to expose the very problems of Western civilization—imperialism, capitalism, and labor regimes—that led
to “the first descent into barbarism” for the West, World War I. The violence meted out to colonized peoples in South Africa and the oppressive global racial order, in which South Africa played no small part, had something to do with black radicalism in 1900. As was the case for later black intellectuals and anti-colonial activists, race and empire were understood as mutually constitutive. In 1900, however, the response was not anti-colonial as we now presume it to be from the postcolonial era. Black Victorians did not envision independent nation-states, instead many hoped for the end of racial and colonial oppression through empire. Turning to 1900 extends the genealogy of black theorization of empire as a form of (un)belonging. Further, we see ‘Africa’ as not only an ancestral homeland, but partaking in the debates around how to achieve full freedom for black peoples in modernity.

Definitions of Self, Concepts of Others

Charged with the daunting task of introducing Fanny Jackson-Coppin to the readers of her memoir, the Philadelphia journalist W. C. Bolivar opens with a quote from Sir Thomas Carlyle to help readers ascertain the literary value of Reminiscences. “It was Carlyle who said ‘the human anecdotal is the best of all writing,’” he begins. Jackson-Coppin was not only an active race woman and teacher, but also the wife of an AME bishop. Her memoir was edited by her husband and published by the church’s publishing arm. The bulk of its expected readers were members of the church. Bolivar used Carlyle to help them ascertain the literary value of Jackson-Coppin’s memoir.

12 While Hannah Arendt turned to the decimation of the Herero in order to understand the atrocities of the second World War, James pushes us to look further south on the African continent.
The author of “Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question,”13 Carlyle’s words did not seem incongruous to the task of validating the memoir of an ex-slave. I draw attention to this moment in Bolivar’s introduction, not to suggest that Carlyle was unsuited to the task. I do so to highlight the intimacy of members of the black intelligensia with Victorian literary figures. That Carlyle may have been racist only aides my attempt to reconstruct the discursive context in which the likes of Jackson-Coppin, Bolivar and others found themselves and the counter-discourse that I refer to throughout Anxious Records as black Victorianism.

That liberalism came into being as British imperialism matured is well-known.14 But that black modern radical thought shares in that legacy is often less volubly proclaimed. When acknowledged, these “Victorian strategies” as Cornel West and Henry Louis Gates Jr. deem them, often appear peculiar or erroneous (West and Gates 111). As the single most venerated and widely read black intellectuals of the twentieth-century, DuBois is often at the center of such critique. As Orlando Patterson contends, “[w]hat, after all, was W. E. B. DuBois but an Afro-Saxon?” (Patterson 104).

Along with West, Gates, and Patterson, several others have examined DuBois’ Victorian bent. But DuBois was a product of his time and as such was not isolated in this. My earlier contention that we take period seriously requires that we contextualize him in this way. Because DuBois is often read as the voice of “race” matters in post-World War I America, terms like nation and diaspora obfuscate others like empire. Fin de siècle South Africa and the Anglo-Boer War are of

13 First published in Fraser’s Magazine for Town and Country in 1849, the essay extolls the virtues of black slave labor, if “Black Quashee” would not voluntarily render himself useful. “Black Quashee” was the term used in “Occasional Discourse of the Nigger Question” for the former black (male) slave in Jamaica.

14 For more on the relationship between liberalism and the British Empire see Mehta.
little or no import. Paul Gilroy demonstrates this in the following passage from *Postcolonial Melancholia*:

We should also recall that when the African American savant [DuBois] wrote those celebrated words, he had yet to see the catastrophe of the First World War, never mind the Second. The words ‘Auschwitz,’ ‘Hiroshima,’ ‘gulag,’ and ‘Apartheid’ were unknown to him, and the idea of genocide did not form part of the conceptual apparatus through which he considered the moral credentials of North America’s color-coded modernity and the ethical pretensions of western civilization. (Gilroy, *Postcolonial Melancholia* 36)

An attendee of the 1900 Pan-African Conference in London, however, DuBois had heard of segregation, not only in America, but in South Africa. Along with other attendees he heard of the corvée, conscripted mine labor, colonial land appropriation, and the Belgian Congo. Inspired, at least in part, by the desire to ameliorate the condition of mine workers in Kimberley and the Rand, the at least half of the papers given at the conference touched on South Africa. If some of the "celebrated words" from *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) to which Gilroy refers were that "the problem of the twentieth-century is the problem of the color line," they were to appear two years earlier in Benito Sylvain’s *Du sort des indigènes dans les colonies d'exploitation*.\(^{15}\) Sylvain attended the Conference as the aide du camp of Ethiopian leader, Menelik. The sentence formed part of a collaborative “Address to the Nations of the World.” Often read as a sign of DuBois’ singular genius, it was written in the last days of the conference by a committee that included, DuBois, Sylvain, and Williams.

The aim here is not to disparage DuBois, but to situate him within a broader field of black radical thought and discursive practices that I call black Victorianism. The Conference closed with a letter to Queen Victoria care of her Colonial Secretary, Lord Chamberlain. In her biography of

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Williams, Marika Sherwood remains relatively silent about his deep investment in the Queen’s Empire. But that the conference ended with the drafting of the “Address to the Nations of the World” and a memorial to Queen Victoria about the malfeasant colonial governance ties the push for the recognition of race and racism to a publicly constructed desire for the empire to remedy these (with equal rights, education, and access to justice), namely in British South Africa. This included: the Cape Colony, the Natal Colony, the newly annexed Rhodesias, and the soon to be defeated Boer Republics of Transvaal and Orange Free State.

DuBois’ “strategies” were Victorian. But they were deeply imbricated in a collective black ethos that not only revered Victorian writers and intellectuals, but also deployed genres of writing made popular in that era. These included: pamphleteering, magazine/journal publication and circulation, serialization, auto/biography, and the epistolary. Perhaps most Victorian of all, was their reliance on the very symbol of the queen as the “mother” of the brotherhood of man. Even as the status of black men and women around the globe became uncertain with the rise of Jim Crow and other forms of white supremacy, the queen and her liberal empire became a site of nostalgia and an inspiration for critique.

Black Victorians were those of the intelligensia not naive to the changes ravaging the world but keen to the shift in British colonial policy. Theirs was a humanism steeped in the equality and the brotherhood of man and that imperial liberalism promised, but never realized. Their response was to yoke a racial identity to the promises of that older empire. It was a position not so much of opposition as one of critique and reading. They wrote primarily as readers, citing Victorian writers and others of the English tradition. From Henry Sylvester Williams to Clements Kadalie,
reference, critique, and revision are at the core of their writing irrespective of genre. Also commonplace is the tension between the individual (author) and his or her (racial) community.

Black Victorian, then, allows me to suspend for interrogation what one such writer like Sol Plaatje meant when he referred to “English ideas” and “English sentiments” (Plaatje, Native Life 123). It also emphasizes “race” as the term around which they united. Thus, in Anxious Records I extend race men and race women to include many who fall outside of the aegis of the US Constitution. I do so to emphasize that race work was not always the opposite of empire work, but also to push for the recognition of “black” as a globally constructed term. If African Americans of the period sometimes understood themselves to be divinely called to uplift the race, there were people across the diaspora and on the African continent (and beyond) who understood themselves to fill its ranks and to be part of its leadership.

Most studies of black intellectual traditions and liberation—namely Pan-Africanism—focus on the 1940s as the pivotal moment in the emergence of a Pan-African vision. As an object of study, Pan-Africanism entered the academy as much of Europe’s empires were dismantled and the US furnished all its citizens with civil rights. In this way Pan-Africanism has often been tethered to postcolonial nationalisms. Those branches of Pan-Africanism that do not fall within thin model are deemed illegitimate or at least not-quite-Pan-Africanism. Writing of Harris Braley Parks’ Africa: The Problem of the New Century, Michele Mitchell claims that “it might be difficult if not specious to situate Parks within such a Pan-Africanist camp” (Mitchell 70) as Du Bois, Williams, and Anna Julia Cooper, three of the participants at the Pan-African Conference held in July 1900 in London. Like many African Americans of the period, Parks believed in providential design: that slavery was meant to prepare African Americans to save their “native African” brethren. Mitchell aligns Parks
with Pauline E. Hopkins, another “race woman” who “embrace[d] imperialism as a providential opportunity for their own uplift work” (Mitchell 70).

But Parks’ and Hopkins’ “civilizationalist ideas” and their race work were not outside of the Pan-Africanism of their time, but integral to it. The disaggregation of “all the fire and romance” of Hopkins’ fictional project and Williams’ notion of Pan-Africanism and “the British Negro” is part of a larger narrative of the fracturing of race work from nation/continent-building in the 1950s as much of the African continent and the Caribbean were formally decolonized. Brent Hayes Edwards notes that at this time “Diaspora” as the moniker of choice for people of African descent living outside of Africa who were largely the descendants of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Anxious Records: Race, Imperial Belonging, and the Literary in South Africa is my attempt to reckon with what came before diaspora and nation: empire.

Central to my concern are the ways in which these changes in who constituted the diaspora not only signal the instability of terms like nation and diaspora, and at times their limits, but also their relative newness. Until the end of the Second World War, it was not uncommon for race men and race women—working in the service of the black/African race—to be empire men and empire women.16 They understood Britishness and blackness to be necessarily imbricated; black freedom could best be wrought through the British Empire. To many black people at the start of the twentieth-century, it seemed an idyllic space for racial equality and full freedom. Diasporan, Trans-Atlantic, African, American, West Indian, Anglophone, Francophone, Hispanophone, Yoruba, Xhosa, Malaysian, they came from particular national and geo-political contexts, but they were all deeply committed to the uplift and progress of their race. British citizenship was not the end, but a

16 In the Francophone case, René Maran and Frantz Fanon are two notable examples.
means by which they could cultivate a sense of belonging and brotherhood, through shared
language, civil protections, and access to the seemingly boundless territories of the Empire.
Through Britishness they felt they could best unite their race. If they mimicked English dress,
mores, and literary pretensions, they were also mimicking race pride, demands for equal education,
and protection under the law.

The end of World War II precipitated a global push for independence by Europe’s
colonies, but it cannot be insignificant that up until the 1930s and part of the 1940s empire was the
most concrete and available form of statehood. It provided the grammar of unfreedom and
freedom. There is a burgeoning field of scholarship around the intersection of black and Victorian
cultures. Yet most seem to either ignore the importance of the actual imperial edifice that snaked
beyond the nation’s shores and the significance of the colony as a site of serious participation.
Period and field (of study) are not always brought together, such that Victorian studies continues to
refer to a set of texts and mores of a certain set of writers and class and race of people. While
African studies and (Diaspora studies to a lesser extent) refers to a set of texts, writers, and race of
people whose birth was some time in the 1950s.

In *Dark Victorians*, Vanessa D. Dickerson explores the political and cultural exchanges
between African Americans and Britons during the Victorian era and the ways in which Victorian
rights discourse influenced black struggle in America. In her edited collection *Black Victorians/
Holbrooke seeks to “put [black Victorians] back into the [British] national picture” (Gerzina 2). For
her, black Victorians are “black people who lived and worked in England during Victoria’s
reign” (3). Writing on the cosmopolitanism of Pan-Africanists, like C. L. R. James, Kwame
Nkrumah, George Padmore, Jomo Kenyatta, and Peter Abrahams, Simon Gikandi argues that they were “Afro-Victorians.” In Maps of Englishness, Gikandi speaks of “colonial Victorians,” or athomi. Athomi, Gikandi argues, were those “colonial readers” who “renounced[d] their previous identities and narratives to enter an imperial future in which—many of them were to complain later—they were still marginal” (Gikandi, Maps 37). In his rich account of the betrayal of creole elites in the 1880s by the colonial government, Vivan Bickford-Smith writes of “black Englishmen” (Bickford Smith).

Like Holbrooke, I use black to qualify Victorian. “Dark” and “colonial” could aptly describe the writers/community in which I am interested. They all seem to have supported a kind of pan-colonized consciousness. But either term could muddy the waters and diffuse their coherent and deliberate emphasis upon their race. It is important for us to apprehend their keen awareness of themselves as part of a collective racial identity within the imperial family. Race pride and cohesion, for some, could only be wrought through empire. Only then would all members of the race speak the same language (English) and have equal access to justice, fair play and education. If “dark” and “colonial” are not forceful enough as racial monikers, “Afro-” seems to fix the category too far in the other direction. It was not only about being of African descent, but being raced subjects. Gandhi was not outside of their fold. While Gikandi is certainly attentive to the Diaspora, the term “Afro-Victorian” does not privilege race as I believe necessary for this project. My argument is that a Pan-Africanist sensibility at the fin de siècle was linked to a racial and imperial identity that included shared ancestral links to the continent but were not limited to it.

Further, as Gikandi uses “Afro-Victorian” to refer to those Pan-Africanists—C. L. R. James, Kwame Nkrumah, Jomo Kenyatta, George Padmore and Peter Abrahams—who lived and worked
during the era of late colonialism, to use it might confuse more than it would clarify. As we will see, the period is important, my larger project involves tracking how and when black colonial subjects became disillusioned with empire. James, Nkrumah and Company inherit this tradition of black Victorianism, but between the two lies an epistemological shift that we can only understand by looking to their predecessors’ take on the South African question. Important to my work here is to point to the ways in which ignoring this earlier moment, or easily aligning it with the latter one, aids the absence of empire as an important term within black radical thought that was not always already that to which all black radicals were opposed. The disillusionment of Gikandi’s Afro-Victorians was the outgrowth of the growing realization after the South African War that British subjecthood would not extend equal protection to all races. At the same time, while the affective rupture that Gikandi attributes to “athomi” is one that I will draw on throughout this dissertation, it does not capture the pivotal role English played in the imagining of a community that spanned the empire and crossed linguistic as well as cultural borders. Neither does it emphasize the race of those it describes as much as their cultural and linguistic context.

So too Bickford-Smith’s “black Englishmen” does not allow for the necessary emphasis on Victorian culture, or the special reverence in which Queen Victoria was held. If the Colonial Secretary, Joseph Chamberlain, was recalcitrant and ineffective, it was not due to the weakness of the queen’s devotion to her black subjects. The very claims of black Victorianism were grounded in Victoria’s notion that all the peoples of the British Empire (black or white) were related via kinship ties.

The age of improvement, the Victorian era was earmarked by imperial expansion, industrialization, possibility, adventure, and print. It afforded many the opportunity to alter their
social and political position in it, including members of the ‘subject races.’ With the abolition of the slave trade in 1807 and slavery in 1834/8 as well as its refusal to recognize the American Fugitive Slave Act passed in 1850, in the nineteenth-century at least, the British Crown appeared to be the chief champion of the liberty of black men and women.

The prolific African American writer Pauline E. Hopkins’ invoked the British Empire as just and fair to the black man and women in her first novel, *Contending Forces*. Much attention has been paid to Hopkins’ idealization of Boston/New England as a haven for black people in the novel (Carby 121). But the prologue to the novel is set in the British West Indies. The unfortunate events that befall the once wealthy slave-owning Montfort family only transpire because the family patriarch decides to move the family and all of their slaves to the American South. Unwilling to free his slaves in accordance with the British Emancipation Proclamation of 1834, Montfort tries to resettle in the South and free them at his leisure. Seen as too liberal by several of his neighbors, Montfort is killed and his wife and children cast into slavery. His descendants only receive retributive justice through the British justice system (Hopkins, *Contending Forces* 17 – 31). As in the novel, important to black Victorianism was the family. If the tribe was made private, or at least not a matter for public censure and regulation, the family mediated the relationship between the “race” and the individual.

If the British were the first to abolish the slave trade and chattel slavery, the British Empire was at least a necessary counterpoint against which to shame American racism. But by the end of the nineteenth-century Africa had been carved up amongst Europe. Systems of conscripted labor were flourishing across the continent. The Anglo-Boer War raged from 1899 to 1902. What happened to black people resident in South Africa after the war determined the efficacy of
Britain’s Empire. The ways in which the reality of post-war South Africa challenged the sanctity of the black family and its access to upward mobility and civilization, ultimately proved one of the final straws for black Victorians.

The pamphlets, autobiographies, magazines, journals, and novels read in this dissertation traffic in the notion that allegiance to the British Empire would set the black man free. Even more, they each posit the Cape/Cape Town as its center. The black Victorians I read were not only interested in Victorian England as a point of comparison, the (re)turn to Africa was central. Black Victorianism here was not only an exchange of ideas and art between blacks of the Diaspora and white Victorians. It was a way of re-imagining the British Empire as a conduit of black liberation. Mapped, this liberal, Victorian Empire would have Africa as its center at the heart of which is the Cape. In short, their black Victorianism was a kind of _retour_ to Africa.

While most of the texts I read here were written after the Victorian era, I use _black Victorian_ to preserve their authors’ strong commitment to a racial identity alongside their political investment in a late nineteenth-century understanding of liberal empire. Victoria, Victorian culture and Victorian ideas snaked across the empire, affecting the imperial picture too. Black British subjects outside of the metropolis often understood themselves as not simply British, but Queen Victoria’s subjects. South Africa challenged and eventually eroded this fiction of belonging.

As a result of increased segregation and later apartheid, the Cape was only a possible black utopia for a fleeting moment. But it remains important to our understanding of black literature and Pan-African discourse of the time. The inviability of the Cape as black utopia rendered belief in the Empire redundant. It is not that Pan-Africanism was always already only about political independence in the form of the nation-state, rather it became so in the absence of inclusion in
the empire. As with Gikandi’s *athomi*, in the empire, black radicals came to see that even in empire, they were still “marginal” (Gikandi, *Maps* 37). If anti-colonial resistance was born of the impossibility of inclusion, the postcolonial experience is understood here primarily as that of mourning.

Taking stock of what South Africa meant to black Victorianist discourse and race work necessitates attending to what exactly black meant there and how such definitions confounded and consolidated the notions of the race that emerged outside of its borders. Thus I weave the particularly South African strain of this, careful to unpack what “black” meant at different moments. The multiplicity of blackness is not uniquely South African, but the difference between colored (US) and coloured (South African) identities are important not only to understanding apartheid South Africa. It was precisely at the fin de siècle that the two terms began to signify differently. It was also at this time that several intellectuals of the diaspora, the continent, and those who would be identified as black African and coloured in the contemporary South African racial lexicon tried to unite under one umbrella racial category of black or coloured. I attend to some of the ways in which they mobilized transliteration and translation to approximate a racial coalition. I argue that the schism between black in American and in South Africa is not only a matter of apartheid logic or a keen sense of racial difference between coloureds and so-called ‘natives’ in South Africa or the preponderance of racial intermixture in the US. It is also the result of national parochialisms, the dismantling of circuits of black immigration from and to South Africa outside of the labor conscription, and the dominant narrative of South Africa as a white settler colony.
Not only does the term “black” refer to a broad cross-section of people, but others such as “coloured,” “native,” and “kaffir” sometimes take on different meanings here too. I do so to maintain the volatility of such identities at the time. In Chapter two, for instance, coloured often appears as “colo(u)red” to mark the ways in which Francis Z. Peregrino deployed both the African American and the South African definition of it in order to unite people who were not white into one race. I put the “u” in parentheses because Peregrino often used the American orthography whenever he used the word. I do not do so in other chapters because his work is the only in which there the tension between the American meaning and the South African one is make explicit.

“Native” and “kaffir” (or “kafir”) will not appear within quotation marks unless used within a text that I cite. Though pejorative for our contemporary sensibilities, many of the writers whose work I analyze here, used them because these were acceptable in their time. Further, to distinguish among the various ethnic communities (coloured, Xhosa, Zulu, West Indian, African American, or Negro) that they understood to be part of the black race, I find it necessary to use terms like “native” and “kaffir.” So to “non-European,” often recognized as an official term for people who were not white in South Africa, appears in Anxious Records. Used by several of the writers in whom I am interested to signal to their readers that they were all under the same heel of oppression, “non-European” also allowed them to appear less radical than they were. As a result, it too appears in this dissertation.

Untold Journeys

Until the implementation of the Prohibited Immigrants Act of 1913 that took hold in the 1920s, black immigrants travelled to and settled in South Africa. The Union government’s declaration of diasporan blacks as prohibited immigrants was a late response to Garveyism and Ethiopianism.
Seen as externally derived incitements to revolution, I try to reconstruct the ways in which such radical ideologies were mutually constituted across waters. Doing so not only decentralizes the individualized “African American savant” model and contribute to the dismantling of the apartheid gaze that refused “our blacks” agency, it also helps to restore South Africa and Africa as part of a greater experience of colonialism and the black world. So too, the importance that Cape Town plays, not only asks that we begin to see the Cape as comparable to other parts of the British Empire like the Caribbean as well as India. It also refutes the revisionist attempts of the apartheid (and post-apartheid) state to deny Cape Town as a site of black life and modernity. Along with Rhodes and Milner, were Williams, Dean, Peregrino, Newana, and Kadalie to name but a few.

Ultimately, this loss of the Cape/Cape Town precipitated the calcification of Africa as a site of origin for those in the diaspora. Under this schema West Africa—from which transatlantic slaves came—became the key point of reference for New World blacks. Between 1834/38 and 1910, the Cape was a site of possibility to which black people from other parts of the Atlantic world could hope to immigrate (even if this was not always practiced in real numbers). The exclusion of black colonial elites for the imperial body politic happened not only in the post-war Cape, but in West Africa too. But whereas diasporic Africans could look to West Africa as a source of origins, the Cape was almost only ever conceived of as a place of coeval black modernity. Its loss precipitated the loss of a kind of coeval, global black modernity. From the diaspora, Africa became only the ancestral home. In excavating this moment in the history of the city and the region, I hope to revive a dialogic practice between African and African Diaspora Studies around black modernity.
If the South African question brought an end to black Victorianism’s commitment to empire in much of the world, in South Africa the rise of Afrikaner nationalism sustained it, albeit ambivalently. In some ways the particular tradition of black resistance of the Cape is part of that intellectual inheritance. *Anxious Records* is also an attempt to explore alternative connections between literary traditions of the African diaspora and the literary in South Africa that do not privilege the Harlem Renaissance as an antecedent of the Sophiatown Renaissance of the 1940s.

To understand the literary production of the period in both the diaspora and the continent, I argue we need to apply a global lens. In her last year as editor of the *Colored American Magazine*, Pauline Hopkins published by her last novel, *Of One Blood, or, the Hidden Self* (1902 – 1903), in serial form in the magazine. At the same time Hopkins had begun correspondence with one black South African, Allan K. Soga. Alongside her Pan-African opus and several short stories, Hopkins featured Soga’s essays on the demise of the black franchise in South Africa, called “The Ethiopians of the Twentieth Century.” Soga, had been introduced to Hopkins and the *Colored American* by his friend Harry Dean, an African American sailor resident in Cape Town at the time, who would later write his autobiography in which his travails over the Cape and southern Africa would feature. Dean was at the 1900 Pan-African conference in London organized by the Trinidadian barrister, Henry Sylvester Williams, who was moved to start the African Association in 1898 with a black South African woman, Anne V. Kinloch, and convene the conference because of the injustices that the black man faced in South Africa. In the 1920s, Clements Kadalie, leader of the first black South African trade union, the Industrial and Commercial Workers’ Union of Africa (ICU), wrote for A. Philip Randolph’s *The Messenger*.

17 The fourth in the series on Ethiopians of the twentieth-century was written but Reverend Charles S. Morris (Morris, “Ethiopians of the Twentieth Century. IV. My Visit to South Africa).
By reading their work together, I turn our attention to the place of empire in black radical thought in the first half of the twentieth-century. I try to read the African American nadir as part of a set of global dialogues around what it meant to be black and to be free. I do not wish to valorize their efforts nor their views on empire. Neither do I intend to denigrate their dream. I only hope to grasp at their ways of seeing the injustices of their times and their visions of freedom, if only to unshackle them from our present.

Divided into three sections this dissertation examines the affective dispositions of this intelligensia to the revolutionary possibilities of black trans-nation through empire: “Hope” before the founding of the white settler state in South Africa in 1910; “Despair,” in the inter-war period and; “Loss” as the British Empire wanted on the eve of apartheid in 1948. This dissertation takes its title, “Anxious Records,” from Clements Kadalie’s assertion in his autobiography, My Life and the ICU: The Autobiography of a Black Trade Unionist, that he was “was anxious...to recor[d]” the hardships and aspirations of “a civilized African family” at the turn of the century (Kadalie, My Life and the ICU 74). When Kadalie pens his autobiography in the 1940s, black Victorian anxiety about being remembered is at crescendo. Yet the other texts that I read are also anxious records of urban, modern [civilized] African and non-European life in Cape Town. During the years of hope, they are concerned about the limits of their community. During the period of despair they become skeptical about black Victorianism as a viable revolutionary vehicle.

Section one, “Hope,” comprises chapters one and two. In Chapter one, “Cape Town and African Diasporic Dreams of Utopia,” I examine how two black Victorian writers from the diaspora retain “empire” as a model for articulating their own revolutionary aspirations. I offer close readings of Henry Sylvester Williams’s pamphlet, The British Negro: A Factor in Empire, in
which British Empire is the vehicle of Pan-Africanism, and Harry Dean’s *The Pedro Gorino*, in which an independent black empire is championed. In Chapter two, “‘Extend Hands across the Sea’: The Race Paper and the (Im)Possibility of Building the Race in South Africa” I examine the efforts made by Francis Z. Peregrino, Allan K. Soga, and Pauline E. Hopkins to use the race paper to build a sense in their readers of a global racial community. I read a series of articles from 1901 and 1902 by Francis Peregrino published in his journal, *The South African Spectator*, in which he constructs a narrative history of black heroes entitled, “Black, Mulatto, Quadroon, Octoroon.” I explore his difficulty in translating American racial terms into Dutch/Afrikaans and Xhosa and the simultaneous resistance of his readers to Dutch as one of the journal’s languages. Then, I read the series of articles by Allan K. Soga, Peregrino’s friend and collaborator, that appeared in *The Colored American Magazine* between 1902 to 1903, under Hopkins stewardship. I argue that both Peregrinos meet resistance to their attempts to include indigenous languages and cultures because the community understands English and Englishness to be modern.

In section two, “Despair,” I consider the growing tensions around the Victorian empire as a site of racial equality after the first World War and the alternative forms of imagining belonging that this precipitates. Chapter three, “Figuring in Black: The Periodical, Trade Unionism, and Black Literature in 1920s South Africa,” is a close reading of S.M. Benett Ncwana’s *The Black Man*, a periodical meant to marshal into one constituency, his ethnically and racially diverse readers through political news, poetry, writing contests and advertisements for black businesses, all toward a black empire. It was the first periodical of the Industrial and Commercial Workers’ Union of Africa (ICU). The chapter also attends to the shift in emphasis from racial to worker solidarity that
the union tried to make as it moved from *The Black Man* and Cape Town to *The Workers Herald* and Johannesburg.

The final section of the dissertation, “Loss,” comprises Chapter four, “After the Revolution: ‘Making the World Safe for Heroes.’” In it I read Clements Kadalie’s autobiography, *My Life and the ICU: The Autobiography of a Black Trade Unionist in South Africa* (1946) and Ethelreda Lewis’ novel, *Wild Deer* (1933). Kadalie was the founder of the ICU while Lewis was one of the white, liberal, lady patrons of the union once it moved to Johannesburg. Several believe that the union failed because it attempted not only to shed its racial focus, but also took on too many white liberals. I also read Kadalie’s writing for the African American labor magazine, *The Messenger*, in which he tries to educate his African American readers about the status of black people in South Africa and encourage them to move to the country to help. I argue that while the loss of South Africa as a utopia made black Victorianism bankrupt outside of South Africa, in the country it seemed to reconstitute itself. While some like Ethelreda Lewis offered the New Negro as the only option, the “race man” who could lead black South Africans out of bondage, Kadalie uses the autobiography to lay claim to the very tradition that gave rise to the New Negro. He identifies himself as urban and links the African family to the city. Yet both texts seem to render the black female insignificant. In Lewis’ ‘good’ black women become wombs that reproduce the right kinds of black men for the future—indigenous, authentic, and pure, because of their mothers, yet capable of negotiating modernity because of their American fathers. In so doing, I argue, that Lewis contorts the legacy of the black transnational community in South Africa, evacuating the potential revolutionary power of locally rooted practices of blackness. While in *My Life and the ICU* they are
absent altogether. If autobiography allows for a kind of postmortem on the movement as well as the opportunity to claim urban space, it does so at the expense of black female subjectivity.

Ultimately, this dissertation offers close readings of recovered archival material—pamphlets, periodicals and unpublished manuscripts—and 'lost' texts. I argue that their absence from South African, African and African Diaspora canons results from their status as iterations of failed revolutionary fervor outside of nationalism. The periodical and pamphlet, useful in effecting the present of its readers, are eclipsed by the novel and auto/biography, which can stage nostalgia and prophecy for deferred revolutionary futures. For African, postcolonial and diaspora studies, this project offers a timely methodology for the recovery of imagined futures beyond nationalism.
LOSS
Chapter 1: 
Cape Town and African Diasporic Dreams of Utopia 
Victoria. J. Collis

Some time toward the end of the nineteenth-century an African American man by the name of Henry Foster Dean docked at Cape Town. In 1929, he published his autobiography. Comprised of four books, the last three detail his adventures in southern Africa and his dream of establishing an Ethiopian empire there. Some time in 1903 the West Indian barrister, Henry Sylvester Williams, docked at Cape Town. By 1905, he had returned to England. But during his tenure at the Cape he became the first black person to be accepted to the Cape Bar. In 1902, he published a pamphlet entitled, *The British Negro: A Factor in the Empire*. There were two essays in it; both of which Williams had given as lectures. The first, “The British Negro,” was a passionate attempt to make the British realize the significance of “the British Negro” to the empire’s prosperity. The second, “The Ethiopian Eunuch,” is an ode the black man’s as a great civilization. If the second asserted that African civilization(s) was historically and culturally equivalent to that of Europe and the West, the first laid out the networks of economic interdependence that bound the metropole to its black subjects and posited it as the imperative for political equality in his time. Dean’s autobiography and Williams’ pamphlet share two things: the centrality of southern Africa to their retelling of the black modern experience, and; a preoccupation with Empire in articulating their visions of a united race.

To discuss these two texts we need to locate them in relation to African and African Diaspora literatures. To do this, I argue, we need to first establish what we mean by Pan-Africanism and Ethiopianism. This may seem like nothing more than a semantic tedium. But as Carole Boyce
Davies reminds us in *Black Women, Writing and Identity: Migrations of the Subject*, names emerge out of particular historical, economic, social, and political contexts (Boyce Davies, 5 – 8). The term Africa is in part a colonial inheritance and:

[unpacking the archeology and genealogy of [it] is an important exercise in our understanding of how the politics of conquest and domination are so fundamentally linked to naming . . . and the] implications for how African peoples (particularly in the diaspora) begin to activate monolithic categories of heritage and identity, as, for example, “Afrocentricity.” The political basis of identity formation is a central issue in all of these interrogations. For, again, in the diaspora, under Pan-Africanist ideologies, the reconstruction of “Africa” as homeland occurred, also for management of reality. As resistance to European domination, monolithic constructions of Africa posed an alternative identity and did duty against the European deployment of its reality and its attempt to redefine the identities of large numbers of people taken from their native homelands. (7)

The labor of “unpacking the archeology and genealogy of Africa” is precisely what Mudimbe took up in *The Invention of Africa* nearly six years before *Black Women, Writing and Identity* (Mudimbe). But Boyce Davies brings together an interesting cornucopia here: Africa, “politics of conquest,” “Pan-Africanist ideologies,” “monolithic constructions of Africa,” and naming as discursive.

Williams convened the 1900 Pan-African Conference held in London; Dean, from all accounts, attended it. Yet, neither man is widely known as a Pan-African icon. In fact, both writers and their texts have often been read as outside of Pan-Africanism proper. In this chapter I read Williams’ pamphlet and Dean’s autobiography toward unpacking their exclusion and the ways in which Pan-Africanism is often singularized as a black radical ideology. Yet Pan-Africanism, Africa, Ethiopianism, and Ethiopian meant differently at the fin de siècle. start from the premise that we need to tease out the difference between our postcolonial memorializations of such terms and their older incarnations. Williams and Dean reveal the strong desire for imperial belonging that permeated them. Rather than read this as an aberration, naïvety, or the mark of an incomplete
awakening, I contend that we need to consider empire a viable course to black radicals at the time, even if only for a finite period of time. Taking them seriously as radical race and empire men, requires that we decouple Pan-Africanism proper from the realization of an independent (African) nation-state.

There are several sources from which one can derive working definitions of Pan-Africanism proper. I focus on the following three critical sources: George Shepperson’s “Pan-Africanism and ‘Pan-Africanism’: Some Historical Notes,” published in 1962; Immanuel Geiss’s Panafrikanismus: Zur Geschichte der Dekolonisation, first published in 1968 and translated into English in 1974 as The Pan-African Movement; and C. L. R. James’s “Towards the Seventh: The Pan-African Congresses—Past, Present and Future,” an address given at the First Congress of All African Writers at Dakar, Senegal in 1976. The first two are considered the inaugural academic texts on the movement. The limits of Pan-Africanism in relation to empire, nation, and diaspora that they cast haunt our contemporary understanding of it. “Towards the Seventh” offers an alternative, perhaps despite itself and its author. James pushes his audience to consider what was happening in 1900 and locate the conference within the imperial frame: widespread dissatisfaction in England and across the Empire; the Anglo-Boer War (1899 – 1902); and the rise of various Pan-movements globally.


1 I take this up in Chapter one. For more on the way in which Pan-Africanism has been defined see Shepperson and Price, Independent Africa; King, Pan-Africanism and Education; Langley, Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa 1900-1945; Redkey, Black Exodus; Griffith, The African Dream; Shepperson, “Ethiopianism and African Nationalism,” Phylon, XIV, I (1953), ”Notes on the Negro American Influences on the Emergence of African Nationalism,” and “‘Pan-Africanism’ and ‘pan-Africanism’: Some Historical Notes.” Within the movement itself George Padmore, Kwame Nkrumah, and W. E. B. Du Bois are the sources often named.
James can assert in “Towards the Seventh” that the “intellectual foundation” of Pan-Africanism only emerged in the interwar period with the four Pan-African congresses organized by W. E. B. Du Bois and the 1945 Manchester congress convened by George Padmore.

In “Pan-Africanism and ‘Pan-Africanism’: Some Historical Notes,” George Shepperson defines pan-Africanism proper as capital “P” Pan-Africanism in response to the rather loose use of the term in studies on Africa in the 1960s. There is a Pan-African movement distinct from pan-African movements. Garveyism and Ethiopianism might be pan-African in scope, but they were not necessarily part of the Pan-African movement. Capital “P” Pan-Africanism refers to the movement of W. E. B. Du Bois embodied by the five Pan-African Congresses during the interwar period, held between 1919 and 1945, George Padmore’s book, *Pan-Africanism or Communism?* (1956), and Kwame Nkrumah’s 1958 All-Africa People’s Conference at Accra, the movement for which Nkrumah “claim[ed] Ghana has a special destiny” (Shepperson 346).

Brent Hayes Edwards situates Shepperson’s discussion of capital “P” pan-Africanism within his own genealogy of the emergence of the term *diaspora* to describe the communities of peoples of African descent in “The Uses of Diaspora.” He riffs off of Shepperson’s definition of diaspora as a way of referring to the shared experiences and connection among peoples of African descent that can accommodate their differences (Edwards, “The Uses of Diaspora” 45). Edwards generously allows Shepperson’s definition of the capital “P” variety to include the 1900 conference organised

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2 Particularly the Twentieth Century Fund’s *Tropical Africa* (1960).

3 These were: 1919 (Paris), 1921 (London, Paris, and Brussels), 1923, (London and Lisbon), 1927 (New York), and 1945 (Manchester).

4 Shepperson defines Pan-Africanism with a capital “P” and pan-Africanism with a lower case “p.” I will explore his differentiation between the two shortly.
by the Trinidadian barrister, Henry Sylvester Williams. Yet, Shepperson himself does not include Sylvester Williams or the 1900 conference in his definition of Pan-Africanism proper, or to use Shepperson’s term “modern Pan-Africanism” (Shepperson, “Pan-Africanism and “Pan-Africanism” 354). Williams is mentioned twice in the essay: first, as the “original secretary” of the Pan-African Conference of 1900; and again, on the same page as having possibly stolen the idea for the gathering and a pan-African movement from the “American Negro,” T. Thomas Fortune (Shepperson 354). Not only is Williams’s Conference not part of capital “P” Pan-Africanism for Shepperson, but even if it were to be included, Shepperson highlights its US-based African American roots. He argues that “it must never be forgotten that Du Bois and his associates in the early Pan-African movement were Americans as well as Negroes” (353).

Shepperson lists the 1900 Conference as one of the nine possible “organizational influences” on the movement proper that gave rise to its particular form. But ultimately he remains uncertain of its significance. He writes,

[although this is mentioned by Padmore and Decraene, its significance for the emergence of the formative conferences of modern Pan-Africanism (1919 – 27) has still to be determined. If its original secretary was a West Indian, H. Sylvester Williams, DuBois was Chairman of its Committee of Address to the Nations of the World. Although the permanent organization which it set up was allowed to fall into disuse—probably because of the introverting influence of the bitter struggle for civil rights in the United States at this time—the pan-African sentiment which it engendered was not lost. (354)

The 1900 Conference is not part of modern Pan-Africanism, which draws from the congresses of 1919 through 1927. Thus, while Padmore and Decraene’s texts are works of Pan-Africanist

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5 See Edwards, The Practice of Diaspora. Edwards’s work on diaspora and black internationalism is instrumental in the recent troubling of African American vanguardism in studies of black internationalism and even the black Atlantic. Also see Stephens.
literature, Williams’s *The British Negro* and Captain Harry Dean’s autobiography are not.\(^6\) Further, Shepperson privileges African American influence on the movement, arguing that even if Williams was West Indian, Du Bois, chairman of the committee that penned the “Address to the Nations of the World,” was an African American. If the African Association fell into disuse it was because of “the bitter struggle for civil rights” in the US.

In *Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa 1900-1945*, Ayodele Langley accuses DuBois of deliberately excluding other Pan-Africanisms in order to place the congresses that he organized at the center of any genealogy of the movement (Langley). Whatever the cause, the omission has often been maintained in the field of African Diaspora Studies and the study of Pan-Africanism itself. Shepperson’s emphasis on African Americans as the chief progenitors of the movement may stem from a confluence of factors: the dominance of the Harlem Renaissance as the modern flowering of black cultural and intellectual practice, Du Bois’s own emphasis on the special place of the American Negro in Pan-Africanism and his own genealogy of the Pan-African movement that highlights its African American origin (Edwards 46), the overshadowing of the 1900 Conference by the first World War and the events that led up to it, or the paucity of the archive of Williamsian Pan-Africanism.\(^7\) To be fair, Shepperson does signal the importance of other black people in the Americas, even using the term “New World Negroes” (Shepperson 350). But the espousal of African American origins may have more to do with an over-dependence on national borders. From the diaspora, although border-crossing is often understood as a given in the spirit of

\(^{6}\) Nor for that matter is J. E. Casely Hayford’s *Ethiopia Unbound* (1911).

\(^{7}\) As I have already mentioned, there are now three biographies on Sylvester Williams. Each is a pioneering work of Pan-African history, however, each has gaps, especially around his years in South Africa. Such gaps point to the scanty nature of the Williamsian archive and the absence of Sylvester Williams and other early Pan-Africanists from either the Pan-African archive, the South African archive, or the British imperial records.
our scholarship, it does not always embody it. At the same time, the prevalence of empire as the frame of political and social belonging in this earlier pan-Africanism complicates theorisations of pan-Africanism as radical from our present, when decolonisation and nation-state formation are nearly synonymous.

Immanuel Geiss’s definition of Pan-Africanism while more extensive, resembles Shepperson’s. For both, Pan-Africanism bears an amorphous character that is hard to pin down to a single definition. Geiss offers three possible ways of understanding the terms. The first refers to the “intellectual and political movements” comprised of Africans and peoples of African descent. That is, we are all one race or people. The second comprises those “ideas which have stressed or sought the cultural unity and political independence of Africa, including the desire to modernize Africa on the basis of equality of rights.” For Geiss central to this are ideas like the “‘redemption of Africa’ and ‘Africa for the Africans.’” Finally, Geiss offers the third way in which we may understand the term as: those “ideas or political movements” that call for the political unification of the continent or “close political coordination” (Geiss 3 – 4).

Cognizant of its emergence of three different continents (Africa, the Americas, and Europe), Geiss suggests that it is necessary to think of Pan-Africanism as having developed on different planes. He offers six: a ‘Pan-Colonial’/ ‘Pan-Colour’d movement; a racial movement (consisting only of black Africans and their descendants); continentally circumscribed unity at the exclusion of those in the diaspora; regional unities (southern, East, West, and North) toward continental unity; nationalism, or the formation of nation-states; and tribalism.
Like Shepperson, Geiss recognizes Du Bois as the “father of Pan-Africanism” despite his acknowledgement of Du Bois’s tendency toward “self-adulation” (Geiss 5). He contends that anything before “1958, when two Pan-African conferences were held on African soil (both in Accra), and the ‘diaspora’ first began to return to the ‘promised land’ of Africa,” is “prehistory” (7 – 8). For Geiss, the movement “may be seen as African nationalism extended to embrace either the entire African continent or Black Africa alone” (6 – 7). Geiss too conceives of pan-Africanism proper as beginning with the clear push toward decolonization and African nationalism.

In his version of the movement’s history, C. L. R. James lists Williams as part of Pan-Africanism’s trinity with Du Bois and Padmore in “Towards the Seventh: The Pan-African Congress—Past, Present and Future” (James 236). But as I have already mentioned James makes it clear that Du Bois laid the “intellectual foundation” of the movement. He begins his address with a discussion of “the first descent into barbarism” for the West, World War I and the inability, in his opinion, of Western consensus to decipher what it meant. For James the first Pan-African Conference, along with the South African war, “one of the first great wars for independence of a colonial people,” he explains, were conscious attempts to expose the problems of Western civilisation, imperialism, capitalism, and labor regimes that led to the war. Those early Pan-Africanists laid the foundation on which the work of he and his fellow writers at Dakar in 1976 stood (238). James warns his listeners against judging their predecessors,

[b]ecause even in those days, although they were making appeals to governments and persons in authority, asking them please to look at what was happening to Black people, and to use their influence in order to lift Black people from the low level at which they were being maintained...there was more than a spark of Du Bois militancy, even defiance ... (238 – 9)
Despite James’s defence of early pan-Africanists, this passage illustrates the intellectual crisis experienced by even colonial Victorians like James as to what to do with them, or in the case of Du Bois, this earlier version of him. James remains ambivalent about the tepidity of the Pan-Africanist demands that emerged out of Du Bois’s first congress. “I personally believe that there was ground for a bolder Call,” James says (240). Certainly with James the “bolder call” he felt was necessary was a Marxist one, but his confusion of how to keep them as predecessors and partners with whom he could lock arms “at the rendezvous of victory” is emblematic of the tension with which many pan-Africanists and scholars of pan-Africanism have had to contend from the mid-1940s onward.

Simon Gikandi points to the colonial Victorianism of pan-Africanists of the 1940s, such as Jomo Kenyatta, George Padmore, Kwame Nkrumah, and C. L. R. James, who called for decolonization (Gikandi, “Pan-Africanism and cosmopolitanism” 3 – 4). Earlier pan-Africanists like Henry Sylvester Williams, though critical of the Scramble for Africa, did not advocate the end of British imperialism. In an interview in South Africa for the *Review of Reviews*, Williams, the first black barrister accepted to the Cape bar, voiced his hope for a federation of the various non-Europeans in Cape Town. The city as well as the wider Cape Colony with its qualified non-racial franchise was an important site for many oppressed peoples at the beginning of the twentieth-century. If successful, such a federation would have served as a model for the rest of the empire.

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8 The title of James’s selected writings comes of course from Aime Cesaire’s *Cahier d’un retour au pays natal* (Notebook of Return to my Native Land). “And no race holds a monopoly of beauty, of intelligence, of strength, and,/ There is a place for all at the Rendezvous of Victory” (Eshleman and Smith 72).

9 James himself was a federalist, and left his native Trinidad in 1962 when it became clear that West Indian federation would not be the form that independence in the Anglophone Caribbean would take.
most especially people of African descent. Even after leaving South Africa Williams continued to write about the Cape from England and his native Trinidad. While in England, he worked on behalf of several chiefs from southern Africa who were rapidly being dispossessed of their land. Francis Z. Peregrino, from the Gold Coast (contemporary Ghana), was another attendee at the 1900 Conference who championed the British Empire as late as 1909. He was an ardent pan-Africanist and had lived in Upstate New York, settling in South Africa by way of the Conference. Pan-Africanists like Sylvester Williams and Peregrino were subjects of the British empire who wanted to be fully included in it and accepted as British. If they hoped for citizenship, it was British citizenship.

If our question is: Why has early Pan-Africanism failed to enter into the discourse around Pan-Africanism as parts of its “intellectual foundation?” I want to argue that earlier Pan-Africanists and the 1900 conference engender dis-ease for many scholars of black modernity, Pan-Africanism, and the black radical tradition because we remain unable to attend to the significance of empire in modern black imaginings of freedom. If we look at James’s engagement with Du Bois and his contemporaries that I quoted above we see that for James it is their “militancy, even defiance” that redeems them. He reads their text, “Address to the Nations of the World,” his and his contemporaries’ (anti-colonial and postcolonial) terms. If James, Padmore, Kenyatta, and Nkrumah are colonial Victorians they are late colonial Victorians. It is their lateness that differentiates them from the early Pan-Africanists.

10 As we will see by the end of this chapter and those that follow this promise is not fulfilled, but what we are concerned with is why the Cape is important at this time and what resistance at the Cape looks like. This is an important exercise not only for our understanding of Pan-Africanism and colonial Africa, but also South Africa’s relationship to the African diaspora (of the transatlantic slave trade) and the Black Atlantic.

11 See Peregrino’s pamphlet, His Majesty’s Black Labourers, African Studies Library, University of Cape Town. In it he encourages black people in South Africa to serve in the British army in the first World War.
The colonial/Afro-Victorians of the 1940s present one kind of problem to us as postcolonial scholars. (I use postcolonial here to signal the time-space continuum from which we write, rather than a particular theoretical allegiance.) That is, how do we read their attachment to the “culture of colonialism”—schools, literature, sport, music, language, and so on—alongside their fierce assertions of identity or passionate cries for decolonization? These late colonial Victorians drew from the ideas of their predecessors, as we continue to today. The key difference is that for their predecessors, nationalism was one of the options, not the only option, for imagining of freedom. For the postcolonial and even the late colonial, the colonial project has always already been unviable as a successful politics of belonging. It was not so for the colonial, white or black. With the scholarly turn to Pan-Africanism, Pan-African literature, African literature, and Caribbean literature emerging at the start of global decolonization and postcolonial nation-state formation this proved a conundrum for these and surrounding fields of study.

In this way, Shepperson’s privileging of American federalism as a central influence from which the notion of Pan-Africa arose (Shepperson, “Pan-Africanism,” 349), comes out of precisely this problem of how to read black and African colonial texts from fields constituted under notions of black and African existence and liberation from which such texts are sometimes aberrations. We have often attempted to resolve the problem that early Pan-Africanism by labeling these early figures facsimiles of Englishness, Frenchness, Europeanness, whiteness—“mimics.” Yet their ability to think blackness globally was in part a result of their experience of imperialism as a racially oppressive and abusive system(s) of governance and their ability to traverse the Empire(s) to which

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12 James’s attachment to federation (over nation) resembles Williams’s. Williams called for a federation of all non-Europeans in South Africa (Malays, West Indians, Kaffirs, Indians, and Coloureds).
they belonged, and know it. It was also born of an intimacy with the rights discourse of British imperial liberalism.

‘At a Future Date’

Henry Sylvester Williams arrived in Trinidad as a young boy from Barbados. He was the son of a wheelwright. Growing up on the northeast of the island in the small village of Arouca, Williams lived among ex-slaves, the descendants of the free black population, Indians, French and English whites, as well as Chinese and Portuguese immigrants enticed to the island to set up small trade enterprises. In the last decade of the nineteenth century he travelled to North America, settling in Nova Scotia for a few years, before he moved to London in 1896. There he studied at Grays’ Inn and by the time he moved to Cape Town in 1903, he was a barrister.

In many ways Williams’ migratory life is evocative of the fragmentary and transnational nature of Caribbean existence in the 21st-century. After the abolition of slavery, many peoples of African descent were unwilling to return to work on plantations. Further, with the rise of Indian beet sugar on the European market, the demand for West Indian cane sugar fell, and peoples of African descent in the region found themselves unable to find work. As Williams himself explains in *The British Negro*, many left the island in pursuit of work (Williams 23). But for them, traversing the globe at the end of Queen Victoria’s reign, the world was not divided into nations, rather it was a series of imperial zones. For those of the Anglophone Caribbean, if the pressing question in nineteenth-century was how to go from *slave* to *subject*, the fin de siècle was about how to make black imperial *subjects* imperial *citizens*. Henry Sylvester Williams endeavored to imagine full freedom for himself and the other members of the African race, the British Empire was his vehicle.
The 1900 Pan-African Conference that he organized in London certainly brought together leading black intellectuals from around the world, including, as I have mentioned, the African American W. E. B. Du Bois. As Chairman of the Committee of the Address to the Nations of the World, Du Bois led the drafting of that document in which we are told: “The problem of the twentieth-century is the problem of the colour-line.” Yet despite his collaboration with African Americans like Du Bois as well as French-speaking peoples of African descent, like the Haitian Benito Sylvain, at his core, Williams seemed to operate steadfastly in the imperial frame.

Starting with Owen Mathurin’s *Henry Sylvester Williams and the Origins of Pan-Africanism, 1869 – 1911* (1975), a body of scholarship has emerged around Williams. J. R. Hooker followed the following year with *Henry Sylvester Williams: Imperial Pan-Africanist* (1976). Much of this scholarship attempts to recast Williams as the “father” of the movement instead of W. E. B. Du Bois. With her recent biography of him, *Origins of Pan-Africanism: Henry Sylvester Williams, Africa, and the African Diaspora*, Marika Sherwood means to “restore...Sylvester Williams to his rightful place in Black struggles for equality and in the history of Pan-Africanism” (Sherwood xv). Despite the gaps that remain in Williams’s archive, Sherwood does much to place him at the center of Pan-Africanism’s birth. In 2001, the University of the West Indies held a conference, “Henry Sylvester Williams and Pan-Africanism: A Retrospection and Projection,” in celebration of the centenary of the 1900
meeting. His contribution has been noted in several seminal works on Pan-Africanism as well.13

Williams’ commitment to the British Empire, however, is minimized or understood as a justification for placing him outside of Pan-Africanism proper. For Immanuel Geiss, Williams and the Pan-Africanism that he typifies are part of “the prehistory of Pan-Africanism” (Geiss 5/7).

Marika Sherwood, in her attempt to resuscitate him, points to his desire for “true citizenship” (Sherwood 133). Yet in his “Observation” to The British Negro, from which Sherwood’s reference is taken, Williams writes that “[the British Negro’s] present position in the Empire falls short of what is true British citizenship” (Williams vii).

The “aims and objects” of the African Association that he started in 1897, were given as: “to encourage a feeling of unity to facilitate friendly intercourse among Africans in general; to promote and protect the interests 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 [matters] affecting their rights and privileges as subjects of the British Empire, by direct appeals to the Imperial and Local Governments” (Temple Papers qtd in Sherwood 40). The Association meant to foster a race-based filiality through the British Empire.

13 See Hooker; Mathurin. Williams’ contribution is mentioned in George Padmore’s Pan-Africanism or Communism?, (1971). Anne Victoria Kinloch is an important figure in her own right, who has also fallen out of the record of Pan-Africanism. During her time in Britain she gave several lectures, including her “entrance article” for the London Writers’ Club, at the reading of which Emmanuel M’Zumbo Lazare, Williams’s friend from Trinidad, was present (Sherwood 41). Lazare was in England to take part in the jubilee pageant as a member of Trinidad’s Light Infantry Volunteers. In an article for the Trinidad Daily News, Williams writes that Lazare told him of Mrs. Kinloch, her desire to join the Writers’ Club, and her stirring talk on the abuses meted out to “natives” in South Africa. Whether Lazare introduced them or simply made Williams aware of her is unclear, but the two ultimately met in Birmingham, where Williams gave a paper on temperance (41). Thoroughly impressed by her, he asked her to share the platform with him. According to Williams, of the five minutes he allotted her, “she took fifteen or twenty” (Hooker 22). Kinloch appears less and often to explain how Williams became interested in South Africa. All three of the biographies on Williams mention Kinloch in this way. However, in more recent scholarship she has begun to appear as a symbol of the exclusion of women of African descent from the study of Pan-Africanism (Reddock 256 – 267.)
Williams started the African Association in London in 1897—the year of Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee—with Anne Victoria Kinloch, a black South African woman married to a Scottish engineer. It would later be renamed the Pan-African Association. At the start of the twentieth-century, the African Association brought together several leading black intellectuals from across the globe for its conference, including W. E. B. Du Bois, Anna Julia Cooper, Bishop Alexander Walters, and Samuel Coleridge-Taylor. The famous Jubilee Singers performed at least once during the three-day event. Out of the conference emerged that most recognizable sentences of the early twentieth-century: “the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line.”\(^\text{14}\) As a product of collaboration in writing and multiple publication by at least two attendees, the “Address to the Nations of the World” is not only a sign of Du Bois’ singular genius, it also signals the broad intellectual reach of the 1900 Pan-African Conference. Williams postponed the Conference from January to July in order to get leaders like Du Bois to attend, as several notable men and women of African descent would be in Paris at that time for the World’s Fair in Paris. Rather than Du Bois being one of a few intellectual giants that Williams “was bright enough to ask...[to] please to come to London to take part,” we see his ideas as part of a rich intellectual landscape that offers us much insight into the workings out of black identity and coloniality at the dawn of the twentieth-century (James, “Towards the Seventh” 238). Yet the conference and several of the early Pan-Africanists who conceived of it are often excluded from Pan-Africanism proper.

If we define Pan-Africanism as a struggle for independent nationhood as it began to be defined in the 1950s and 1960s, with the lead up to decolonization, Williams imperial

\(^{14}\) This sentence is rarely recognized as having been conceived in committee at the conference, rather it is credited to W. E. B. Du Bois’s *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903). However, it first appeared in print in French in *Du Sort des Indigènes dans les Colonies d’Exploitation*. I will return to this shortly.
commitment makes him a hard figure for many scholars of Pan-Africanism and the Diaspora. But as a conduit between the Diaspora and the continent, and the Caribbean and South Africa in particular, Williams deserves further attention. He is part of the fabric of struggle for liberation in the Caribbean that is often associated with C. L. R. James and George Padmore. Both men stood with their fathers and listened to Williams when he returned to Trinidad in 1901 to open branches of the Pan-African Association. This Caribbean sojourn was reported in *The South African Spectator*, a journal published out of Cape Town from 1901 intermittently until 1919, when its publisher and editor, Francis Peregrino, died. Padmore’s father, H. A. Nurse, boarded with Williams’s wife and children after Williams’s death in 1911. Young Padmore would have been exposed to stories of Williams as he visited his father. The Water Riot of 1903 in Trinidad was organized by the Trinidad Ratepayers’ Association, the members of which had first joined together under the banner of the Pan-African Association. In Jamaica, several of the members of the Pan-African Association were also in the People’s Convention, an organization committed to mobilizing black men and women to discuss the pressing issues of their time. While touring both islands, Williams spoke of South Africa. Despite the Acting Governor’s assertion that “oppression of ‘the race’ in the West Indies or Africa” was nonexistent and Jamaicans should not be concerned about “Bantus or Kaffirs of South Africa,” Williams continued to rail about the poor conditions black people were subjected to here. And his listeners continued to be politicized by the issue.

Perhaps the reason for this is best elucidated by the Guyanese writer Wilson Harris in “History, Fable and Myth in the Caribbean and Guianas,” when he reads another 19th-century

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15 Peregrino is memorialized at the District Six Museum as an important member of the community. But he had also lived in Upstate New York, where he published another journal entitled *The Spectator*. In chapter two of my Ph.D. thesis, I think comparatively about the two journals and his project as a part of the black intellectual circuits of his time.
Afro-Caribbean writer, J. J. Thomas. Published in 1889, Thomas’ *Froudacity: West Indian Fables* by James Anthony Froude is a polemic that Thomas wrote and published a year after James Anthony Froude’s travelogue on his time in the Caribbean, in which Froude claimed only a year earlier that the region was not yet ready for self-government. Thomas debunks Froude’s claims one by one in *Froudacity*. Wilson Harris, however, argues that both Froude and Thomas are unable to break out of the “central dilemma” of the region: that “the human person was an object to be measured, validated, pronounced fit or unfit” in economic terms (Harris 154). It is from this central dilemma, Harris suggests, that “[a]ll of Froude’s biases and aberrations in his reports on the Caribbean sprang.” This central dilemma of Caribbean existence, he continues, “lies at the heart of economic fascism wherever this is practised, Rhodesia and South Africa are glaring examples” (154). Williams too recognized that the Caribbean and South Africa had this in common.

In South Africa, Williams worked with the likes of Dr. Abdullah Abdurahman, J. H. M. Gool, and John Tengo Jabavu, icons in coloured and black African politics. At least one of his articles appeared in Sol Plaatje’s newspaper *Tsala ea Becoana* (‘Friend of the people’), a self-styled “independent race newspaper” *Koranta ea Becoana*, or the *Bechuana Gazette*. With his articles in the *Pan-African*, and *The British Negro*, Williams’ writing warrants literary attention. Granting such attention is not in the service of restoring yet another narrative of a great man, but rather to restore the circuits of exchange and debate about possible futures for black people at the start of the 20th-century. In Williams’ *British Negro*, of whom he writes in *The British Negro: A Factor in the Empire*, we may augment our understanding of the “New Negro” typically associated with the Harlem

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16 I use coloured and black African here in recognition that though all three of these men may have been considered coloured in their time, they have been remembered based on the racial categories of apartheid and contemporary South Africa.
Renaissance. The New Negro in this context not only signifies a turn toward a more urban black subjectivity in the US, but also a global shift toward an explicitly nationalist and internationalist black consciousness and away from European empire.\(^{17}\)

But *The British Negro* also troubles exclusively nationalist or continental readings of black South African writing. We know that the South African writer Sol T. Plaatje spent some time in the US in the 1920s after an unsuccessful trip to England to the convince the Crown to repeal the Native Land Act.\(^{18}\) While there he spoke on the platform of Marcus Garvey’s Universal Negro Improvement Association several times. The UNIA’s journal, *Negro World*, publicized *Native Life in South Africa*. By 1922, a free copy was given to those who purchased a year’s subscription (Martin 136 – 137). But Plaatje’s now famous book, describing the effects of that act on black landowners and tenants, shares uncanny similarities with Williams *The British Negro*. The enumeration of the number of black people in South Africa with which Plaatje begins the first chapter, mirrors Williams’ own enumeration of the “factor” the British Negro represents in the Empire. There is a strong Christian ethos in both as well as an appeal to British liberalism. But perhaps the most interesting is the use of “pariah” to name the experience of partial citizenship for black people. Williams contends that the black British subject is “an alien and a pariah” in the Empire without full citizenship rights. Describing the effect of the Native Land Act eleven years later, Plaatje writes: “[a]waking on Friday morning, June 20, 1913, the South African Native found himself, not actually a slave, but a pariah in the land of his birth” (Plaatje 17). Reading Williams’ text is an important

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\(^{17}\) Brent Hayes Edwards considers the transnational scope of the Harlem Renaissance and the “New Negro” in his masterful account in *The Practice of Diaspora*. He uses diaspora as the conceptual frame through which to do so. Looking before the Renaissance I want to consider what the significance of empire was for ‘framing blackness,’ as Edwards might put it.

\(^{18}\) In 1914, Plaatje left Cape Town as part of a delegation from the South African Native National Congress (SANNC), which would become the African National Congress (ANC) in 1923.
literary exercise for thinking through literary intellectual traditions of the Caribbean, the US, Europe, and Africa. The British Negro stands at a nexus between the Diaspora and the continent in the colonial era.

Thirty-four pages in length, the text is a compilation of two of Williams’ essays, “The British Negro: A Factor in the Empire” and “The Ethiopian Eunuch.” Initially, Williams delivered them as lectures Williams gave in Britain to several clubs and associations. The first, for instance, was given before the South Place Debating Society, while the second was an address before the Peckham Theological Forum. His audiences were mainly white, liberal, Christian, and English. But by the end of “The British Negro” the audience is doubled or split between an overt white one in the metropole and black colonial readers across the Empire. “The British Negro” attends to the development of the African race in Williams’ time along “a foreign basis” under colonialism and the ways in which the “British Negro” was an agent for good in the Empire. Williams identifies this as “the practical view” in his opening. “The Ethiopian Eunuch,” however, takes what he calls, the “philosophical standpoint,” exploring African Christianity and civilization. First, let us focus our attention on “The British Negro” as it goes to the heart of Williams’s imperialism, his Pan-Africanism, and how South Africa functioned as a kind of lens through which he envisioned black utopia from a distinctly Anglophone Caribbean perspective.

The essay occurs in two parts. In the first, Williams enumerates the number of Africans “wholly or in part” who reside within the Empire. At 65 000 000 “souls,” he asserts that the race is an important factor in the Empire, consuming something like £45 000 000 worth of British goods. As slaves they created and consolidated British wealth; as freed men and women, their “descendants have virtually become the owners of the soil, contributing three-fourths of the total
revenue in our West Indian Colonies” (Williams 13). In South Africa, Zanzibar, and other parts of
the Empire, he explains the “unrighteous exploitation” of black labor continues to render the race
‘useful’ (14). Additionally, black servicemen have proved essential to its expansion and
maintenance (20). As such, he concludes the first section by asserting emphatically that the black
British subject is not a burden to the Empire, but a blessing (22).

The second part of the essay turns decisively toward South Africa, which Williams
identifies as his central “consideration.” Here his critique of Empire from the black colonial
perspective is at its sharpest. Despite the “well advertised...excuse for the [Anglo-Boer] war” being
“the amelioration of Native condition under Boer Government,” Williams maintains his doubts.
Gold, diamonds, and the other mineral resources abundant in South Africa are the true reason for
the war. He lists the material conditions that would better black life in South Africa, such as:
unlimited and equal access to education; equal access to public transportation and institutions, as
well as points of purchase; and religious equality and respect, where by European missionaries treat
“their black or native missionary brother in Christ...as a man instead of as a dog” and do God’s
work rather than bow to greed. This improvement of black existence in South Africa is connected
to a wider black experience in the very next sentence. “My sincerest hope,” he writes, “is that
throughout the British Colonies a man’s colour will form no hindrance to advancement providing
his merit warrants promotion. At present colour-prejudice operates even to the extent of refusing
him the franchise, and a sufficient compensation for his labours.” The next sentence takes us back
to South Africa: “If British Rule will clean the Augean stables in South Africa of the vicarious evils,
blood-curdling and astounding practices carried on even previous to the war, and deposit the
loathsome debris in Lethe, then I heartily welcome it, but in the absence of a guarantee, and a wholesome public opinion there, one hesitates to pronounce the ‘gratias agamus’” (22).

He writes toward the close of the essay that: “[t]o urge and suggest, here and now, a universal union between [the 65 million black British souls] would be impossible, and absurd, owing to the inter-tribal differentiations which obtain, but prospectively seeing the tendency of British civilisation is to generalise a common mode of thought, it would not be hyper-sanguine to imagine this probability at a future date” (26). He is not then wedded to the British Empire for its own sake, but for the revolutionary future it can enable. South Africa, as an imperial question, becomes both a site on which this future can be enacted and a catalyst for it.

The final paragraph picks up the religious element introduced by ‘gratias agamus.’ His reader is called to work toward improving the lot of the race in the Empire so that at the time of Reckoning only those who do not participate in that divine work of race uplift will have reason to worry. Williams quotes the following lines from Robert Montgomery’s *The Omnipresence of the Deity*,

But who can trace Thine unrestricted course,  
Though Fancy followed with immortal force?  
There’s not a blossom fondled by the breeze,  
There’s not a fruit that beautifies the trees,  
There’s not a particle in sea or air,  
But nature owns Thy plastic influence there!  
With fearful gaze, still be it mine to see  
How all is fill’d and vivified by Thee;  
Upon thy mirror, earth’s majestic view,  
To paint Thy presence and feel it too. (26)

These are the same lines that Thomas Babington Macaulay sited in his scathing review of *The Omnipresence of the Deity*, entitled “Mr. Robert Montgomery’s Poems,” in the April 1830 issue of
the *Edinburgh Review*. Macaulay roasts the poem for being an unoriginal work of “literary pilfering.” These particular lines that Williams uses, Macaulay identifies as “an excellent specimen of Mr. Robert Montgomery’s Turkey carpet style of writing” (Macaulay 660). But Williams uses these well-known lines to speak to the white, liberal, Christian audience that he often found himself speaking before. They ground his work on behalf of his race in a relatable Christian ethos for his white audience and readership. At the same time, his use of these particular lines hint at his own possible ruminations about the state of print culture and the commodification of the literary text. But Williams goes further, employing Montgomery’s poem to encode a radical and subversive call to his race, ending with “O race of mine!” immediately after.

By placing the poem before this plaintive cry of racial filiation, Williams makes the lines from the poem speak not the omnipresence of the Supreme Being but of the Empire and the race working through it. South Africa affords a shift in audience/reader and a subversive recalibration of a relatively apolitical piece of English verse. We might use Homi Bhabha term, “subversive mimicry,” but it is subversive nonetheless, casting those presumably in authority, into a state of anxiety at some future date. The omnipresence of deity becomes the omnipresence of the Empire. If peoples of African descent work within the Empire, it also becomes about the omnipresence of their race. In his hands the poem acknowledges Empire’s pervasive reach and suggests that the African race harness it to achieve its own ends. Overtly building the Empire has a subversive end: the future black union of which Williams speaks. As Williams speaks to his predominantly white, English audience, he also speaks to a global black one.

Williams wrestles with that “central dilemma” of Caribbean Society in the essay. But unlike J. J. Thomas, he begins to navigate a way out of it by recasting the British Empire as a network of
black solidarity. The South African question is what allows him to do so, whereby South Africa represents the re-inscription of this dilemma and a way beyond it. South Africa gives him an opportunity to transform Empire into a network for a future black utopia rather than a system of racial oppression.

The readers he speaks of when he says that he has shown that the Negro is a factor for good in the Empire may be mostly white, but as he moves to conclusion by way of South Africa and its “native question,” he begins to speak of some future black union. The impossibility and absurdity of uniting “them” becomes on the final page part of “the great struggle before us” for whom “forbearance [will] be the touchstone of unity, and ‘forward’ the silent command of the heart, so that when Father Time shall have called a reckoning, these lines, chosen from Robert Montgomery, will be the interpretation of an anxious mind” (Williams 27). By placing South Africa and the Cape at the heart of the black experience, Williams reminds us of the importance of empire as a formative experience for many black people (not only those in the British Empire) in that period.

The melding of race and Christianity follows through to the second essay in the volume, *The Ethiopian Eunuch*. R. J. Hooker claims that Williams was not a proponent of “African personality” (Hooker 111), but in “The Ethiopian Eunuch” he speaks of the “singular interest the personality and character” of the Ethiopian in the Old Testament. This work of reconstructing his history exemplifies “the duty of every cultured member of the Hammetic race” in Williams’ estimation. Thus what emerges from these two essays is Williams commitment to both the restoration of the rich cultures of the race in history and the recognition of the contributions of

19 Hooker means this in terms of Negritude.
the race to the British Empire. South Africa seems to offer the platform from which the enlightened histories of peoples of African descent could be put into the present at the start of the twentieth-century when empire was a constitutive aspect of the black modern experience.

‘Umbala,’ or It Is True

Captain Harry Dean’s autobiography of his life in southern Africa proves difficult to place in a single national or regional literary tradition. It could be read as African American, African, or Pan-African. Its slipperiness in this regard, I suspect, has led to its relative absence from scholarship on Africa or its diasporas. First published in 1929, it begs us to consider the limits of the definitions of such literary traditions; most of which emerged in the 1950s and 1960s as much of colonial Africa and the diaspora became independent nation-states and civil rights were gained in the US.

The book details the adventures of the American-born ‘negro’ sea captain as he sailed his topsail schooner, the Pedro Gorino, in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans around southern Africa during the Anglo-Boer War. It reveals Dean’s desire to create a pan-ethnic community that included all peoples of African descent and extended from Cape Town to Pondo Land (a section of the Eastern Cape province of present day South Africa), Basotuland (modern day Lesotho), and

20 I explore the scholarship on Dean’s autobiography in detail below.

21 African American seems not only an ahistorical term by which to describe Dean, but also erases Dean’s own complex self-fashioning as an African. I use the term negro to signal the historical moment of Dean’s writing and experience. However, I put it in scare quotes to register his disdain for it as a racial descriptor. According to Sterling North, who provides the preface to both 1929 editions, “Captain Dean feels the word ‘negro’ is of false derivation, undescriptive, and in every way unfit for the position it fills in our language. He claims that there is no ‘negro’ race, only many African races” (Sterling North, “Introduction” to The Pedro Gorino: The Adventures of a Negro Sea-Captain in Africa and on the Seven Seas in His Attempts to Found an Ethiopian Empire; An Autobiographical Narrative, xii). Hence throughout much of the text, with the ironic exception of the subtitle, negro appears in scare quotes. In the longer version of this dissertation chapter I consider the terms of Dean’s collaboration with Sterling North, with whom he wrote the autobiography. I consider the ways in which the place and time of writing and publication of the text necessitate Dean’s collaboration with North and his use of ‘negro’ despite Dean’s own dissatisfaction with the term, but here I am interested in it as a sign of Dean’s notion of the multiplicity of African identity(ies).
Portuguese East Africa (currently Mozambique). In this respect, his narrative is equally African and Pan-African as it is African American. With its complex geographies, both in terms of Dean’s own African American identity and his cartographic engagement of the African continent, the book adds new dimensions to our discussions of African and African diasporan literary production.22 Dean’s narrative unfolds at the peak of (European) imperialism in Africa, when legal affiliation to the continent was not a matter of national citizenship, but rather of imperial subjecthood. In this way, reading it is an important exercise for current debates around empire, nation, and diaspora in African contexts.

When first published in 1929, the autobiography was released in both the United States and Britain. In 1989 another edition appeared in the United Kingdom. The American edition appeared under the title *The Pedro Gorino: The Adventures of a Negro Sea-Captain in Africa and on the Seven Seas in His Attempts to Found an Ethiopian Empire; An Autobiographical Narrative*. The same subtitle was used when the book appeared in Britain that same year, but rather than *The Pedro Gorino*, the book was called *Umbala*. With the ship’s name as its title, the US edition emphasises the generic conventions of the adventure tale from which the autobiography draws. At the same time the word “Negro” in the subtitle draws attention to the racial difference of the protagonist in relation to that of the typical hero of imperial adventure narratives. The British edition’s title, *Umbala*, is taken from Dean’s recounting of his interaction with a chief in the text. He explains that: “[e]very time the chief spoke this man uttered his single word [umbala] until it grew to an enormous and terrible significance.” Emtinso, an ordained minister of the African Methodist

22 The re-articulations these may give rise to are timely today as African diasporas in the Western Hemisphere and Europe now include an increasing number of recent African immigrants and their descendants, whose presence necessitates critical re-engagement with what diaspora means in terms of Africa. See Zeleza; Said.
Episcopal (AME) Church and Dean’s guide on the trip, translates “umbala” from his native Xhosa as, “It is true” (Dean 162). The scene serves as the epigraph of the UK edition: “One man at the hut of this chief said nothing but ‘Umbala.’ At my first opportunity I asked Emtinso the meaning of the word. He said that it meant ‘It is true’” (xxiv). Presumably, the British publishers used “Umbala” to affirm the veracity of Dean’s narrative, but by using Xhosa as the language in which to declare its authenticity, they also Africanised the text. The choice of “Umbala” for the autobiography’s title pushes the reader to consider it an African text, even if its author is an American “negro sea-captain.” Dean’s narrative then needs to be read not only as African American, but African too. I do not mean that we should disregard its writer’s or its own African American identity, but rather that we take seriously Dean’s engagement with Africa as his “own countree” (Dean 55), and all of the political, cultural, social, and even geographical registers embedded in such a claim.

The many valences of Dean’s definition of African identity are borne out by his shifting claims on citizenship and use of multiple racial terms throughout the text. He uses the term natives to refer to those indigenous to the continent who speak an indigenous African language (here Xhosa, Sotho, Swazi, and Zulu). African, Ethiopian, and ‘negro’ refer to all peoples of African descent. Africando, Kosar (Xhosa), Basuto, coloured, and American ‘negro’ are used to describe particular ‘African races,’ or ethnicities, he encounters on his adventures. Dean possesses an “ardently pro-African” vision, in which his disavowal of the term negro is also an embracing of the label African, such that African means “many African races” (North xi – xii). To hold together the complexity of African identity in the text and its autobiographical subject’s own dense self-fashioning, I amalgamate its US and British titles. The Pedro Gorino/Umbala signals the importance
of the ship as a microcosm of the pan-Africa for which Dean longs, his yearning to base such a community in southern Africa, and the text’s resistance to categorisation. The ‘many African races’ (re)presented in The Pedro Gorino/Umbala speak in at least one tongue other than English, Xhosa. Umbala then, not only affirms that the text is true, an issue that I will show most critics take up in their readings of it, but also signals the genuinely multiple and multilingual nature of African identity as well as the ‘truth’ about early pan-Africanism’s links to South Africa. As a text that deems southern Africa an important site of pan-Africanism, all within empire, I argue that it calls into question much scholarship on pan-Africanism; in most of which West Africa often serves as the place of origin for the diaspora, while the nation-state is the political formation through which pan-Africanism flourishes. I read Dean’s narrative as a work of African and pan-African literature toward restoring the early rumblings of pan-Africanism to its study.

The Pedro Gorino/Umbala comprises four books, each roughly fifty to sixty pages long. In the first book Dean describes how he came to fix upon the idea of a black empire. Most important is his own genealogy, which he provides in the first chapter. It shows Dean to be a pure-blooded African. Supposedly his mother descends from Sam Cuffe. Born Said Kafu “off the northwest coast of Africa,” Cuffe and his family nursed the pirate McKinnon Paige back to health in 1737 (Dean 3). According to Dean, Kafu joined Paige when he left to find his treasure in Madeira and return to England. Both men changed their names to avoid Paige’s discovery and capture by his enemies, Paige to Captain Slocum and Kafu to Sam Cuffe (5). Eventually they travelled to Salem, Massachusetts in 1740 in order to avoid danger. Cuffe became Paige’s business partner. Dean claims that his mother, Susan Cuffe, is the “great-grand-daughter of Sam Cuffee” and

23 I am referring here to the formal movement started with the 1900 Conference organised in London by Henry Sylvester Williams and continued with congresses in the interwar period and beyond.
granddaughter of Paul Cuffe, the black American sailor who was committed to the repatriation of peoples of African descent living in the New World back to Africa (12). John Dean, Susan’s second husband, is his father. John, Captain Harry attests, descends from a merchant family from Quata, Morocco that settled in Philadelphia during the colonial period. By chapter two, Dean can declare: “I am African and proud of it. There is not a drop of white blood in my veins.”

Interestingly, in the next sentence, Dean links his assertion of an authentic African identity to his family’s history as seafarers. “My ancestors,” he boasts, “have been sea captains and merchants and I have spent my life on the sea” (14). In fact, the rest of the first book is about Dean’s introduction to a sailor’s life under the stewardship of his uncle, Silas Dean, on the ship fittingly named *Travellor II*; Paul Cuffe’s own ship was called *Traveller*. In book I, he also learns about the *Full Moon*. According to his other paternal uncle, Solomon, the *Full Moon* was a Dutch ship that docked at Saldanha Bay in 1619 to get water. The king of the Herero held a feast for the captain of the ship and his crew, but they intoxicated the king and his best warriors. Once the Herero passed out, the *Full Moon* stole away with all of their valuables and twenty Herero children—sixteen girls and four boys. The children were taken to Jamestown, Virginia and sold into slavery. According to Uncle Solomon, their sale was the watershed moment at which the transatlantic slave trade began. “From then on,” he explains to his nephew, “they were buying and selling men and women like so many dumb animals the length and breadth of the Colonies.”

When young Harry asks why the Herero did not go after the Dutchmen and reclaim their children and their possessions, his uncle says that they did not have ships. The chapter closes with Dean repeating over and over again: “They shall have ships, they shall have ships” (53 – 4). The tale concretises Dean’s dream to bind all African races into one empire, the success of which is
dependent upon its ships. But it also makes Southern Africa an important site of return for New World Africans.\textsuperscript{24}

The second book tells the story of how Dean acquired the Pedro Gorino, settled in Cape Town, and laid the foundation for his empire. At Lourenço Marques (modern day Maputo), one of the Portuguese officials offers him Portuguese East Africa for £50 000 sterling. Dean details his letter writing campaign, petitioning his African American friends to support the purchase in order to build a homeland for the wandering African. None support him. His mentor, Captain Forbes, from whom he was sure he would get the money if all else failed, dies. Forbes’s death precipitates Dean’s turn away from black America as a source of Africa’s redemption, and toward his friends in Southern Africa, both indigenous and from the diaspora, to build a black empire.\textsuperscript{25} The last two books, around which much of my reading here is focused, cover Dean’s failed attempts to found an Ethiopian Empire with the help of Segow (Sigcau) Faku, king of the Pondo, Lerothodi (Lerotholi)\textsuperscript{26} and Baring, king and queen of Basotuland, Bishop Levi Jenkins Coppin, of the AME Church, Coppin’s wife, Fannie Jackson, who taught Dean as a boy, and Francis Z. Peregrino, editor of \textit{The South African Spectator}.\textsuperscript{27} How do we categorise and read such a text?

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{24} Uncle Solomon’s tale does not wholly mesh with what we now of the roughly twenty African slaves who arrived at Jamestown, Virginia in 1619. They did arrive abroad a Dutch ship, however, there is no record of one named the \textit{Full Moon}. The English explorer Henry Hudson docked his ship, the \textit{Half Moon}, at Jamestown that same year. Perhaps the name of the ship in Uncle Solomon’s version of the first African slaves in the Americas comes from his ship. For more on the historical record on the “20 and odd negroes” who were sold at Jamestown in 1619 see Sluiter 395 – 398.
\item \textsuperscript{25} In my summary of John Cullen Gruesser I engage the notion of black America as Africa’s redemption in terms of African American Ethiopianism, or African American understanding of its messianic role in Africa. I remain unconvinced that this was Dean’s dream, at least by the time he wrote his autobiography.
\item \textsuperscript{26} The first time I mention the (Xhosa and Sotho) names of people and places that appear in the book I will provide the contemporary orthography. However, thereafter I will use the spelling that Dean provides to maintain consistency with his text.
\item \textsuperscript{27} Peregrino and his journal are discussed in the following chapter.
\end{itemize}

Du Bois expresses skepticism at Dean’s account in his review. While he finds the “book [to be] interesting and in its final chapters, [a] fascinating story of Dean’s dream,” he maintains that “[p]erhaps his dream goes in some respects beyond the facts, but it is all worth reading” (Du Bois 376). In his introduction to the 1989 edition, George Shepperson concedes that “*Umbala* is a remarkable book, by a remarkable man, written in remarkable circumstances.” “In fact,” he continues, “it is all so remarkable that the reader who knows little or nothing of its background may be tempted to dismiss it as a farrago of fantasies” (Shepperson, “Introduction” vii). Shepperson himself first became acquainted with Dean’s narrative in the 1950s. Initially he was aware that “[Dean’s] attempts to found an ‘Ethiopian Empire’ could not be altogether mythical,” but would only “mentio[n] Dean in print” as “‘colourful’” (vii). Burger also expresses doubt at the full veracity of Dean’s tale since there is little evidence of his presence in southern Africa outside of his autobiography and one US consular record (Burger 86 – 88). Gruesser seems alone in his

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unshakeable confidence as to the full veracity of Dean’s account. He reads the autobiography alongside Pauline Hopkins’s *Of One Blood, or, the Hidden Self* (1903), with whose work Dean was certainly familiar. To prove Dean’s version of events, Gruesser relies on a 1903 letter to Hopkins, as editor of *Colored American Magazine*, from Allan Kirkland Soga, the editor of *Izwi Labantu* and son of the Xhosa minister, writer, and hymnist, Tiyo Soga. Soga wrote to Hopkins: “Dear Miss Hopkins:—Our attention has been drawn to your work in the *Colored American Magazine* by Mr. Harry Dean, a young American travelling in this country, who gives us a very flattering account of your work on behalf of the colored race” (Greusser, *Black on Black* 69).

Gruesser reads *The Pedro Gorino/Umbala* as an African American Ethiopianist text. African American Ethiopianism cast African Americans as the messianic saviours of African descended peoples and the African continent (6). Dean uses Ethiopia to refer to the continent and his longed for black empire. He does so despite his involvement with the first Pan-African Conference organised in London in 1900, where the term “Pan-African” was first coined. Soga’s letter confirms Dean’s familiarity with at least one other Ethiopianist writer, Pauline Hopkins. Gruesser’s comparative reading of Dean and Hopkins hinges on this. Yet, I want to argue that *The Pedro Gorino/Umbala* resists the African American Ethiopianist label.29

Clearly Dean admired Hopkins’s work. Yet, in his reference to Soga in *The Pedro Gorino/Umbala*, Dean does not mention Hopkins. He writes that:

> [a]t East London I met Kirkland Soga, editor of one of the very few newspapers ever printed in a native African tongue. His mother was a Scotch missionary and his father chief of a Kosar [Xhosa] tribe. His father had translated both the Bible and *Pilgrim’s Progress* into Kosar, and was the first native of South Africa to attract the interest of a biographer. (Dean 93)

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29 I will return to these terms (Pan-Africanism and Ethiopianism) in more detail shortly.
In describing their meeting Dean does not mention their discussion of Hopkins’s work. Reconstructing the event over two decades later, he could have forgotten that he had told Soga of her. Soga’s letter shows Dean as having immersed himself in the black South African circles and become a human circuit of exchange between black people in the diaspora and those on the continent. That Dean does not recall this suggests that he was more interested in impressing upon his reader the literary and intellectual practice of Soga and his father. He unveils to his readers an embodied Africa and modern African literati engaged in periodical culture and translation. Dean’s emphasis on African literary production and consumption suggests the writer’s own interest in a literary project that exceeds Gruesser’s Ethiopianist description.

Dean shared Hopkins’s affinity for the older label of Ethiopia when referring to the continent; the way he first saw it in his childhood copy of *The Arabian Chronicles* (Dean 14). But if in Hopkins’s writing, Africa is primarily a source of past greatness for African Americans, in Dean’s autobiography it pulsates in their present. The title of her book on Africa, *A Primer of Facts Pertaining to the Early Greatness of the African Race and the Possibility of Restoration by Its Descendants* (1905), intimates as much. Like most African American Ethiopianist literature, the book poses Africa as a temporal other, ancient and deteriorated. However, Dean does not only present Africa’s greatness in the past in his autobiography. Neither does he understand Africa to be only of significance to African Americans in their rehabilitation of themselves in America, or their restoration of the continent to its former glory. For Dean modern Africa, in his present, is glorious too.

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30 Clare Corbould examines the importance of Africa as a source of history and heritage to US blacks in the interwar years and the shift from being “black Americans” to “African Americans” (Corbould).
Dean’s determination to show his readers modern Africa and Africans, differs from Ethiopianist writers like Hopkins, and even most of his other contemporaries at his time of writing. Gruesser presents early twentieth-century African American Ethiopianism as being America-bound. Ethiopianists like Hopkins were not interested in physically returning to Africa, rather they saw Africa as a proud past upon which the African American could build his or her present and future in America. At other times they considered Africa as fallen and cast themselves as Africa’s only salvation. In either case, modern Africa is seen as being in decay.

Yet, we know that race men and women like Fanny Jackson-Coppin and Bishop Levi J. Coppin did return. As we will see in the following chapter, if Hopkins did not exactly want to move to the continent her construction of Africa as a repository of African American heritage in *Of One Blood, or, the Hidden Self* was complicated by Soga’s own writing about contemporary problems facing the race in Africa. Interestingly, his columns for *The Colored American Magazine* alongside which Hopkins’ last novel appeared, were titled, “Ethiopians of the Twentieth-Century.” Soga’s letter as one of the few references to Dean’s presence in South Africa, shows Dean’s conceptualisation of Africa as more than a site of pastness for the diaspora. In *The Pedro Gorino/ Umbala* Africa has a vibrant public and intellectual culture. Soga’s letter shows Dean’s participation in it. Further, it highlights the scarcity of this particular moment from African, South African and Diasporan studies.

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31 With rare exception, such as Claude McKay’s *Banjo* (1929), Harlem Renaissance literature did not differ from Ethiopianist literature in this respect. More contemporary with Dean is Sutton E. Griggs.

32 So too, in the next chapter I explore the relationship between Hopkins and Soga and the extent of their intellectual exchange.
In nearly all of the readings of Dean and his narrative he is considered “colourful,” to quote Shepperson, or the text is read as “an autobiographical curiosity,” to borrow from Gruesser. To be fair, this has much to do with the scarcity of sources that verify Dean’s presence in South Africa and what his southern African life was like. Shepperson writes that Dean’s book can never be fully understood “until secret archives are opened...and which, even then” some secrets may have died with Captain Harry Dean. But in some ways their skepticism is a product of the lacuna around the period in which Dean was in southern Africa and an active participant in pan-African struggle and coordination. Shepperson’s repetitive use of the word “source” in his account of Dean, his life, and his autobiography is symptomatic of a larger crisis that the text both presents and represents. That is, if Africa exists as a site of origins for the New World, with West Africa as the source of much of the slave labour forcibly exported from the continent in the four hundred years of transatlantic slavery, that is, the diaspora, how does one write about South Africa as a site of return, or recursion for those in the New World born of that diaspora? What, if anything, exists by way of relation between these two before the start of apartheid, and the anti-apartheid struggle, other than the occasional black South African students in the US?

Any attempt to answer this question, I think, must take on my previous question of how to categorise a text such as Dean’s. To contemporary readers, for whom citizenship, rights, and political agency for anti-colonials arose in lockstep with postcolonial nation-states, this seems to be the provocation of the subtitle of Dean’s autobiography: The Adventures of a Negro Sea-Captain in Africa and on the Seven Seas in His Attempts to Found an Ethiopian Empire. Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper demonstrate the relative newness of the nation-state in Empires in World History:

Power and the Politics of Difference. Up to the middle of the last century, they explain, “[r]elationships between democracy, nation, and empire were still debated.” Most of the “struggles for political voice, rights, and citizenship took place within empires” (Burbank and Cooper 7). Edwards, in fact, begins “The Uses of Diaspora” with the recognition that “diaspora...does not appear in [black] literature until surprisingly late after the Second World War.” Its emergence in scholarship on peoples of African descent is the result of interest in pan-Africanism by academics like Shepperson in the 1950s (Edwards, “The Uses of Diaspora” 45 – 6). That the 1950s also precipitates the period of widespread decolonisation and independence across Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean, I believe is part of this interest. Independence altered the nature of relation among peoples of African descent and the oppressed/colonised more generally. Elsewhere Edwards gives the history of the term in Jewish and Greek intellectual traditions. Interestingly, the connection between diaspora and empire erupts; in parentheses he notes that “strikingly, Jewish settlements around the Mediterranean Sea were commonly called apoikiai, or ‘colonies’” (Edwards, “Langston Hughes” 690). Dean’s narrative, although written after the first World War, is illustrative of the diversity of Pan-African identity in terms of empire up to the first decade of the twentieth-century and, sometimes, beyond.

In Captain Harry Dean’s narrative, black empire may not come to fruition, but it is not “a necessary fiction”; it is a possible future. And, though in some ways based on “ancient African beliefs,” his empire offers African descended peoples on the continent and in the ‘New World’ an alternative to their mutually constitutive experiences of European imperialism and racism. He offers southern Africa and his ship, the Pedro Gorino, as the nuclei of such an empire where New World Africans and continental Africans can join together. In the course of the narrative Dean meets an array of peoples of African descent working in South Africa for the uplift of their race.
Some he knows from the US, like Bishop Levi Jenkins Coppin of the American Methodist
Episcopal (AME) Church and his wife, Fannie Jackson, “the great ‘negro’ woman educator,” who
taught Dean as a young boy (Dean 14). In fact, Coppin receives Coppin appears throughout the
text and is even the focus of an entire section (Dean 139 – 142). Others he probably met in
London at the Pan-African Conference in 1900, such as Francis Z. Peregrino, the editor of The
South African Spectator (Dean 248 – 252). Peregrino was originally from the Gold Coast
(contemporary Ghana). 34 Peregrino was an important race man in the Cape until his death in
1919, while Dean was introduced to the ship’s cook, Sidney Wilson, by his mentor, Captain
Forbes. The two Barbadians, Peter Benjamin and Will Braithwaith, served as first and second mate
on the Pedro Gorino. But there were also people whom Dean met for the first time during his
sojourn in South Africa. These include: the black Canadian, Mary Brandon Tulley (Tule), who
established a mission in Idutywa, on the border on the Cape Colony, with her Xhosa husband
(Dean 156); the black Texan, Kid Gardner, whom Dean tries to help get out of prison; Reverend
Gow, the ‘coloured’ AME minister; Segow, the paramount chief of the Pondo; Lerothodi and
Baring, the king and queen of the Basuto; and the unnamed West Indian doctor who nurses Dean
back to health after the British attempt to poison him (Dean 244 – 247). Scattered across South
Africa, from North America, the Caribbean, and across Africa, Dean portrays them all as more or
less committed to a similar vision of black empire.

Bishop Coppin, Fannie Jackson, Peregrino, Reverend Gow, Segow, Lerothodi, and Baring
all express similar desires in the text to create an ‘Ethiopian Empire.’ Coppin, Peregrino, Gow help

34 Peregrino’s parents, ex-slaves, had ‘returned’ to Gold Coast from Bahia, Brazil in the aftermath of the 1835 uprising
there; he was born in 1851 in Accra, making the operations of empire in the black Atlantic all the more interesting for
a history of ‘return’ and pan-Africanism. See Sherwood.
Dean organise the meeting of the kings that he holds in Cape Town before he leaves South Africa.

At the opening of book II, Dean explains it as follows:

I would instigate a movement to rehabilitate Africa and found such an Ethiopian Empire as the world has never seen. It would be greater than the empire in Haiti, for while that island kingdom with its Toussaint l’Ouvertures and Christophes produced great palaces, and forts, and armies—battalions strong enough to whip the best soldiery of France—yet the island itself is a mere pin-point on the earth’s surface compared to the great continent of Africa where I planned to build my empire. It would be greater than the empires of Africa’s past—such powerful nations as those who raised their enormous stone structures at Zimbabwe and elsewhere—for although these kingdoms must have numbered their subjects by the hundreds of thousands, their store of knowledge was limited. I dreamed of an empire infinitely more cultured. Africa could again lift up her head. Her fleets would sail upon the sea. Her resources would once more enrich her own children. I dreamed of downfall for the imperialists, those wolves from the Zuider Zee and the slums of White Chapel. (Dean 67 – 8)

Dean uses empire to describe polities that no longer exist on the continent, such as Zimbabwe, as well as what Toussaint L’Ouverture and Henri Christophe forged in Haiti with the Haitian Revolution from 1791 to 1803. This is perhaps why C. L. R. James turns to empire at the end of The Black Jacobins, a history of the Haitian Revolution and Toussaint L’Ouverture’s anti-colonial heroism. The revolution that lead to the first freed black community after the start of the transatlantic slave trade did not immediately result in the formation of a nation-state. Wedded to the Jacobean principles of “equality, fraternity, and liberty,” Toussaint was reluctant to secede from the French Empire. Thus, the Haitian Revolution was less matter of gaining independence from the metropole that demanding equality.35

For his part Dean does not always define empire as a type of government at the head of which there is an emperor or supreme ruler. While based on their discussions of their shared

35 For more on Toussaint, the Haitian Revolution and black modernity see James, The Black Jacobins; Scott, Conscripts of Modernity.
dream of Ethiopian empire, the queen of Lesotho, Baring, assumes that when they “effect a
coalition between the Pondos, the Pondo Mesis, and the Basutos...her husband would be King over
such a union” (Dean 210), Dean makes clear to his reader that such a union would be democratic,
and even socialist. In the scene in which he witnesses the repetition of “umbala” each time the
chief speaks, he says:

[i]t came to me at this time that the native Ethiopians’ naïve confidence in their leaders
might, if used to the right ends, prove their most valuable asset, but if abused as it has been
in the past would surely keep them in an abased and lowly position...like a confiding wife;
they can see no error or defect, and that has been their downfall. (162)

In Dean’s empire good leadership necessitates consultation with one’s subjects, and good
citizenship requires that one remain active in the daily operations of government. As ostensible
leader of this empire, he eschews personal enrichment independent of that of those around him
and under his leadership. Both times he receives land concessions—first from Segow and then
from Queen Baring—he expresses a desire to develop them for the good of his race and empire
(178, 211). He expects his holdings in Basotuland to make him independently wealthy, but he also
plans to enrich the king and queen. And all three of them “dreamed of a center from which
culture could radiate to every corner of Africa” with its schools and cities (211).

Furthermore, Dean understands such a union to be inevitable if peoples of African descent
are to fight European imperialism successfully. In the autobiography, he reproduces a letter he
supposedly wrote at the time to a friend in the US. In it he says of the British:

Nothing will deter these men save physical power superior to their own and sufficiently
strong to strike terror into their leathern hearts. Their principal activity is marching up and
down the world sowing dragon’s teeth, and their principal aim to amass more gold than
any who went before them.

Unless humanity learns to choose for its leaders philosophers instead of the
megalomaniacs they have been choosing for the past sixteen centuries, their mechanical
inventions and arms of precision will eventually help them to destroy themselves and to wipe the human race from the face of the earth” (177).

He is convinced that the only way to resist European imperialism and its injustices against Africans is to form an independent empire. But by empire, he is at once referring to the mode of governance that dominates the period, and a way of holding together multiple African races.

In much of the scholarship on black internationalism Africa, not necessarily Africans, remains absent in the daily working out of a black internationalist practice or as a vital node within the black Atlantic beyond the transatlantic slave trade. African participation in black global networks has been studied, but often this scholarship focuses on those Africans who are, or were, writing and working from what we now call the Global North.\(^\text{36}\) Dean’s autobiography, written at the height of what we often call the Harlem Renaissance, immerses us in this kind of dialogue in Africa, when African American authors were on average disinterested in returning to the continent. Despite his own claims to “ha[ve] circumnavigated Africa eighteen times, crossed it from east to west three times and from north to south once,” Dean focuses on his time in South Africa and the Cape in particular in his autobiography (North xi). It is the story of his failed life’s quest to found an “Ethiopian Empire” in southern Africa through land concessions granted him by Segow Faku, king of Pondo Land, Lerothodi, king of the Basotuland, and his prospective purchase of Portuguese East Africa (now Mozambique). The centrality of the south of the continent is important to a larger understanding of Pan-Africanism and modern Africa.

Dean’s desire to make his readers recognise Africa as modern and coterminous with the rest of the (black) world is evident throughout the text. But he does not apply this only to the built,
industrial centres of southern Africa, such as Cape Town, Lourenço Marques, and Kimberley. He dispels the “fictitious reports [that] would have one believe that the most backward tribe in Africa resides” in Pondo Land. Once there, he says, “we found the people cleanly, hospitable and handsome. The huts in which they lived were far more sanitary than the ‘negro’ cabins of the Southern [United] States” (Dean 161). In fact, Dean invests considerable narrative energy humanising the “natives,” giving space to indigenous languages (like Xhosa) on the pages of his text and recording the cruelties meted upon them by colonialism, such as in the case of the Full Moon, or the expropriation of large swaths of Pondo Land by the British (174 – 177).

Here I want to highlight Michelle Stephens’s treatment of the racialised vessel in Black Empire: The Masculine Global Imaginary of Caribbean Intellectuals in the United States, 1914 – 1962. Stephens writes of “the Negro ship of state at sea” as a metaphor for “the African diaspora in America in a state of political limbo, as a floating colony perpetually drifting somewhere between slavery and freedom, yet bound together, sharing a common transatlantic history and destiny.” Additionally, for Stephens, it is emblematic of the nation-state as the central paradigm in political discourse during the first half of the twentieth-century. Her subjects of interest, immigrants from the Anglophone Caribbean, without nation-states to call their own, entered America and conceived of American citizenship in markedly different ways when compared to European immigrants to the US (Stephens 2). Stephens acknowledges European colonialism as the experience that binds Anglophone Caribbean immigrants together, but deems the nation-state more central than empire.

Yet Dean’s autobiography, set in Africa, shows the “Negro ship of state” to also be symbolic of the African and pan-African experience of unbelonging and belonging, and equally a part of the
transatlantic world. At the same time, it reveals that the nation-state, was one of the options available in political discourse. Empire was another. The Pedro Gorino/Umbala posits empire as the political formation to which peoples of African descent attempted to belong, or remake their world around, whereby capital “E” Empire delineates a form of government and subjecthood while lower case “e” empire represents a community of many African races. South Africa, a place of multiple European Empires before the Union of South Africa allows for a kind of circumnavigation of power structures (such as the British colony, the Boer republic, or the American nation-state) from all of which peoples of African descent were alienated. On arrival at Cape Town, Dean suggests that he already knew the “danger of [his] position,” having chosen Cape Town, the Cape Colony, and South Africa as his base. But he intimates that this choice was deliberate and he was unwilling to be swayed from it. As an American, law in South Africa defined him as white. However, when he associated with whites he was “suspected of social climbing.” At the same time, he was “suspected by the government of ulterior motives when [he] mixed with his own race” (Dean 79). South Africa is a dangerous place, but it is also offers liminal spaces between the British Empire, Boer Republics, and African nations. It is only there, fittingly in Cape Town, that Haji Hassan, the Somali prince in disguise, and Kid Gardener, the Texas cowboy, can meet and collaborate. Chapter VIII is entitled, “Cape Town, a Somali Prince, and a Texas Cowboy” (78 - 88).

This kind of serendipitous meeting and collaboration amongst diverse peoples of African descent also happens on the Pedro Gorino as a microcosm of black empire. The ship comprises a variety of people, mostly black, and all male. They come from the Caribbean, South America, and South Africa. Dean describes them as “a good crew.” All of them “took a particular interest in the operations of the ship because of a profit-sharing plan [he] instituted” (90). Even the name of the
ship is not the one that Dean initially wanted; it results from a crew member’s assertion of agency in restoring the vessel. Dean’s command of his ship, the Pedro Gorino, demonstrates most clearly the kind of leadership that Dean understands to be ideal for humanity in general, and African races in particular.

When Dean purchases the ship in Stavanger, Norway it is called the Pellar Guri after a peasant girl of the same name, who rallied her countrymen to repel an exiled Norwegian ruler and his Scottish mercenaries trying to conquer the nation-state. Struck by her heroism, Dean decides to keep the name. Sydney Wilson, the ship’s cook and “a West Indian who had been under Spanish influence all his life, misunderstood...He thought we had said Pedro Gorino...a clever man with the brush as most sailors are, and several days later he took it upon himself to pain the name on the prow.” When Dean points out Wilson’s error, Wilson replies “Pellar Guri no name for black man’s ship.” On seeing how sullen Wilson was at the thought of changing it, Dean “said no more about it. And Pedro Gorino she was from that day forth” (71 – 2). If the ship is a metaphor for his envisioned Ethiopian empire this scene reveals the complete absence of didacticism from its governance. That Wilson takes it upon himself to paint the name of the ship onto the prow reveals Dean’s willingness to be led, at least momentarily, but those he is supposed to lead. No one asks Wilson to do the job, neither does he volunteer to do it. He simply does it. In fact at several points in the narrative Dean cedes control of the vessel to others.

During his trip to visit Segow Faku in Pondo Land he leaves his first mate, Peter Benjamin, in charge, makes the second mate, Will Braithwaith, Benjamin’s second in command (144). Benjamin captains the ship during a whaling expedition in the Indian Ocean along the Mozambican coast. Although Dean notes that he “gave explicit instructions,” Benjamin and
Braithwaith make the call to use the ship to hunt for whale and seal (145, 125). In fact, the two men had already taken the ship on “two successful trips carrying fiber and skins as well as miscellaneous cargo” up the coast without him (145). Although the whaling expedition ends tragically with Peter Benjamin’s death, Benjamin having contracted blackwater fever in Mozambique, Dean leaves his ship again, shortly after Benjamin’s burial, to visit the king and queen of Basutoland. Yet the ship cannot fully insulate Dean, his crew, and the African races from the tentacles of the British Empire. The helplessness of the Pedro Gorino, “among the great men-of-war,” when Dean first arrives at the Cape Town docks ships forebodes as much (58).

In fact, each time the Pedro Gorino is in danger, it is in the care of Englishmen. Symbolic of the black empire, it is safe in the hands of various black leaders, but not in the hands of (white) Englishmen. The first time is when Dean allows nine Englishmen to charter the schooner without his crew, or him as captain. He goes along as an invited guest. The Englishmen throw him overboard at Knysna late at night, while asleep, leaving him for dead (103). The second, is when Dean entrusts William Price with his ship and his livelihood and that of his crew. Price ultimately mortgages the Pedro Gorino and Dean so thoroughly that when he discovers Dean’s stockpile of ostrich feathers and burns them, the establishment is able to force him out of South Africa. The ship, like Cape Town, Pondo Land, and Basutoland is the nucleus of the black empire. Dean’s pledge upon hearing the story of the Full Moon is “they shall have ships, they shall have ships” (53 - 4). Dean’s inability to keep his ship is a sign of the failure of their community to come.

Forced to go to the bankers with whom Price promised his money would be safe, Dean’s papers are confiscated and he is given one week to leave South Africa or go to jail for his debt. “You’re a diamond smuggler, an enemy of the British Government, and a damned American
“nigger,” the president of the bank tells him (260). This is only instance in the autobiography that the term nigger is used. Kid Gardner is the only other character in the text who uses something like it. When called “swartz” (now spelt swart), Afrikaans for black, and told to leave a white pub, the Kid responds: “You trying to class me with your Cape Town nigguhs? I’m from Texas, and I ain’t to be tampered with” (emphasis added; 84). In Kid’s uttering, the term evokes a shared experience of oppression. Despite his assertion that he is not of the same class as “Cape Town nigguhs,” his difference is one of place; he comes from Texas, not Cape Town. They are all “nigguhs,” what marks him out is that being from Texas he is unwilling to accept unfair treatment because of his racial identity. Nigguhs is not necessarily a derogatory racial slur for the Kid, as much as it is an articulation of a common experience of oppression. The bank president means to insult and denigrate Dean with his use of nigger as well as alienate him from Cape Town and South Africa. The Kid acknowledges his Americanness as a cultural inheritance that enables him to alter the oppressive racial landscape of the city. The bank president recognises Dean as a legal American (second-class) citizen in order to delegitimize his claim to the city of Cape Town, the colony of Cape, South Africa, and the continent.

Provocatively, reading this as a recognition of Dean as diasporic, brings to the fore the problem of de-historicising diaspora in the history of relations between Africa and peoples of African descent on the continent and around the globe. Dean is both working within an imperial frame (in the colonial city of Cape Town, the Cape Colony, the British protectorate of Basutoland, and Portuguese East Africa), and working to foster what he calls an Ethiopian empire. Certainly his Americanness helps him traverse these various colonial spaces and pursue his dream of empire. The Portuguese official who offers him the Portuguese colony assumes that he is an American spy.
“Every one knows,” he tells Dean, “that you are an intelligence officer in the employ of the American Government” (115). But as a person of African descent, he also lays claim to these landscapes as an African. The same official remarks to him, “I suppose you realize that your position in Africa is as insecure as it is unique.” He deems Dean “the most dangerous sort” of spy because he is black and perhaps, African. When Dean quickly and angrily denies that he is working for the US government, the official smoothly and quickly shifts registers. “Perhaps you represent another power,” he continues, “let us say an organization of your own people.” Shrugging his shoulders, he contends that “the situation remains primarily the same” (114–115).

Years later, Dean claims that Sir Harry Johnson would later speak of him “as the most dangerous ‘negro’ in the world and a menace to the peaceful subjugation of the natives in Africa” (115). Certainly, when the bankers give Dean their ultimatum they intimate as much if not so precisely. They accuse him of “maligning Cecil Rhodes,” the great colonist, and “stir[ring] the Basutos, the Pondos and the Pondo Mesis to rise and massacre their English neighbors” (260). Dean acknowledges the special power that American citizen gives him in the region. When Kid is arrested and put in jail at the Breakwater, Dean admits that the only way to save him was to prove that he is an American citizen (85). When he sees that his American citizenship is what endears the Portuguese officials at Lourenço Marques to him, he plays along. If he buys Portuguese East Africa the colony would be protected by the American government and thus would avoid becoming a pawn in the war raging between the British and the Boers at its borders (114–115). Dean reads the motives of the Portuguese as a means to his end of Ethiopian empire. “The possibilities opened before me like a flower,” he writes at the end of the chapter: “Delagoa Bay, future maritime headquarters for native Africa; Lourenço Marques, a new center of culture for the
colored race; Portuguese East Africa, a national home to which the wandering Ethiopians the world over might come and live in peace. Who could tell? With such a foothold an enterprising colony might expand until it had recaptured the whole continent” (114 – 116). His American citizenship might allow his to purchase the literal soil upon which the empire would emerge, but it is his sense of connection to other Ethiopians, Africans, that makes him take the offer seriously.

Dean’s narrative does not valorise the New World more than Africa, nor does it assume Africa to be without modernity or black modernisers of its own. As a narrative in which Africa itself is a protagonist—populated and coterminous with (black) America—Dean’s autobiography differs from other African American texts of “return” to Africa, both in terms of where its protagonist returns to (South, not West Africa) and what he claims to find there by way of modernity, modernisation, and its inhabitants. Moreover, written before decolonisation and the formation of nation-states in Africa, Dean’s is an important text toward historicising anti-colonial resistance in Africa, pan-Africanism, and African nationalism.

Let us return to Shepperson’s essay on Pan-Africanism, in which South Africa emerges in the first half of the twentieth-century as the birthplace of Ethiopianism as a Christian secessionist movement among black clergy. Ethiopianism, according to Shepperson, was understood by whites in South Africa as the “Black Peril,” or foreign blacks corrupting content natives (Shepperson, “Pan-Africanism” 351 – 352). It was an important movement at the end of the nineteen-century and the start of the twentieth-century in South Africa. Unlike the versions of (African American) Ethiopianism previously mentioned, while it involved men like Bishop Levi Jenkins Coppin of the AME, it was largely home-grown.
If Dean’s autobiography is Ethiopianist, it is perhaps more derivative of South African
Ethiopianism, which was rooted in the continent and arose out of black Christians’ and clergy’s
frustration with white Christian control in the Church. Dean admits his Buddhism and
ambivalence about Christianity to Bishop Levi Choppin of the African Methodist Episcopal
(AME) Church (Dean 143). South African-derived Ethiopianism, would perhaps be the category
that Shepperson’s definition of Ethiopianism might support. However, Dean does not align
himself with either African American Ethiopianism, or South African Ethiopianism. The Pedro
Gorino/Umbala is neither about the future restoration of Africa by virtue of African American
ascendancy nor is it about black secessionist churches. Dean helps Bishop Coppin build AME
churches and schools, but he remains skeptical of Christianity. The text is about Ethiopian empire,
black empire, as a way to imagine community for peoples of African descent. In a time of
European imperialism on the continent, and indeed the world, before the emergence of the
nation-state in Africa, Dean uses empire to articulate the common interests of black people across
the globe.

Shepperson’s history of Pan-Africanism does not acknowledge that at the same time Pan-
Africanism was also fomenting in the country and men like Henry Sylvester Williams were
catalysed to become Pan-Africanists precisely because of the conditions of fellow black people in
South Africa. Sylvester Williams claimed to have been compelled to start the African Association
(1898) and convene the 1900 Conference, after learning of the horrible conditions in the gold and
diamond mines on the Rand and in Kimberley, respectively. Several black leaders from South
Africa had been invited to attend the Conference, but as a result of the South African War were
unable to do so. Whether men like Dean and his friend Francis Z. Peregrino who settled in Cape Town on the heels of the Conference were interested in the region before the conference is unknown, but Peregrino, whose entire family moved with him to Cape Town, probably was. Dean suggests that Coppin composed the AME hymn, “Ethiopia Stretch out Thy Hands,” while living in Cape Town. The scene in which all eighteen of the indigenous kings, their retainers, Bishop Coppin, Reverend Gow (also of the AME), Peregrino and Dean clasp hands and sing it together three times, each time louder than the last, we see the culmination of a Pan-Africa. Many African races joined together. “Again and again,” Dean writes, “they sang it. The harmony grew wilder and more wild, the rhythm more and more barbaric. They drummed upon the table, they sang weird minor strains. Alto, bass, and tenor came deep and clear. And kings who had fought for untold generations held hands and sang a song which conquered even the most stubborn heart among them” (Dean 252).

For Dean this moment is powerful, not because they are all singing a Christian hymn. Despite his respect for Coppin, his wife, and several other black missionaries he mentions, Dean rejects Christianity several times in the text because of its collusion with European imperialism (249). It is important for him because it is the moment of realisation, in vocal harmony, of his dream of black empire in which there is friendship and brotherhood, yet difference. It is a culmination of the other eruptions of song and bilingual exchange in the book. One of which happens on board the Pedro Gorino in the midst of a storm. The Xhosa passengers sing in response to the storm:

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37 Such as Sol T. Plaatje, one of the founding members of the African National Congress (originally the South African Native National Congress) and a prolific South African journalist who published the first novel by a black South African in 1919 titled Mhudi and John Tengo Jabavu, a leading politicians and the editor of Imvo Zabantsundu, the first Xhosa language periodical in South Africa.
'Uyeze-Umoya,’ the storm is coming, see it rise. 
Awu-ye-lelema-ma,’ woe is coming upon us. 
En-gomte-tō’ it is the law of God.

At the same time, some of the ship’s crew sings: 
‘I know Jesus am a medicine man, 
I know Jesus can understand,’ understand,’
I know Jesus am a plate of gold; 
Gives you’ one swaller and it cures yo’ soul (95)

In this scene there is parallelism. Only when they sing “Ethiopia Stretch out Thy Hands” do these two come together as one.

Another way to translate the Xhosa song quoted above from the text along with Dean’s translation is: (“[u]yeze-Umoya/[a]wu-ye-lelema-ma/[e]n-gomte-te”) “the wind is coming/o yes mother/it is the law.” Both translations make the Xhosa song appear more somber and foreboding than that which the (black English-speaking) crew sings. The first warns of the coming of woe, that is unavoidable because it is the law of God, or in accordance with my translation it the Law. In the second Jesus heals, understands, and enriches you. By bringing together ‘native voices’ and song with that of the foreign-born blacks in “Ethiopia Stretch out Thy Hands,” the scene collapses the two impetuses—the first foreboding, the second hopeful—together.

Another moment of bilingual intertextuality in The Pedro Gorino/Umbala occurs at the end of Segow Faku’s recounting to Dean, through Emtinso, how Pondo Land came to be annexed to the Cape Colony. “[S]e-si-boñ-wa-ngá-bezi-zwe-ná. (Even now the white man watches us.)” the king says after revealing the cruel deception meted upon him by the British, his body shaking with fury. “Li-ző-dú-me-li-mutá-te. (We shall strike them and take them prisoners.)” Emtinso replies drawn into the charged moment, forgetting his job as translator. Dean understands the exchange on an
emotional level, no longer able to acquiesce to “cold logic and impersonal arguments” on how to respond to European imperialism (176 – 177).

However, another way to translate the exchange between Segow and Emtinso is: “Sé-si-boñ-wa-ngá-bezi-zwe-ná,” or “Are we being seen by those of foreign countries?”; and “Lí-zo-dú-me-li-mutá-te,” or “It’s going to thunder and take him or her.” Here “ná” registers ‘Sé-si-boñ-wa-ngá-bezi-zwe-ná’ as a question rather than an assertion. One way to read it is that Segow is not speaking of white colonial officials or simply white men, but instead he is asking Emtinso if Dean is a spy, just as the Portuguese official told Dean he was being perceived. Emtinso’s response could be translated as: whoever may be spying on them from foreign skies, lightning will strike them. The bilingual exchange allows linguistic difference to exist side by side in Dean’s empire. At the same time it reveals the linguistic difference as almost irreducible through translation. Translation does not remove the possibility of distrust or refusal to fully assimilate into the overarching frame of black community. In that way empire, as a unit that brings together different languages, allows for a kind of unified independence, a radical critique of the empire.

The repetitive singing of “Ethiopia Stretch out Thy Hands” brings together these two moments in which oppression is articulated. It is only then that hands are clasped. These previous moments are in two different languages, while the final scene presumably occurs primarily in English. Yet this does not mean that English is the dominant language of Dean’s empire. Rather language ceases to be an obstacle to coming together. Only the title of the hymn is mentioned. It is in English so we may rightfully assume that it the rest of the hymn is too. But the emphasis is not whether the language is European-derived or indigenous but on “harmony,” “rhythm,” percussion (“[t]hey drummed upon the table”), and voice. Music becomes the language of the community.
In this fleeting moment Dean realises his dream. The meeting of the kings at which it happens is made possible by the Prince of Wales’s visit to South Africa, for which the city is altered. The union jack hung everywhere, everyone, including Sir Alfred Milner, charged to a frenzy. But this scene of Anglophilic devotion furnishes Dean with the opportunity to gather “the kings of Africa,” brought to the city to honour the Prince. The British Empire fosters Ethiopian empire, albeit unintentionally.

When Dean is reduced to an “American nigger,” it is not only a racial insult, but a rejection of his previous claims on the continent through British Empire. The Pedro Gorino/Umbala illuminates the imperial interstices and cavities that existed in the region before the Union of South Africa and the first World War. It challenges our received conception of nationally-bounded African literature(s) and the special significance accorded West Africa in the Pan-African movement and relations between the New World and the continent. The dominant mode of political organisation and government in southern Africa, during the time in which it is set, was empire. Reading such an “autobiographical curiosity,” with an awareness of its terms, requires that we theorise empire both as a system of oppression, exploitation, and expansion, the repercussions of which continue to shape life on the African continent and perceptions of it, and as a form of political representation that even when it excluded, informed the political imaginary of those it meant to exclude.

In this chapter I have examined Williams’ and Dean’s attempts to conceive of Cape Town as a site of black utopia, arguing that Cape Town was important to black thought at the fin de siècle. Both Williams and Dean use empire to frame belonging. For Williams, it was only possible

30 Milner was Governor of the Cape Colony and British High Commissioner for South Africa at the time.
under British rule. If it would only grant full British subjecthood/citizenship, the British Empire could cohere peoples of African descent into a union at some future date. To an extent, *The Pedro Gorino/Umbala* tries to subvert the British Empire in the way that Williams hopes to in “The British Negro.” Expelled from the region by the British, Dean cannot bring it to fruition. Williams also believed himself to have been forced out, albeit less explicitly than Dean. The December 23, 1903 shooting in his chambers in the central business district was only one of several failed assassination attempts.\(^{39}\) Their texts demand that we grapple with the centrality of empire and the South African question to the Pan-African movement. I contend that “The British Negro” and *The Pedro Gorino/Umbala* give us access to an earlier Pan-African moment in which the nation-state was not assumed form in which full freedom could occur. The turn away from Cape Town and South Africa to West Africa, was no mere shift in location, but a ideological shift from empire and a particular conceptualization of black community to nation-state and diaspora. As I will show throughout this dissertation that postcolonial nationalism is both the fulfilment of the dream of full citizenship and failed attempts at inclusion in the imperial body politic. It is a kind of mourning of the failed promised of liberal empire.

Yet resistance from the colonial state was not the only obstacle. Williams was sensitive to the difficulty of building a union across linguistic and cultural differences. If the meeting in Cape Town, at which Dean brings together black people from the city and the country, mixed race and not, foreign and local born, the bilingual exchange between Dean and Segow reveals the cracks in his black empire, all along the question of language. Beyond the city, the validity of the community comes into question. Proficiency in local language no only indigenizes but becomes a vouchsafe for

\(^{39}\) According to Hooker, “Williams himself believed that it was an assassination attempt organized by the then Attorney General, Mr. T. L. Graham, one of three such during his Cape Town stay” (67).
credibility. For those who stay in South Africa, the question of language—in which language or languages a multiple black community should be imagined—and who can invoke it. In the next chapter, I examine how the Francis Z. S. Peregrino, Pauline E. Hopkins, and A. Kirkland Soga use the race paper to resolve this. Each face the question of how to mobilize local black communities and their histories in concert with the wider black world.
In 1903, Allan Kirkland Soga, editor of the South African periodical, *Izwi Labantu* (“Voice of the People”), wrote to Pauline Elizabeth Hopkins, an active race woman and the editor of *The Colored American Magazine*. The first African American monthly, *The Colored American* had appeared every month since 1900. Soga implored Hopkins, to use the magazine to turn her American readers’ attention to South Africa so that black people in America and South Africa might “co-operate by extending hands across the sea” (Soga, “Letter to the Editor” 467). He included “a bundle” of the only race journals from the country in his estimation. These were: his, *Izwi Labantu*, and Francis Zaccheus Santiago Peregrino’s *The South African Spectator*. According to Soga, the two papers alone “combat...the phalanx of opposition of the anti-native press in South Africa” (467). They hoped, he informed Hopkins, that they could count on her “sympathies and [her] pen through the columns of the magazine, on behalf of your black and colored brethren in South Africa” (467). Through collaboration with Hopkins they sought to push the genre of the race paper to bring members of the race together through the acts of reading and writing, many of whom lived in disparate geographic areas and were from different ethnic and linguistic groups, all under the label “the black man.”

In a biographical sketch of Soga written under her pseudonym, Sarah A. Allen, Hopkins tells her readers that only the previous year, Soga and Peregrino started the South African Native Press Association. As in the case of his letter to Hopkins, only Peregrino and his paper, are named as part of the effort to build black print culture in South Africa. Other contemporary black-owned
and edited periodicals included: John Tengo Jabavu's *Imvo Zabantunsundu Bomzantsi Afrika* ("South African Native Opinion"),¹ Solomon T. Plaatje’s *Koranta ea Becoana* ("Bechuana Gazette"), and *Ipepa Lo Hlanga* ("The National Paper"), which succeeded *Inkanyiso* ("Enlightenment") (M’Belle 11). The 1903 edition of I. Bub M’Belle’s *Kafir Scholar’s Companion* lists all three in addition to *Izwi* and *The South African Spectator* in his chapter on black press² in South Africa (11). M’Belle’s chapter describes a black press that is rich, varied, and the site of intellectualism for black people in South Africa. Colonial and white settler communities understood as much. During the Anglo-Boer War, the Military Authorities suspended both *Imvo* and *Ipepa* (11).³ At the same time, they faced the vagaries of a relatively small market of literate consumers sometimes with entrenched ethnic allegiances. Black publishers and editors at the end of the nineteenth-century persisted under brutal conditions in South Africa. In spite of such adversity, the black press continued to thrive.

Why lead Hopkins and African American readers to believe that the black press in South Africa comprised only two periodicals?

As the first African American owned and run publication of the twentieth-century, the *Colored American* was meant to fill a gap in the African American print culture. It was to be the race’s monthly magazine, “distinctively devoted to their interests and to the development of Afro-American art and literature.” The editors hoped to create a space for creative writing and scholarship by black writers often excluded from white owned publications. The magazine should “develop and foster the bonds of that racial brotherhood” that would enable members of the race

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¹ Often referred to as *Imvo Zabantunsundu* and translated as “Native Opinion.”

² M’Belle writes of the “Kafir Press” and the “Kafir newspaper.” I use the term black, because he includes Peregrino’s paper, despite his explicit understanding of it as extending to those who do not speak a “Kafir” language. “It is,” he writes of *The South African Spectator*, “exclusively the organ of the coloured people, i.e. those who are not ‘white.’”

³ *Imvo* famously expressed its support for the Boers and ran a pro-Boer campaign.
to achieve full manhood and gain “their privileges as citizens” (Johnson and Johnson 4). Certainly the concept of the “race paper” was part of Peregrino’s lexicon too. In response to a reader, he explained that he had decided to start the Spectator in Buffalo, New York after realizing that “the Negroes of the whole Western section of the state had no organ.” Rather than an homage to the London Spectator, he continues, he named his periodical as such because he did not want to align it with a political party or politician. Rather he wanted “a paper along new lines...one that would look on and fearlessly and without favor comment on men and things...what is more appropriate than SPECTATOR” (Peregrino, “What is in a Name?” 3)! It was to speak only in the interest of the race. As the genre of the race paper enjoyed widespread appeal amongst black readers in the US, Peregrino and Soga felt such texts were desperately needed in late Victorian era South Africa.

Already in the 1901 and 1902 issues of The South African Spectator, we see copy from the Colored American and T. Thomas Fortune’s New York Age. Peregrino also provided copy that he invited the Colored American and the New York Age to copy along with Izwi Labantu. The majority of the articles used or offered provide demographic information: how many black women there were in America; how many black stenographers; how many black men lynched in America and why; the status of Colored Refugees of the Anglo-Boer War or those removed from the city centers of the Cape Colony as a result of the outbreak the Bubonic Plague.4 But in doing so, they give a sense of the race being under siege, at the same time that it is large enough to progress, if only its members were to unite. Alongside copy from the Age and the Colored American Peregrino also reproduced articles from West African and West Indian outlets like the West African Globe and the Port of Spain Gazette, and even the Cape Town-based Jewish Chronicle. However, with the exception of Izwi, the

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4 For more on the effects of the Bubonic Plague on racialized urban planning in Cape Town see Swanson.
Spectator did not share copy with other black owned and run publications in South Africa, such as John Tengo Jabavu’s *Imvo Zabantuntsundu Bomzantsi Afrika* (“South African Native Opinion”), or Solomon T. Plaatje’s *Koranta ea Becoana* (“Bechuana Gazette”) (M’Belle 11).

Certainly Soga and Peregrino were aware of *Imvo* and *Koranta*, and probably *Ipepa* too. *Izwi* was founded to counter *Imvo*’s pro-Boer propaganda. Peregrino advertises the *Koranta* in *The South African Spectator* (“Koranta ea Becoana” 3). Of *Imvo*, he writes that he is “glad to welcome again on my exchange list, *Imvo*...ably edited by Mr. Tengo Jabavu of King William’s Town...which came under the tender mercies of the Press Censor during the troublous times...[it is] bright, newsy, and interesting...fills a great void” (Peregrino, “*Imvo* Again” 4). Neither periodical was excluded because they did not ‘fill a void.’ Rather their exclusion has to do with how Soga and Peregrino sought to define the race and the race paper. As I will show, language, loyalty to the British Empire, and who is actively included in the race are what is at stake for Peregrino and Soga. It is not only that they publish in English. Nearly all of these journals carried English copy. So too, *Izwi* and the *Spectator* published in Xhosa and the *Spectator* translated many serials and other articles Dutch/Afrikaans as well. Language sometimes meant that the dominant readership of a given periodical were from one ethnic group or another. Language sometimes cast the boundaries of what one might call black “nation” along linguistic and ethnic lines, be it Zulu, Xhosa, or otherwise.

Practically, different words marked racial identity in different languages and did not always carry their meaning across the various vernaculars. “Abantu abamnyama,” Zulu for “black people,” were not always “abantuntsundu,” Xhosa for “black people,” “zwart mense” or “kleurling,” Dutch/Afrikaans for “black people” and “brown” respectively. Some times “abantu abamnyama” referred to black (Zulu) people; “abantuntsundu,” black (Xhosa) people; “zwart mense” black (native and
(coloured) people; “kleurling” brown (coloured or sometimes exclusively Bushman) people. But it was not only that the members of the race spoke different languages, but that language was sometimes used to parse out a black ‘self’ from a black ‘other.’

For instance, when Henry Sylvester Williams moved to South Africa, Imvo’s editor was buoyed at his choice to settle in the country, but wondered at his decision to through in his lot with “coloureds” rather than “natives” (Sherwood 151). While Plaatje extolled Booker T. Washington’s brand of capitalism and entrepreneurship (Limb 90), but he rarely made an explicit link between blacks in the Diaspora and in South Africa in this period. Plaatje, of course, would travel to the US in 1919 before returning to South Africa. In New York he shared a platform with the UNIA. By 1922, his book, Native Life in South Africa, was frequently advertised in the Negro World, the UNIA organ. Prospective subscribers were told they would receive a free copy with their subscription. But from all accounts, before World War I, Plaatje did not speak of a global race community. Peregrino and Soga however sought to define the race as including all those who were not white. If language was in question is was not a matter of which language was used, though English was the preferred language of racial brotherhood. Peregrino and Soga focused instead on using language and print in service of race building.

But in addition to their broad definition of the race, Peregrino and Soga’s sense of their colored or black race hinged on a commitment to British ideals and the British Empire as the protector of the interests of the race. Jabavu, Imvo’s editor, supported the Boers in the Anglo-Boer war. In the Sarah Allen’s sketch of Soga, she identifies Jabavu’s Imvo as “the oldest established native organ” in South Africa and it “exercised great influence over the native vote.” But when Imvo publicly “throw in its lot on the side of the Bond” in 1897, Izwi was started to guide the native
vote. “Izwi,” Allen explained, “has consistently supported the British ideal” (Allen, “Mr. Alan Kirkland Soga” 115). Soga even left his post as editor for several months in 1899 to serve “as a trooper in Brabant’s Horse” on the side of the British (115). The editor of the Koranta, Sol T. Plaatje, on the other hand, supported the British and at times saw coloured and native interests as intertwined. He favored political recognition in the British Empire to “social equality with whites” (Limb 88) and was a supporter of the tenets of Universal Brotherhood like Peregrino, Soga, and Henry Sylvester Williams. But again Plaatje’s sense of a global race community emerges later in the twentieth-century.

For Soga and Peregrino earnest and full political subjecthood within the British Empire was coupled with a sense of racial community and kinship with those outside of it. The hope was that they would all be united under the protection of the British flag. The Crown, in particular, was seen as protecting the race under the auspices and the legacy of Queen Victoria, the Good. For them the race paper was for a large and varied colored or black community that “should include all shades of thought and color” and would one day have full the protection of the British Empire (Allen, “Mr. Alan Kirkland Soga” 6:7 116). Though both men wrote in other genres, namely the pamphlet, they privileged the race paper as the genre that could bring together all members of the race.

Peregrino was born to Afro-Brazilian parents who had repatriated to the Gold Coast around 1850. After studying in England, he moved to the US and eventually started a periodical, The Fortnightly Spectator, which he published out of the cities of Buffalo and Albany in New York State. In 1900 he and several members of his family moved to the Cape Colony stopping in London to attend Henry Sylvester Williams’ Pan-African Conference. In South Africa he re-
launched his periodical with the new name, *The South African Spectator*. From 1900 to 1902, he used it to foster in English, Dutch/Afrikaans, and Xhosa a sense of racial community among those he identifies as colored. Using the American spelling, rather than the British, Peregrino deploys the American definition of ‘black’ in accordance with the rule of hypodescent. Despite his broad definition of the race, Peregrino remains anxious about interracial reproduction, which he reads as race annihilation. His anxiety results in simultaneous celebrations of broadly defined, multi-lingual black masculinity and pronouncements on black female sexuality that emphasize intraracial marriage and reproduction.

Writing for the *Colored American* until Hopkins’ departure in 1904, Soga focused his essays on the points of concern he raised in his initial letter to her: “education, franchise, religion and tenure conditions” (Soga, “Letter to the Editor” 467). The franchise, both in South Africa and in the diaspora, dominated his writing for the journal. Black disenfranchisement became a central concern for Peregrino in 1902 when some called for the Constitution of the Cape Colony to be suspended. But in all, he maintained his belief in the soundness of British imperialism and its vanguardism in terms of protecting the rights of its black subjects. By 1903 the Treat of Veerenigning which outlined the terms of peace at the end of the Anglo-Boer War had taken effect and squelched the hope that the universal limited franchise would extend across South Africa. Black intellectuals could no longer sustain the belief that South Africa might be the black man’s paradise after the war, with the Cape, its center.

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5 Or the ‘one-drop’ rule, whereby someone with any drop of black blood is defined as black.

6 Clause VIII of the treaty states that: “[T]he question of granting the Franchise to natives will not be decided until after the introduction of self-government.” It meant that the limited franchise would not be included in the constitution of the Union, leaving black people in South Africa unable to participate en masse in the political process, and awarding the Boer political power.
If the book (fiction and non-fiction) was an important feature of black internationalism after the first World War,7 Peregrino’s efforts through The South African Spectator and Soga’s stint as a correspondent for the Colored American illustrate the global co-ordination among race papers as the nineteenth-century drew to a close. It was the genre of race work. Starting a mere two years after the Colored American released its first issue, the literary exchange and collaboration between Soga and Hopkins suggests that at its inception the race paper was a far more global genre than it was national. Books by black writers circulated widely from earliest days of transatlantic slavery, including slave narratives, autobiographies, pamphlets, novels, and poetry collections. But with its relatively quick turnover between compiling, editing, printing, and distributing an issue, the race paper offered a more dialogic space, inviting readers to comment on fiction, current events, religion and more. Editors, often at the mercy of printers, could pull together “a noble, bright and interesting sheet” (“Letter to the Editor from the Editor of Pioneer Press” 3) that combined local and global content, and ship copies of multiple issues to each other.

As Hazel V. Carby shows in Reconstructing Womanhood, of the four novels that Hopkins published between 1900 and 1904, only one appeared in book form—Contending Forces (1900). Hopkins serialized the other three—Hagar’s Daughter. A Story of Southern Caste Prejudice, Winona. A Tale of Negro Life in the South and Southwest, and Of One Blood. Or, the Hidden Self—in the Colored American Magazine. For Hopkins the periodical had a “pedagogic role” to “educate” the largest number of the race as possible (Carby 127). The shift in platform for her fiction from book to

7 See Brent Hayes Edwards, Practice of Black Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black Internationalism, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003). Edwards explores the translation of René Maran Batoula and the global dimensions of black print culture in Harlem and Paris during what is often referred to as the “Harlem Renaissance.” Cahier is of course another example of the book as a race text that comes to move, precisely through translation, around a global black readership cultivating a sense of a “race” as it moved.
magazine signaled a move away from highbrow fiction and “the novel of ideas” toward “the strategies and formulas of...sensational fiction” (145). But if the journal was increasingly used to “educate” the race through the pleasures of sensational fiction, it was not limited to an African American audience. Hopkins and the Colored American’s transition to a more popular fiction also precipitated their increasing awareness of a global black readership. Much as the Colored American Magazine’s title made an obvious claim for a national or even hemispheric constituency of concerns and readers, some of its readers and staff made the genre address the issues of the race well beyond those borders.

Hopkins, Soga, and Peregrino wanted the Colored American to effect the consolidation of the race across borders. Through it they hoped that black people might co-operate around the concerns of the day: access to equal education, the widespread curtailing of black enfranchisement, the suppression of black religious (predominantly Christian) autonomy, and the right of the black man to own land. Certainly these concerns were not unique to the black experience in fin de siècle South Africa. What Peregrino’s race paper and Soga’s Colored American writing offer, is the rare glimpse into how those living in South Africa understood African American race struggles and advances in relation to their own lives. They give witness to discourses around the British Empire as an alternative to all members of the race, including those living in the US. In them one of the central questions how to articulate the race within empire. Post-war reconstruction in South Africa becomes pivotal to these attempts to address this concern. Taken together The South African Spectator from 1901 to 1902 and Soga’s Colored American writing reveal two things about the race paper as a genre. First, the sheer global reach and aspirations of what they defined as a race paper. Second, the link between this broad sense of the “race” and the British Empire.
According to Michele Mitchell in *Righteous Propagation: African Americans and the Politics of Racial Destiny after Reconstruction* (2004), imperialism was central to some notions of black manhood at the end of the nineteenth-century. Along with the franchise, empire was another “prerogative of manhood” to which African American men laid claim in the wake of Reconstruction (Mitchell 56 – 7). If empire was part of the “white man’s burden” it was part of the “black man’s burden” too, often at the exclusion of African American women (51). While black women occupied key leadership positions in domestic reform, they remained outside of the debates around imperialism or internationalism and the future of the race. As Mitchell careful historical analysis shows, this was certainly the case in terms of American wars of empire, but race women featured in discourses around repatriation to Africa and the regeneration of the continent (38). While scholars have studied African American colonization schemes that centered around Liberia and Diasporic desires to ‘return’ to Africa extensively, few have considered how South Africa figured as a site of such a return. Yet as race men (and women) in America tried to figure out their place in American imperial expansion and European imperialism and some considered migration to Liberia as their opportunity for freedom, several considered settling in the British Cape Colony.

The collaboration between Soga/Peregrino and Hopkins reveals how one race woman rendered the concerns of the race in the US “not only National but International in character.” Despite correspondents in “China, Hawaii, Manila, West Indies and Africa” (Hopkins, “Editorial and Publisher’s Announcements” 467). Soga’s presence in the magazine was unique. As he elucidates in his letter to Hopkins, the black man in the US South and South Africa toiled under similar conditions. What differentiated South Africa was its derth of *papers* that represented the
interests of the race (Soga, “Letter to the Editor” 467). He and Peregrino hoped to promote their interests not only through the circulation of their individual race papers locally in South Africa and abroad, but by actively forging an alliance with at least one in the Diaspora, the Colored American Magazine.

In this chapter, I read issues from 1901 and 1902 of Peregrino’s The South African Spectator alongside Soga’s Colored American writing in order to delineate the ways in which the race paper as a genre facilitated their efforts at transatlantic collaboration and solidifying ‘the race’ in South Africa to join together various ethnic and linguistic groups. In my reading of The South African Spectator I focus on two serials that Peregrino ran over the two year period: “Black, Mulatto, Quadroon, Octoroon” and “The Foreign Educated Negro and His Position in South Africa.” Both were translated into Xhosa and Dutch/Afrikaans. I attend to the time lag that haunts the editor’s at trilingual translation and publication and how effects his work to build the race through the periodical. I also examine readers’ notions about language and the race often articulated through correspondence. My comparison of the only remaining copy of The Fortnightly Spectator published out of Upstate New York and The South African Spectator delineates the changes wrought by the move to Cape Town during the Anglo-Boer War and the Bubonic Plague outbreak as well as the encounter with local vernaculars there. I argue that the war, the Plague, and the inclusion of Xhosa and Dutch/Afrikaans do not simply alter the paper, but in fact make it a race paper. It is these particular set of circumstances that force Peregrino squarely into the genre. Cape Town at the fin de siècle, with its rapidly shifting definitions of people who were not white at the same time that whiteness was consolidating itself, necessitates that he define his community. But with the editor’s Americanized spelling and valence of colored (all who are not white are ‘colored’ meaning black)
constantly colliding with some of his readers separating of *coloured* (of mixed European, Asian, and African ancestry) and *native*, the terms of reference are unstable. I contend that this instability results in heightened anxiety around the issue of miscegenation, black female propriety, the abuse of black women and especially girls in Cape Town’s white households as domestic servants and its prostitution dens, and black men’s enfranchisement. Here the race paper perceives the onslaught on the race differently in terms of gender. If only black women did not procreate with white men, combining as one race would be possible. While race women are asked to guard the future of the race by disciplining female sexuality, black men are encouraged to guard the Constitution and the franchise. To do either of these they must get an education or see that their sons do. By the 1903 and 1904 *Colored American* work of Allan Soga, the black man’s franchise is the chief rallying cry. Putting the Peregrino and Soga’s writing in race papers together helps us understand the unique place the Cape served as the concept of the race was argued across the Atlantic, but also its place in defining the genre of the race paper at the fin de siècle.

**Making ‘Good, Bright, Manly Black M[e]n’ and ‘Decent Wom[en]’**

On June 29, 1901 a short article appeared in *The South African Spectator* entitled, “What Are You, Anyhow?” In it, the publisher and editor of the periodical, Francis Z. S. Peregrino, castigates a reader from Worcester who “objects to our frequent use of the word ‘black’” (Peregrino, “What Are You Anyhow?” 5). Since an equal number of “some of the best men the world ever produced” are black, Peregrino concludes that the unnamed reader’s unwillingness to be called black stems from his cowardice. Rather than revile the label, he instructs the reader, he should “[s]ee that you are worthy of the description: A good, bright, manly black man” (5). The exchange epitomizes what
Peregrino understood the pedagogic function of his publication to be. Every two weeks the paper would document for its readers the highs and lows of the black experience in Cape Town, the Cape Colony, South Africa, and, indeed, the black world. From the Philippines to India, Accra to New Orleans, Jamaica to Detroit, wherever events took place that pertained to the race he would write about it in *The South African Spectator*. As the editor informed another reader who hoped to contribute to the paper, *The South African Spectator* “is essentially an educator” (Peregrino, “Answer to Correspondents” 5). Its education would supplement the formal education available to members of the race.

As Peregrino’s call to the reader from Worcester suggests, that education was often gendered. Alongside lynching statistics from the American South that informed his readers of the number of black men submitted to that form of political terror, the periodical furnished guides for black women on how to avoid rape by white men and other kinds of sexual exploitation across the color line. If black men were to become “good, bright, manly black m[e]n” they needed “decent wom[en].” In “Should Be Drowned” the editor quoted from *The Colored American*:

> A colored woman who earns an honest living by washing, ironing, cooking, or scrubbing is a credit to her race and a blessing to her mother, but she who dresses in the height of fashion in clothes paid for with a white man’s money, obtained by sacrificing all that makes womanhood noble true and grand—such a woman is not fit to speak her angel mother’s name.

Peregrino agrees. Such “a thing” is not a “decent wom[an]” he asserts, altering Hopkins’ “true womanhood” by replacing “true” with “decent,” and heightening respectability as an essential to any definition of female humanity.

A harbinger of Victorian respectability, this shift from Hopkins’ “true” to Peregrino’s “decent womanhood” reveals the ways in which, while aimed at readers all across the globe, *The
South African Spectator was directed particularly at race men, women, and children set to make a life for themselves and their families in South Africa in the wake of the Anglo-Boer War. The gendered race education that the periodical doled was formed by the possibility of realizing full freedom and even black utopia that British victory in South Africa promised. God, Peregrino insists, “designed the sanguinary conflict to the betterment of the condition of the oppressed” (Peregrino, “After the War” 5). As much as the war may have been between the British and the Boers, “the oppressed” were the black people who lived in the British colonies and Boer republics. According to Peregrino, if the war was “the misfortune of [the Boer], the future historian will record the fact that the terrible devastation caused by the Anglo-Boer war...as the ill wind which blew some good to somebody, and that one is the black man” (emphasis added; 5). As editor of The South African Spectator, Peregrino understood it to be his job to prepare his readers for the end of the war the true jubilee for black people. They would not only be free from slavery, but could work toward full citizenship. Thus the race paper in South Africa criminalizes black female sexuality not deemed respectable and in the service of reproducing the race.

Previously published out of the cities of Buffalo and Albany in New York state (Capetown correspondent to the Graaff-Reinetter, “Good Words” 2), Peregrino explained to his readers that he moved the periodical and his family to Cape Town because a race paper was desperately needed there. In his estimation, there were approximately “200 newspapers and four periodicals, devoted to the interests of colored people” in the US, but only two race organs existed in South Africa (2). For the black man to take his place in the post-war reconstruction, he wrote, “they need an organ of their own” (emphasis added; 2). Whether ignited at the Pan-African Conference or fully enlightened about the prospects of race work before leaving Buffalo, at the inception of the
twentieth-century Peregrino started his first race paper in the city of Cape Town. There, though occasionally disillusioned with the reality he encountered, he remained convinced that as “the Metropolis of the Premier Colony of [British] South Africa [it] ha[d] suddenly become of the highest importance in the World’s history by virtue of being the theatre for important historical happenings” (Peregrino, “Bricks without Straw” 7). Many “who five years ago hardly ever heard of Cape Town” were now readying themselves in the “[t]housands” to “visit, or pass through it...bent on seeing battlefields, or en route for the El Dorado” of the diamond and gold mines of Kimberley and the Rand, others would settle there. He meant to use his paper to make the city “respectable” for them (7). The Anglo-Boer War was a watershed in British imperial and European history and white settler mythology. Many white migrants flooded South Africa’s shores in search of gold, diamonds, and other mineral resources to make their fortune is also well known. But here, writing for “black and colored people” in the city, other parts of the country, and the black world, Peregrino suggests that there were other kinds of migrants newly aware of the city and South Africa as a result of the war. They were looking to it as a possible site of adventure and life. Peregrino’s Spectator was meant to make the city “respectable” for them. If the Bubonic Plague resulted in the removal of some black residents from the city, precisely to make it “respectable,” Peregrino used the race paper to do so for the very people the state thought undesirable.

In so doing, his understanding of what the periodical should comprise shifts. Making Cape Town respectable for the race necessitated that Peregrino push for reforms in the the city’s housing and rail infrastructure, but it also meant turning to black reproduction. If manly black men and true women were to be reared from its pages the race paper had to turn its attention to families. Black manhood, female sexuality, intraracial marriage, the cultural education of black youth, and
Peregrino’s own family’s day-to-day engagement in middle class culture is woven into the fabric of the paper.

Several members of the Peregrino family moved to Cape Town following the 1900 Pan-African Conference. They included: Francis Z. S. Peregrino, his wife, Elizabeth, their sons, Francis Joseph and Tommy, and their daughter, Florence. By December 1900 they had docked at Cape Town and on January 14, 1901, Francis Sr. published the fourth issue of *The South African Spectator*. As a family, the Peregrinos, provide a rich example of the possibilities of racial uplift through print culture and other leisure pastimes of the late Victorian era. If Francis Sr. was “a born newspaper man” (“As I’thers See US” 3.)\(^8\) willing to cross the Atlantic to pursue his dream of publishing his very own race journal, Francis Jr. lectured on the natives of South Africa. While in London for the Pan-African Conference, Francis Jr. published three of his lectures under the title, *A Short of the Native Tribes of South Africa* (1900). Florence wrote at least two articles in her father’s *South African Spectator*, a short story called, “The Burden of the Horse,” in the “Children’s Corner” of the journal as well as two pieces of marriage that suggest she was a proto-feminist. In fact, the writing style of “The Burden of the Horse” and the centrality of anti-vivisection and animal rights in the “Children’s Corner” columns suggest that she may have authored most if not all of the youth section. In June of 1901, she organized an “entertainment” for the colored people of Cape Town to raise funds for the journal. Her play, “The Guilty Cousin,” was performed with Tommy Peregrino and other children of race leaders such as Francis Gow. The show was repeated at least once more (Peregrino, “The Acme of Gratitude” 5). Tommy was active in his sister’s theatrical venture, acting in the play and performing in other parts of the show. Son Louis stayed in the US.

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\(^8\) This is taken from a review of *The South African Spectator* that appeared in the *Pioneer Press* of Martinsburg, West Virginia.
in the 9th US Calvary, he wrote articles for *The South African Spectator* and the *Buffalo Courier* on the war in the Philippines (Peregrino, “Louis G. H. Peregrino” 5). The Philippines was an important site in the black imaginary in the US at the time that both Francis Sr. and Louis tried to enter onto the agenda of those members of the race resident in Cape Town. Indeed the family was committed to print culture and a particularly Victorian rights’ activism. But only in Cape Town does the paper becomes an explicit arm of Francis Sr.’s race work.

As Peregrino’s use of the term *jubilee* suggests, *The South African Spectator* harnessed American definitions of blackness/colo(u)redness and British rights discourse and loyalty. Thus its first masthead shows the British flag crossed over the American ("Masthead" 1:13 1).9


In subsequent mastheads he replaced the flags with an eye—emphasizing the periodical as an ever watchful observer, poised to reveal all (“Masthead” 1:14 1). However, by December of 1901, the spectating “eyes” used from May to November is also excised with nothing put in its stead until the following issue, which features a new visual representation of it and the flags moved to the editorial

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9 This is the earliest issue for which the quality of the microfilm of the paper allowed it to be reproduced clearly.
section of the paper, where series like “Black, Mulatto, Quadroon, Octoroon” appear (“Masthead” 1:27 1; “Masthead” 1:28 1).


In November of 1901 the spectating “eye” is altered from that of previous months and by the second November issue, explicit references to “the Colored People,” which flanked the paper’s title are removed. They are replaced with: “No public man so high as to be above the just criticism of the SPECTATOR” and, “The SPECTATOR is politically independent, and is the enemy of Religious Intolerance” (“Masthead” 1:27 1).
Like its American predecessor, *The Fortnightly Spectator*, a line from Shakespeare’s *Othello* appears in the masthead: “Nothing Extenuating nor aught Set Down in Malice” (“Masthead” Volume 2:45 1). It is drawn from Othello’s plea to Cassius and Lodovico that when they speak of him, they tell the full truth of his story. Othello beseeches that he may have killed Desdemona, but he did so believing she had betrayed him with Cassius.

10 For more of Othello’s speech see William Shakespeare, *Othello*, Act V, Scene ii, lines 343 – 349: “[s]peak of me as I am; nothing extenuate,/Nor set down aught in malice: then must you speak/Of one that loved not wisely but too well;/Of one not easily jealous, but being wrought/Perplex’d in the extreme; of one whose hand,/Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away/Richer than all his tribe.”
The reference to *Othello* reveals Peregrino’s high regard for providing the truth, or pressuring those in authority to furnish it, through print similar to the other literary reference that they share: “A chief’s amang ye takin’ notes. An’ faith he'll print ‘em” (“Editorial Banner” 2:45 2). Taken from the Scottish bard Robert Burns, the epigraph signals an emphasis on recording, printing, and circulating information so that others can access it.  

Interestingly, the reference to *Othello* ties the black man’s vulnerability to his ability to reproduce within marriage and avoid being cuckolded by white men. But the first *Spectator* is not a race paper in the same vein as *The South African Spectator*. The cover story, “Petition of Colored Men,” illustrates this. It is a report on a petition that black men from Albany signed. The petition asked that their senator and assemblyman vote for a senate bill that would “secure equal rights to colored children in the state of New York” mainly in terms of access to education (Peregrino, “Petition of Colored Men”1). Despite stories that attend to issues of concern to black people, race is not its central concern. Only one issue of the American *Spectator* remains. Dated April 19, 1900, it was probably the last number he would publish before leaving for England and the Pan-African Conference. Unfortunately, the surviving issue of the American *Spectator* does not indicate Peregrino’s reasons for going to England, if he was aware of the situation in South Africa before his departure, or whether or not, when the family left Buffalo, they intended to return. In the American *Spectator*, the editor is disinterested. In contrast to *The South African Spectator*, Peregrino

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11 Literary references abound in Peregrino’s *Spectator* on both sides of the Atlantic. The editor remained steadfast to his commitment to a kind of Victorian gentleman tradition. This was not uncommon for periodicals of the period. But the use of Othello’s plea to tell his story truthfully is perhaps one of the few gestures in the American one that suggest it is meant to represent the race and bring it members together. However, papers like the *Georgia Gazette* would use the same line to signify its commitment to truth, which was becoming an entrenched aspect of the journalist’s creed, rather than building the black race.

12 The bill referred to was Senator Elsberg’s Senate bill 1100. The bill would “repeal section 28, article 11, title 15, chapter 556, of the laws of 1894, entitled ‘The Consolidated School Laws.’”
does not write himself or his family into the periodical. The sole remaining issue of a periodical already on its second volume, it cannot be fully representative of the American Spectator, but the sheet holds some clues as to its layout and general tenor. A comparison of Peregrino’s American and South African periodical suggest that in the move to Cape Town the writer’s project changed.

Roughly every fortnight, The South African Spectator addressed topics as varied as: who counts as a member of the race, education schemes that exploited unsuspecting black families, equal education, police brutality, expropriation of property, prejudice on the railway, the activities of the AME Church (including its school, Bethel Institute), forced removals, lynching bees in the American South, black female sexuality, or how essential the British Empire was to the progress of the race. It was a unique symbiosis between black progressivism and race building and British imperialism.

Through this alchemy, Peregrino re-theorizes jubilee. He weds the notion of jubilee as a celebration of the British Crown on the part of its loyal subjects and its use in African American thought to refer to the day the Emancipation Proclamation went into effect and slavery was abolished across the United States of America.\textsuperscript{13} Having occurred some three decades after the British crown emancipated slaves across the empire, Peregrino argues that American emancipation and the Reconstruction era, were never the true moments of jubilee for the black man. Neither could the US be the place in which it could take root permanently. In an article on the Aborigine Protection Society and the Pan-African Association entitled, “Save Us from Our Friends, Peregrino maintains, that “[i]t is an undisputable fact that the pioneers of any movement which had for its

\textsuperscript{13} The Emancipation Proclamation came into effect on January 1, 1863.
object the amelioration of the condition of the black man, were the people of Great Britain” (Peregrino, “Save Us from Our Friends” 5). He continues:

> Whether it be the reclamation of the wild savage into a reasoning being, clothed and in his right mind, or the liberation of the entrapped and the setting of the captive free England led the van, presenting to others an example, alas but too tardily emulated [my italics]. She placed watchmen over the highways of the seas, proclaiming in unmistakable tones, that for all the black peoples, the year of the Jubilee had come. Break the bonds asunder, smash the shackles, and undo the bars, Aus Liberatus. (5)

In the above passage Peregrino suggests that, perhaps too late, the Americans and others took the “example” of freeing the slave or civilizing “the wild savage,” but it was the British who led the abolition of the slave trade, emancipation, and the civilizing mission.

Again, in “The rule of Belgium in Africa” he argues that the crisis that beseeched the continent and the race with the 1884 Scramble for Africa was a direct result of Britain’s refusal to allow African chiefs in the Congo to leave the Portuguese empire and join the British. Having “compare[d]...the treatment if the native races by the British and other Europeans,” the natives, Peregrino contends, “preferred the former.” Instead of signing a treaty with them, the British recognized Portugal’s power in the Congo. The failure of the British to incorporate the Congo into the British empire “resulted in the King of the Belgians, and the International Society, being permitted to form what is now known as the Congo Free State.” But only the British have “that love of fair play and justice to the weak which forms so distinguishing a trait in the British character.” And only by “fair play” and “justice to the weak” could Africa and the black race be regenerated. In the pages of The South African Spectator Peregrino inextricably links building the race to building the British empire. Only through the two could the black man hope to see a lasting Jubilee.
Only copies of its issues from 1901 and 1902 issues remain. At the top right-hand corner of several of the existing issues “Colonial Office” is written in cursive. Most likely, as the suspension of *Imvo Zabantntsundu* and *Ipepa Lo Hlanga* by the Military Authorities suggest that we owe our record of this “interesting sheet” (“Letter to the Editor from the Editor of *Pioneer Press*” 3) to colonial authorities’ anxieties about black opinion on the war. Its pages overflow with reference to the Bubonic Plague and the war, but Peregrino celebrated the end of the war and British victory as a “jubilant” time for the black man. Though cautious about South Africa as a black utopia at the time that he wrote “The Foreign Educated Negro and His Position in South Africa,” he maintained that the British victory would bring about “the year of the jubilee” for the race (Peregrino, “Save Us from Our Friends” 5). Loyal to the Crown, the paper was never suspended. Yet the jubilation of race men and women around British Empire and victory in the war was not uncritical or unattached to a race-specific political agenda.

Perhaps his clearest linking of building the race and building the empire appears at the beginning of August, 1902. In his editorial he calls on “the black man or colored man [to] draw at once a line of demarcation, placing all the white people on one side, and all others who fail to come under the description white on the other.” He describes the “new bogey, ‘The Black Peril,’” as the invention of the black man’s enemies which conflated black enfranchisement with “social equality” or black men marrying white women. According to Peregrino, the Black Peril should make all black men “understand once and for all...without sophistry and hair-splitting distinctions” that wherever they fall along the color spectrum they are black (Peregrino, “Is There a Black Peril?” 4). If “the [intelligent] black man in South Africa is somewhat jubilant at recent events, and if in his ecstasy he exhibits the inclination to become somewhat hilarious,” Peregrino explains that, “he
is intoxicated only with excessive joy, and not with treason and rebellion” (4). The “recent events”
to which he refers is the upholding of the Constitution of the Cape Colony and the universal
limited franchise, despite pressure to suspend the franchise. If the black man appeared “jubilant”
and “intoxicated” it was because “[h]e believes that for him ‘the year of the Jubilee is come,’ the era
of protection, of equal treatment before the Law, and of Justice in common with all others of the
subjects of His Majesty the King...he rejoices, not at the misery of others, but at the prospect of his
own better treatment” (4). Having experienced other kinds of citizenship, “[t]he black man,”
Peregrino affirms, “appreciates to its fullest measure the superior value...of British citizenship over
that of all others, whether tribal, European, or, Trans-Atlantic ... ” (4). By the time Peregrino settled at
Cape Town, in his opinion, the British Empire seemed to best guaranteed jubilee for the race,
more than any other kind of political affiliation. His race paper would teach black men and
women not only to value their racial identities, but to prize British citizenship as the ideal kind of
citizenship to build their race.

The South African Spectator was priced at twopence. With the exception of letters to the
teditor, special columns, shared copy, and Xhosa or Dutch/Afrikaans pieces, much of it was written
by the editor, Francis Z. S. Peregrino. Each issue was roughly eight pages long; the cover and back
pages were typically advertisements for black-owned businesses in Cape Town, South Africa, and
other parts of the black world. Francis Gow’s photography studio was frequently advertised. It was
located at 48 Plein Street in the city center. Gow was a coloured AME preacher. Alec Mansfield’s
green groceries were a common feature too. His shop was in District Six, at 1 Francis Street.
Mansfield was a fairly well-to-do race man, who bought a property on Main Road in one of the
city’s southern suburbs after a shopkeeper, “a white, foreign woman,” refused to serve him and his
friend breaking their cycling excursion. She made it known that she would not serve them because they were black. Upon purchase Mansfield gave her notice to leave the premises, sending her to “hun[t] a new place and...hereafter [be] more obliging” to members of the race (Peregrino, “Mr. Alexander Mansfield” 7). The paper ran biographical sketches of men like Mansfield, along with their photographs (7). Further afield in Kimberley were H. A. Oliver’s General and Fancy Drapers and Joshua Oates Bakery and Grocery Store at Takoon Square near the De Beers mining camp.

Peregrino was somewhat of a man of all trades, and advertised the stock he imported from the US, such as “American Barber’s Chairs;” or passage on various ships, like the S. S. Cunard, for which he was an agent (“American Barber’s Chairs” 1; “S. S. Cunard” 7). At other times he invited those interested in tertiary education in the US and England to contact him as a recruiter for African American universities and the African Institute in England (The South African Spectator, 1:50 8). Most, if not all, of the advertisements that appear in this Spectator could be identified as “race advertisements.” He ran not only ads for his own ventures, but Gow’s photography studio, Oliver’s drapers and Oates’ grocery story; the leading race men of the community, whom he profiled, were the very same ones whose businesses were promoted. If the genre of the periodical required advertising dollars to sustain itself, Peregrino made sure that such advertising had to help build the racial community for which the paper was intended.

But the largest ads were often for the two largest schools for black pupils in the city: Native College at Zonnebloem and the Bethel (A. M. E.) Institute. Zonnebloem was founded in 1858 by

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14 Another profile offered in the periodical is that of John Tobin, a leader in the coloured community. For more on Tobin see Peregrino, “Mr. John Tobin” 2.
Bishop Gray, of the Anglican Church, and Sir George Grey, then governor of the Cape Colony.\textsuperscript{15} The school was initially meant to educate the children of royal and prominent African families, creating an Anglicized African elite that would proselytize amongst their people and act as intermediaries between the British colonial state and recently annexed southern African states. By 1901, a vocational stream had been added to the curriculum as well as a Teacher Training College. Though the student body no longer comprised only the children of chiefs, it represented a particular strain of colonial black progressivism and upward mobility that prized education as key to their effort to enter the body politic of the Empire, chiefly through the limited franchise. Bethel, was founded by Bishop Levi Coppin and his wife Fanny Jackson Coppin, in 1902.\textsuperscript{16} The school seems to have opened toward the end of February, as an article ran in the last issue of that month on the “Bethel Institute” and the need for the AME Church and such educational institutions in the Cape. In the following issue, the first ad for the Institute appeared. Thereafter Bethel’s ad was a permanent fixture on the cover of \textit{The South African Spectator} alongside Zonnebloem’s.

\textit{Izwi Labantu} was often advertised on the back page as well as black churches in the Cape Town area, including the AME Bethel at Hanover Street in District Six, and the Colored Baptist Church in town at Buitengracht Street. On one occasion the “few Photographs left of the Address presented to the Duke and Duchess by the Colored People” are advertised to readers as “[a]\

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\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{15} Grey was also responsible for the infamous Glen Grey Act of 1894, which instituted individual land tenure among the Xhosa and instituted a labor tax for Xhosa men, essentially forcing them into the labor economy. As we saw in the previous chapter, the Act becomes one of the key issues around which fin de siècle Pan-Africanism begins to form. For at least one black response to the Glen Grey Act see Williams.}
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\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{16} Upon return to the US in 1913 due to failing health, Jackson Coppin published short memoir on her experience as an educator. The title was, \textit{Reminiscences of School Life, and Hints on Teaching}. The AME’s publishing arm, the AME Book Concern, published it. She ruminates on her life in South Africa in Chapter 13. Jackson Coppin had taught at the Institute for Colored Youth (ICY), in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania before marrying Coppin and moving to South Africa. Interestingly, one of her students at the ICY was Henry Foster Dean, the sea captain whose autobiography I read in the previous chapter.}
\end{flushright}
valuable keepsake” (“Photographs of the Address” 8). Having moved his entire family to Cape Town and desirous of a middle-class life that included a home in the Southern Suburbs and domestic staff, money seems to have been a genuine concern for Peregrino. Advertising subsidized fickle subscription rates and provided him with much needed money to maintain the paper and his family. But a scan of both the front and back of each issue illustrates how advertising furthered his aim of providing a Cape Town-based race paper. In the first issue of the new year for 1901, he issues a clarion call to his readers. In “This is for You!,” he attests that:

[t]he white man believes in race pride...his own, and no other race. He thinks first of all of his own race. He does everything to build it up. He patronizes its business men, and he is right. Colored people! take a lesson from him. So long as a man or woman of your race is in business, offers you the same goods, or labors at the same price as anybody else, it is your bounden duty to patronize him or her. (Peregrino, “This is for You!” 1)

Immediately below he lists several black-owned establishments in Cape Town “[t]hat there may be no mistake in the matter.” They include: John Tobin’s restaurant, Grange Café, at 45 Hanover Street; Tobin’s adroit skills as “a teacher of all kinds of string and wind instruments”; William Glend’s barber shop at 7 Hanover Street; H. Dean’s Confectionary shop at 44 Hanover Street; Hendrick Thomas’ shoe store at 50 Hanover Street; Alec Mansfield’s shop; Frank Fester’s grocery and drapery business, and; G. F. Wyeth, a french polisher at 156 Waterkant Street, from which H. Pierce, “a paper hanger and painter,” also operated (Peregrino, “This is for You!” 1). If it was important to Peregrino that they were all black-owned, it was of equal importance that they treated

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17 According to Peregrino, the family lived at Oak Avenue in Newlands. See Francis Peregrino, “To Colored Refugees” 7. While Peregrino never says that he employed any domestic servants, several ads appear for an “[nt]ombazana [nt]sondum.” For one such example see Peregrino, “Tombazana Antsundu (Mhlaumbe iKaya Lezicakakazi)” 6.

18 It is unclear whether the H. Dean referred to here is the same Captain Harry Dean who penned The Pedro Gorino/ Umbala (1929). At some point Dean was expelled from the Cape Colony. From Dean’s autobiography we know that he was in Cape Town at the same time as Bishop Coppin and his wife, who only travelled with her husband to the city in 1902.
black patrons of all colors politely and offered competitive rates. Of John Tobin’s restaurant he noted that one receives “polite attention and reasonable rates” and “[n]o color line” (1).

Businesses that advertised in the Spectator were expected to operate under the same notion of race unity and uplift that Peregrino did. Advertising was not simply a source of income, but a sign of a robust and diverse community of race men and women. Each time a proprietor ran his or her ad in the paper it confirmed his or her commitment to a particular definition of the race and race work. At the same time, new advertisements signaled that the related proprietor had become a race man or woman. With the addresses of each business, school, or house of worship listed the front and back pages of the Spectator offered its readers an alternative map of the city, and even the Cape Colony and South Africa. At the dawn of the twentieth-century, Hanover Street, Bree Street, Buitengracht, Hout, Loop, all “at the center of the Metropolis of the Premier Colony of South Africa” as Peregrino identifies them in when writing of crime in the city (Peregrino, “This is for You!”1), were heaving with black entrepreneurship, creativity, worship, and study.

Much of the scholarship on coloured identity at the beginning of the twentieth-century suggests that as a racial category, it consisted of the same types of people who define themselves and are defined as coloured today. Mohamed Adhikari argues that by the 1904 census, the first to list coloured and native as two distinct racial groups, a cultural and social coloured identity had already taken root. Men like Peregrino and James La Guma in the 1920s, were “maverick[s]” in their respective calls for black unity (Adhikari, Burdened by Race 18n7). As Adhikari attests coloureds in South Africa were agents in the construction of their “colouredness.” But Peregrino’s Spectator troubles our assumptions about who was coloured at the fin de siècle.
Colouredness in South Africa at the dawn of the twentieth-century did not map neatly onto the definition of the race Peregrino brought with him from America. As Peregrino lamented in “The Foreign Educated Negro and His Position in South Africa,” the Cape was not the stuff of the “beautiful day dreams” that many upwardly mobile and established black men in the diaspora thought it was. He advised those who believed as much to “undeceive himself” (Peregrino, “The Foreign Educated Negro and His Position in South Africa” 3). Relocating his race organ from the diaspora to South Africa was not as smooth as he had expected. The interchangeable use of terms like “Kafir,”19 “native,” “colored,” “Coloured,” and “black” in The South African Spectator often seemed to prompt sharp criticism. Though such resistance was rarely furnished in the periodical, Peregrino chided those who use the term “colored” to privilege their European heritage. Why not use an umbrella term for all who have black ancestry like Negro, as black Americans? What was the purpose of labels like: colored, off-colored, or bustard (Peregrino, “An Authoritative Dictum” 6). The descendant of returned diaspors, he was West African-born and often (self-)described as a West African native. His wife was African American. Their children were typically described as West African natives despite have grown up in the US and Cape Town. For Peregrino and his family descriptors like “Kafir,” “native,” and “Coloured” all applied. An all encompassing label like black and the African American colored could register all three identities. Yet the title of his serial on black heroism through the ages reveals the difficulty of corralling all the different groups into one constituency. The series was run in English, Dutch, and Xhosa, respectively as: “Black, Mulatto, Quadroon, Octoroon”; “Swart, Mulat, Quadroon, Octoroon”; and “Ntsundu, Bhastile, Quadroon, Quadroon, Octoroon.”

19 Kafir, or Kaffir, was the term used to refer to the South African ethnic group known today as the Xhosa. The first translations in Xhosa of the Bible, and even texts on the language referred to both the people and the language as Kafir. I. Bud M’Belle’s Kafir Scholar’s Companion (1903) is but one example. At times, Kafir was used to refer to all black African groups, but this would typically include a hyphen, such that Zulus would be listed as Kafir-Zulu.
Octoroon.” Even the terms for inclusion under a racial umbrella were not easily translatable into at least two of the local languages (Dutch/Afrikaas and Xhosa) and racial lexicons of late Victorian and fin de siècle South Africa.

Of course there were fissures in the black community in the US too. Peregrino himself laments that racial mixing, or “absorption” as he refers to it, was considered by some to be “the means of solving the race problem” (Peregrino, “The Foreign Educated Negro, and his Position in South Africa” 2). He defines absorption as the practice of mating in such a way that any trace of Africa would be removed, leaving the descendants of the former slaves no more than “ethnological indescribables” (2). After all terms like mulatto, quadroon, and octoroon arose in the slavery cultures of the Americas, including that of the American South. If the terms used to describe the race were multiple and often reflected the extent of the racial admixture of their ancestors, it was not only a South African phenomenon. So too the desire to separate in terms this posed a problem in the US as well with even the most dedicated race men being accused of marrying lighter skinned women in order to “marry up” (Mitchell 206). In Imperium in Imperio: A Study of the Negro Race Problem, Sutton E. Griggs takes on the problem of defining the race in the US (Griggs). Black Americans may have chosen to use the term Negro to refer to all peoples of African descent, but that did not mean that differences in color and class were not used to differentiate one set from another.

That this conversation on the terms of blackness and the categories of non-white racial identity or identities, occurs at the start of the twentieth-century across the sea in periodicals in the US and South Africa signals the instability of race as a marker of identity and a way by which to define community. Yet the collective difficulty in translating even these terms that connoted racial
designations—mulatto, quadroon, and octaroon—speaks to the particularities of the race in South Africa at the start of the twentieth-century.

Peregrino’s desire to unite the race in Cape Town may have emanated in part as a result of his own transatlantic/diasporan/African family, but he was by no means alone in his attempt. African American immigrants such as the Coppins, Reverend R. A. Jackson of the Colored Baptist Church, Reverend A. Henry Attaway, Principal at Bethel Institute, and his wife C. F. Attaway who taught alongside him all saw their work in South Africa as connected as important race work. They frequently blurred the line between coloureds and natives. West Indians, often passing as African American (Peregrino, “American or West Indian—Which?” 3), obscured the boundaries between the two groups too. Allan Kirkland Soga, himself the offspring of an interracial marriage, defined himself as a black man and worked under the notion that they were all once race. Men like Abdullah Abduraman and John Tobin who are now in the pantheon of coloured South African heroes, worked within this broad coalition for the advancement of the race. Considered a coloured organization, when the African Political Organization was started in 1902 it was for coloureds and natives. Both Soga and Sol T. Plaatje were among its earliest members. Plaatje would go on to start the South African Native National Congress (later the African National Congress) in 1912. Others included Reverend M. M. Makone of the AME Church. Peregrino was among those appointed to deliver the Royal Address to Prince Alfred that expressed the concerns of the city’s residents who were not white.

The pictures that accompanied the biographical sketches Peregrino frequently published suggest that the race that Peregrino and some of his readers understood themselves to be part of included many who could be mistaken for white as well as others whose names suggested that they
were native. The photograph that heralded the First Colored Lodge of Freemason in South Africa confirms that not only were various ethnic groups represented in the paper, but they sought to worship and organize together ("The First Colored Lodge of Freemasons in South Africa" 2).

The South African Spectator suggest a black racial identity that was neither coloured nor black African in the contemporary sense. Peregrino actively tried to foster an American-style colored
identity by which all those who were not white were colored (coloureds and natives). Yet he was not so much a maverick trying to realign racial allegiances, but a cipher of non-white local attempts to self-define at a turbulent point in the history of the city, the colony, and the future nation. In the midst of war-torn South Africa, many coloreds from the north of the country, who had refused to fight against the British, found themselves destitute and homeless. Unable to live in the Boer Republics, they migrated to the Cape Colony in search of protection.

At the same time, the Bubonic Plague took hold. The disease was racialized. Black people who lived in the city—often densely packed together in small squalid spaces—were perceived to be the cause of the outbreak. The “sanitation syndrome,” as it is now known, ushered in one of the first forced removals of black people from urban South Africa. The Plague Administration moved many natives and some coloreds from their homes in the city center. As from far afield as Port Elizabeth black people wrote to the editor of the Spectator for assistance because the Plague was being used to expropriate their property and businesses in that port city. In Cape Town, those removed were resettled at the Uitvlugt Location, modern day Ndabeni. Interestingly, translated from Afrikaans, “Uitvlugt” means “outward flight.” Peregrino and his South African Spectator were integral to kind of fluidity across the new barriers around the city center for natives and coloureds, cultivating a sense of race pride and a singular racial identity. It was a mouthpiece for black people across South Africa eager for the war to bring about an extension of the limited franchise to the former Boer Republics, publishing notices from the Colored Refugee Commission. The South African Spectator reflects the unstable nature of black, colored, native, and “the race.” One reader “congratulate[s] the Supreme Court through the columns of your splendid paper, for their decision

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20 Peregrino started the Commission with Reverend Philips and W. A. Roberts to help those expelled from their homes and deal with the graft and abuses to which colored refugees were susceptible.
in the case of ‘Crown v. Willet’” in which it takes “a step in the right direction [and] decides in an unequivocal voice that he who has negro blood is a negro in Cape Colony.”

The mission statement of the Colored People’s Vigilance Society (CPVS), published in an issue from May 1901 articulates the openness of colo(u)red as a racial category. “It is distinctly understood,” he explains, “that the term Coloured is used here to embrace all who are not known as white,” shifting between the American and British spelling of the word (“Letter to the Editor” 7).

The Society’s motto was: “Eternal vigilance is the price of Liberty.” To maintain their freedom black people needed to guard their racial community. The purposes of the CPVS were listed as follows:

First, [t]o bring about a better understanding, and to foster friendly relations between all people in South Africa, who are not known as white.

2nd, [t]o investigate carefully, and with the view to procure remedy by lawful means for any Colored person who has suffered injury in his or her person through the unlawful acts of others, and to which he or she may not have contributed.

3rd, [t]o investigate, and place before the proper authorities for compensation, the just claims of all coloured people who have sustained losses through the enforcement of the laws recently found necessary for the suppression of the Bubonic Plague.

4th, [t]he Society shall have Agents and Correspondents throughout South Africa, who will collect and forward to the main office all reports of matters affecting the well-being of the race, and thus we will be [a]ble to keep in touch with the movements of our brethren elsewhere.

5th, And as the misfortunes and troubles of the race are not confined to the district affected by the present epidemic, and as, moreover, it is to be feared that there will always be need for the services of such a body, and long after the present troubles shall have ceased, therefore this society shall be a permanent organization. (Peregrino, “The Colored People’s Vigilance Society” 8)

The CPVS was started in response to forced removals of “people...who are not known as white” meted out by the state as a result of the Plague outbreak. Yet the organization’s mission statement suggests that the removals catalyzed Peregrino and like-minded intellectuals into race consciousness as they realized that they could be easily expelled under the pretense of protecting the good of the
(white) public. This was not only a threat to natives, but coloureds too. They were one race and needed to rally, implement a system of information-sharing and coordinating their responses in reaction. The race paper, was just the ‘system.’

Arguably The South African Spectator succeeded as a race paper precisely because of the fluidity of the race at that time. But if many were willing to define the race across linguistic and ethnic lines, there remained a cultural distinction to those who were to be included. In the main they had to be literate or semi-literate, often Christian, respectable, and aspirant. The multilingualism of the paper was strategic. It enabled a wider cross-section of readers and listeners to hear and understanding Peregrino’s call to action on behalf of the race. But it was English that would ultimately unite all black people.

Writing about a report in the Cape Times about “[t]he use by a certain section of the colored population of obscene language” in public, Peregrino bristles at the implication that the colored people are the only ones who use inappropriate language in public spaces. Yet he implicates “the taal,” as the language used at such times. Though he admits to the existence of “choice epithets” in English too, he makes it clear to which language his allegiance belongs. The “taal,” he writes, is “a patois I am fortunate enough not to understand” (Peregrino, “Bad Language” 2). With the exception of correspondence from readers, very few original copy is publishes in the taal or Xhosa. Translations of English serials are given Dutch/Afrikaans and Xhosa to ensure that the messages reach his target audience, but he remained conflicted about maintaining the cacophony of languages found in the region. One white reader wrote that, on “The Native Question and the Use of the Dutch Taal,” Peregrino should “advocate in [his] paper that all colored children shall be taught the English language in their schools and use it in their everyday life in home, in business
and in religious avocations!” The “taal signifies bondage and slavery,” he contended (Harris, “The Native Question and the Use of the Dutch Taal” 2). Curiously, despite the invocation of “the native question” in the title none of the other local, black vernaculars—Xhosa, Zulu, Sotho, Swazi etc.—are mentioned. Rather English is upheld as:

the language over and above all others that brings music to the ears of perfect freedom and liberty,\(^{21}\) secured and guaranteed by England, the home of the Free. Let the colored people use this language as their own, wipe out ever vestige of Dutch, and let there be but one language, one flag, one king and one throne. Dutch is synonym for slavery:\(^{22}\) we abolished the slavery, let us also bury language and everything else that tends to embitter and keep alive the memory of the mournful past. If we wish to annihilate the racial barrier then we must not persist in communication either on the platform or by the press, bilingually,\(^{23}\) this truth I leave for the consideration of your readers and your self. (2)

Peregrino agreed, but cautioned that in the interim, while English took root among the people, it would be dangerous to let “the steed succumb[b] to the pangs of hunger while the grass grows.” If the majority spoke and read Dutch, not English, in order to build the race his periodical had to publish in Dutch as well. As such, in response to Harris, he writes: “we devote some space at the present to Dutch in the interest of those who know only that language, if only to advise them through that language to learn English” (2). Language was at the heart of debates around enfranchisement and political equality. If education would give black men access to the vote, it was an English education that was needed.

But while Peregrino seems to have understand the Dutch as an alternative colonizers in the region who were inhospitable to the black man, he could not ignore some of his readers commitment to it. He seemed to have a more favorable view of Xhosa. In one of his last columns

\(^{21}\) emphasis added.

\(^{22}\) emphasis added.

\(^{23}\) Italicis found in text.
at the close of 1902 entitled, “European Names for Natives,” Peregrino asserts that natives should not be given European names. “Civilize him, cultivate him, improve and Christianize him,” he begs, “but pray let him remain a black man, and not a buffoon” (emphasis added; Peregrino, “European Names for Natives” 7). To maintain native names one had to maintain naming traditions which were often inextricably linked to the languages. For Peregrino Dutch and English were the languages of public discourse that transpired outside of the race. One was the language of slavery and bondage; the other was the language of political freedom. Xhosa and other such languages were aboriginal and necessary in keeping the black man “manly.”

A colo(u)red elite fluent in Xhosa denoted race progress rather than race annihilation. In Africa unlike America, Peregrino argues, “[t]he black man is [here] to stay...And the educators of black humanity will do well to keep this fact in view...They should aim at the 'production of good black men[,] and not attempt to make impossible white men out of good black men and thereby waste excellent raw material.” A “manly black man” is educated and intelligent, learned in the ways of civilization, but not an imitator (Peregrino, “Civilization versus Imitation” 4). For Peregrino and other black intellectuals interested in a broad-based black identity in South Africa, all black people in South Africa were natives, black, and colored. But “colored” is simply a “vague meaningless, and indefinite appellation” that falsely separates the race, allowing those of mixed blood to claim “superiority” over the “pure and genuine article.” Aborigines are “the first inhabitants of a Country,” he explains to his reader; “a Native ‘is one born in a place.’” All the race are aboriginal

24 Peregrino consistently refers to the policy of “absorption” in the US which essentially would result in the annihilation of the race in America. Despite anti-miscegenation laws and the prohibition of interracial marriage, he argues that the practices of lynching and rape were meant to deplete the race. Further, American immigration policies favored white immigration to the US. On the basis of immigration policy alone, the ratio of African Americans to the white majority would eventually be rendered negligible. See Peregrino, “The Foreign Educated Negro and His Role in South Africa,” The South African Spectator 2. Also see Peregrino, “Civilization versus Imitation” 4.
or native and must strive to be “Real Lively, Manly Black M[e]n” (Peregrino, “Who Is the Native and the Aborigine” 4). Xhosa, Sotho, Zulu, Swazi and other aboriginal languages were part of this construction of real, lively and manly black manhood. Yet as I will show, Peregrino was not interested in a return to a precolonial time. He was firmly rooted in the modernity that attended British imperialism.

Yet if he preferred English as the language of public discourse and state formation, Peregrino maintained that aboriginal languages were essential to black manhood in Africa. At the same time, Dutch-speakers continued to write to the paper in Dutch and expected to read some portions of their paper in Dutch too. If he wanted to build a broad-based notion of the race from Cape Town, he had to concede to Dutch as one of the languages in which to publish his race paper. In almost every issue he provides a rundown of the news in both Dutch/Afrikaans and Xhosa, under the headings “Het een en ander” and “Impawana,” respectively. In some issues, the first three columns are in Dutch/Afrikaans, Xhosa, or both. The relevance of a particular item to the various language-groups often dictated the language in which it was published. Several articles on the Uitvlugt Location, like “iLocation yaseUitvlugt” (“Uitvlugt Location”) and “iUitvlugt Location (iParadisi)” (“Uitvlugt Location (Paradise)”), are published in English and Xhosa. While “The Black Man” appears as “Ze Zwarte Man.” The Black Man” was a sermon given by an AME minister in Zion City, Chicago. In it, black disenfranchisement in America is described candidly. Even advertisements for the Pan-African Society were translated into Dutch/Afrikaans.  

25 See Peregrino, “Uitvlugt Location” 5; “iLocation yaseUitvlugt” 2; “Uitvlugt Location (Paradise)” 5; “iUitvlugt Location (Paradisi)” 2.

26 See “Black Man” 5; “Ze Zwarte Man” 2.

27 Peregrino often referred to Henry Sylvester Williams’ Pan-African Association as a Society.
features on Uitvlugt, which affected predominantly Xhosa-speakers, were offered in English and Xhosa, the sermon from the diaspora that describes racial oppression more broadly is offered in Dutch/Afrikaans. Translation was not only used to give each group access to the news items that most affected them. It was also a tool in creating a sense of a larger race community. Putting events from the diaspora—the “kleurlingen en Amerika” ("Ze Zwarte Man" 2)—in Dutch/Afrikaans helped in the cultivation of a black manhood among local coloureds sometimes ambivalent to a broad-based racial identity that would align them with Xhosa-speakers. The use of translation in the serialized histories, allegories and opinion-pieces that featured in the paper offer more insight into the ways in which translation was used to build the race in The South African Spectator.

The three serials that appeared between 1901 and 1902 were: “Black, Mulatto, Quadroon, Octoroon,” “The Foreign Educated Negro and His Position in South Africa,” and “The Book of the Three Bees.” The first offers a history of black men who were literary and revolutionary heroes since the Roman Empire. The second attends to the question of why black men should immigrate to South Africa and what to expect upon arrival. It reveals what Peregrino believed South Africa would be before he actually settled there and its perceived importance to Peregrino and other black intellectuals. While it is meant to tell others what to expect and what kind of race work they would be expected to do once in the Cape, it was also about his own ambivalence in the face of the reality of the British Empire in the region. The final serial, “The Book of the Three Bees,” is an allegory of the race in South Africa in terms of the Boers (led by GOH, or Grand Old Humbug) as abusive and exploitative. The Britons, under Her Majesty, “a wise and true Queen,” “carried the arts of commerce and civilization and the blessings of religion” (Peregrino, “The Book of the Three Bees” 5). Only the first of the three serials that The South African Spectator runs appears in English,
Dutch/Afrikaans, and Xhosa. The second, “The Foreign Educated Negro and His Position in South Africa” was translated into Xhosa. For each, the English version appeared first. Dutch/Afrikaans and Xhosa versions followed in later issues. Peregrino’s use of translation in *The South African Spectator* to craft a sense of racial brotherhood is perhaps most apparent in the tri-lingual installments of “Black, Mulatto, Quadroon, Octoroon.”

As with much of the translations in *The South African Spectator*, they are not attributed. Only the last installment of “Ntsundu, Bhashile, Quadroon, Octoroon” offers any clue as to its translator. Below Peregrino’s name, as author, is written “iguqulelwe ngu D. M.” (Peregrino/D. M., “Ntsundu Bhashile Quadroon, Octoroon” 1:35 2). *Iguqulelwe* is the past participle of the verb *ukuguqula*, to change or to translate. The installment was translated by D. M. Presumably the previous two installments of the Xhosa versions of “Black, Mulatto, Quadroon, Octoroon” were also translated by D. M. as it is subtitled “ipepa lesitatu,” or third paper. The second installment of the Xhosa series appeared under the same title as the third, a close translation of the English title (Peregrino, “Ntsundu Bhashile Quadroon, Octoroon” 1:35 2). If so the first ran under the title, “Omnyama Olubhelu Nabanjalo,” “Black Yellow and Others Like That” (Peregrino/D. M., “Omnyama Olubhelu Nabanjalo” 1:19 2). It is possible that all the translations into Dutch and Xhosa were done by the same person. Many Xhosa-speakers would have spoken Dutch. And some Dutch-speakers spoke Xhosa. But given D. M. assertiveness in signing off his Xhosa translations one would assume he or she would also want to claim the Dutch translations as well. The time lag between the first English “Black, Mulatto, Quadroon, Octoroon” and the various Dutch/Afrikaans

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28 As I will show, it was perhaps the most loose translation of any in the series.
and Xhosa versions suggest that different people were used for each and sourcing reliable translations proved difficult.

The first in the English series appeared on February 23, 1901. The *Spectator* ran a Dutch/Afrikaans translation a month later, on March 23. The first attempt at a Xhosa translation featured in July of that year, the next came almost year later, on March 22, 1902. Finding translators may have been difficult. At least one reader complained about the quality of the Xhosa in *The South African Spectator* (“Letter to Editor” 4). Readers wanted to see their language represented, but they expected sound grammar, spelling, and idiom. Often publishing under heavy financial constraints, Peregrino needed well-educated Dutch and Xhosa writers willing to write for little or no reimbursement. He voices this concern in at least twice in 1902 (Peregrino, “The Acme of Gratitude” 1:40 5; “A Unique Entertainment Will be Repeated” 1:40 6). At the same time it may not have occurred to Peregrino to translate the series until it was well underway and there was demand. But if readers demanded that he translate his serials, their demands are not evident in the published correspondence. What is clear is that Peregrino understood that even if English was to be the language around which the race would unite in the future, if he wanted to build a cohesive black community in Cape Town “at present,” he had to actively engage each language group. Aware of the necessity of using the local vernaculars, the translations demonstrate how Peregrino used translation to judiciously disseminate parts of his history of the race and recode it for Dutch-speakers and Xhosa-speakers. In this way, the serial, an essential feature of the race paper was itself serialized.

Of the twelve entries to the English series “Black, Mulatto, Quadroon, Octoroon,” there are only six in Dutch, and three in Xhosa. The first installment may be missing as the way in which
the ones available are numbered suggest that one is missing. From what remains, the series begins with a discussion of Africans in the Greek historical record. Ethiopians, Peregrino writes, appear frequently in Homer’s writing “in terms of praise, and...as being highly religious and civilized.” Greek and Roman civilization can be traced back to Ethiopia via Egypt (Peregrino, “Black, Mulatto, Quadroon, Octoroon” 1:7 4). He goes onto prove that Ethiopians were indeed black. From these first Africans descended black men “of the highest culture to which the human race is attainable.” They include a mix of pure-blooded black men and mixed race: Scipio Africanus, the writers, Alexander Dumas (father and son), General Lucoe, the 1826 President of Bolivia, General Paez Sometime, President of Venezuela, and General Piar, a central figure in the Columbia revolution (Peregrino, “Black, Mulatto, Quadroon, Octoroon” 1:7 4). The next entry in the series debunks the myth that Africans descended from Cain and black skin stems from the curse upon his descendants. Rather, Peregrino asserts that the Ethiopian “derived its name [and complexion] from the climate (Peregrino, “Black, Mulatto, Quadroon, Octoroon” 1:9 4) Nearly “two-thousand years before its re-discovery by Diaz and Vasco da Gama,” the Cape of Good Hope and South Africa was discovered and settled by these early Africans (4). The next entry depicts the heroism of another black hero, Hannibal. It highlights him as an equal to the great French general, Napoleon (Peregrino, “Black, Mulatto, Quadroon, Octoroon” 1:10 3). These first three parts of the serial establish the link between North and sub-Saharan Africa, clearly delineating that modern European civilization emanated from black Africa. For readers ashamed of their African ancestors,

29 The series is enumerated from the seventh installment, published on May 4, 1901. If we could back from this issue to the first installment of the series that is available, it appears that there were thirteen and we only have numbers two through thirteen. I will explore in detail which were translated and which were not into both Dutch/Afrikaans and Xhosa. I will use the original numeration. That is, the first in the series that we have available will be number two, the last, number thirteen.
these entries are meant to assure them that they descend from an ancient civilization that extends into the European civilization by which they find themselves being ruled.

The rest of the series turns to the Haitian Revolution and the squabbles amongst black, mulatto, quadroon, and octoroon that would see the mixed race heroes of the Revolution—Rigaud, Petion, and Boyer—“become the dupes of Napoleon, and...assist in reducing the land of their birth to slavery” (Peregrino, “Black, Mulatto, Quadroon, Octoroon” 1:24 5). If Haiti was “the Paradise of God” (Peregrino, “Black, Mulatto, Quadroon, Octoroon” 1:11 5) under Toussaint’s leadership it became every man’s paradise, even white men willing to accept black rule (Peregrino, “Black, Mulatto, Quadroon, Octoroon” 1:20 4). But, according to Peregrino, short-sighted “Mulatto sons” of French planters, brought about the Haitian Revolution’s failure. Although they remained without rights under French rule, convinced of their inherent superiority, they resisted alliance with blacks. The Mulattoes united under their leader Rigaud, “alarmed at the prospect of the future government of the Island being in the hands of the blacks” (Peregrino, “Black, Mulatto, Quadroon, Octoroon” 1:19 5). The English edition of the series ends abruptly with the black generals—Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe—defending Haiti against Napoleon’s General LeClerc, sent to reclaim the colony for France (Peregrino, “Black, Mulatto, Quadroon, Octoroon” 1:24 5).30

The translations into Dutch/Afrikaans appear to be direct translations of some installments from the English series. Following Peregrino’s numeration, parts one, three, four, five, seven, and nine, were offered in Dutch. The Xhosa translations, however, do not follow the English series as closely. In the first installment, “Omnyama Olubhelu Nabanjalo,” “Black Yellow

30 At the end “To be continued” is written, but no new entries in the series appear through 1901 or 1902.
Like That,” the title places the emphasis on a hoped for unification among pure-blooded and mixed black people. In it, Egypt and Ethiopia represented the mixed (or olubhelu) people of the race and Ethiopia the black (or omnyama). It draws on the connection between Ethiopia and Egypt in the first installment and suggestion that Greco-Roman high culture originally emanates from Ethiopia (Peregrino, “Black, Mulatto, Quadroon, Octoroon” 1:7 4). The second installment appears the following year with the title, “Ntsundu, Bhaustile, Quadroon, Octoroon,” which more closely mimics the English and Dutch versions. This installment compiles parts two and three of the initial English series. The second is a translation of part five.

In other words, the Dutch/Afrikaans series emphasizes the ways in which Ethiopians were described in historical traditions that predate Christ and makes the argument that the term Ethiopians was used to refer to Africans. “Homer, die acht honderd jaren voor Christus schreef, maakte dikwijls gewag van Ethiopiers,” the translation reads (or, Homer, who wrote eight hundred years before Christ, often made mention of Ethiopians) (Peregrino, “Zwart, Mulat, Quadroon, Octoroon” 1:10 3). In the English version, it is nearly the same: “Homer, who wrote eight hundred years before Christ, frequently referred to the Ethiopians” (Peregrino, “Black, Mulatto, Quadroon, Octoroon” 1:7 4). The next sentence in English is closely translated into Dutch too. “He,” Homer, the second sentence claims, “referred to them in terms of praise, and spoke of them as being highly religious and civilized.” In “Zwart, Mulat, Quadroon, Octoroon,” it reads similarly: “Hij gewaagde van hen met lof, en getuigde van dat volk als zijnde hoogste godsdienstig en beschafd” (Peregrino, “Zwart, Mulat, Quadroon, Octoroon” 1:10 3). (or He spoke of them with praise, and testified that most people as being religious and civilized). The rest of it continues on as a near transliteration of
the original English. So too the Dutch/Afrikaans translation of parts three, four, five, seven, and nine. The Dutch/Afrikaans version differs from the English series in terms of what was translated.

Only parts two, four, five, six, seven, and nine (the second half) appear in Dutch/Afrikaans. Based on the parts translated and those excluded from the Dutch/Afrikaans a reader of that series would learn that Ethiopian was indeed the word used to describe Africans. They were highly regarded and considered to be the source of Western civilization. Hannibal, an African, was the equal of Napoleon, who tried to put down the Haitian Revolution. The revolution becomes the core of a modern racial identity from oppressed people from the continent. The Dutch/Afrikaans version reveals the tensions between the mostly black ex-slaves and the mulattoes, but does not highlight the failings of the mulatto leadership. For instance, Rigaud’s conflation of “liberty with infidelity” exposed in part eight never makes it into that translation. The first half of part nine, in which the mulattoes efforts to gain citizenship rights separate from a black racial community does not appear in Dutch/Afrikaans either. This us important in a political context in which political rights would be racialized such that Coloured and natives would be put onto different voter rolls. Rather than emphasize this as a viable option through translation, Peregrino instead offers revolutionary Haiti as a failed black utopia that fails precisely because those who were not white there were unable to unite as one race. Reconstruction South Africa, which some hoped would be the black man’s utopia might fail, for the same reason. Thus only the second half of part nine is translated. Here the mulatto leader, Rigaud’s heroism is displayed. He fights off a “would-be-assassin” (Francis Z. S. Peregrino, "Black, mulatto, quadroon, octoroon," 1:16 6). The option of mulatto citizenship at the expense of black is minimized. Instead the Dutch/Afrikaans
series highlights the hostility between black and mulatto and how it threatens the freedom of both
groups.

Part two of the English series is loosely translated into Xhosa as “Omnyama Olubhelu
Nobanjalo,” while parts three and four are combined in the first “Ntsundu, Bhasilile,
Quadroon, Octoroon,” and and the last is a translation of part six of the English version. The
emphasis here is on the long historical record of black Africa as civilized, the ‘discovery’ of the
Cape of Good Hope and South Africa by black Africans, centuries before Diaz and Vasco da Gama
and the call for unified struggle from the mulattoes that awoke the slaves. The Xhosa series seems
to call on Xhosa-speakers to trust their mixed race brethren and heed their call for united
resistance to racial oppression. Rather than a point of division, the lack of one vernacular around
which to engage each other becomes a means of uniting the different groups into one.

But if Peregrino used the diversity of vernaculars of his readers to effectively build racial
brotherhood through The South African Spectator, English was the language in which he pushed
“true woman[hood].” With the exception of an advertisement for a domestic helper for Mrs.
Peregrino in Xhosa, text addressed to black women and about them appeared in English
(“Tombazana Antsundu (Mhlaumbe iKaya Lezicakakazi)” 6). In particular, black women were
castigated and warned about protecting their wombs from the threat of “absorption” and their
daughters from white male desire. The very terms Peregrino was unable to translate into Dutch and
Xhosa (quadroon and octoroon) became the source of anxiety about black women’s sexuality. The
vernacular could be used to foster racial unity among the various shades and hues of “South
Africans who were not white” (emphasis added; Peregrino, “The Colored People’s Vigilance
Society” 8), but black women were expected to stem the tide of mixed race offspring that he used translation to unite.

In second issue of 1901, Peregrino reflects on Soga’s welcome to The South African Spectator in Izwi Labantu. In his welcome, Soga apparently contends that ventures like the Spectator had not succeeded in Cape Town thus far because of the sheer “indifference” of the “Cape people” (Peregrino and Soga, Rather Rough on Them” 3). The Dutch inculcated Colo(u)reds in Cape Town with “the false idea of servility” and “stamped him as a class below the ordinary human level” so thoroughly that “‘reproach.’..is associated with the colored question” (3). “If we are to believe Olive Schreiner,” he continues, “the mere mention of it in some families is suggestive of the whisperings in a Death Chamber” (3). Interestingly, the problem is quickly gendered. If “the men are certainly indifferent...to their social uplifting,” cries like “[m]y father was an oprecht Irishman, or my mother was an English lady” are put in the mouths of colo(u)red women (3). In fact, he laments that their “highest ambition is to contribute to the petticoat government of the British Army” (3). Black women’s lack of sexual reserve and disregard for race respectability are at the root of the inability of the race to unite. By reproducing mixed race offspring and celebrating their own European ancestry they continue to dilute the possibilities of racial brotherhood. Soga and Peregrino agree that “[i]t is a woman’s privilege to sire the stock from any race she likes (3). “[B]ut,” they wonder, “what about the recruits. It makes little difference who ‘Papa’ is...it makes all the difference in the world if the rising generation is to be allowed to sink to the level of the Hooligan” (3). The Spectator and the AME Church are charged with helping the colo(u)red people throw off their sense of inferiority and help emancipate the race (3).
This article, of course, appears only a page before the first installment of the “Black, Mulatto, Quadroon, Octoroon” series. Absorption is deemed a threat to race unity in both. In “Rather Rough on Them,” however, it is not a latent threat and women receive the brunt of the warning against racial mixing. As if soldiers in the race army are expected to be cautious about the “recruits” they allow into the race through reproduction. In “Breezes from the East,” Peregrino informs his readers that a correspondent from Port Elizabeth sent in a report that a boy and his mother went to the train station to go out of town on business. However, [o]n arriving at the station, the son, who was white in complexion, was allowed to pass on production of his permit, whilst the mother, whose hue was dark, was told first to be inoculated, and then allowed to pass. We ask you, Sir, where does principle come in, in this case? Was it not plain that she was treated according to her color. (Peregrino, “Breezes from the East” 3)

Plain as it might be that the woman was discriminated against because of her color, Peregrino uses this incident to speak to interracial sexual relationships between white men and black women. “I can only hope, therefore,” he writes, “that not many of those who are entrusted with the enforcement of this atrocious regulation are responsible for the presence in the community of a class of offsprings, who are thus taught to despise their parents” (3). However, it is their mothers for whom Peregrino reserves his reproach. He hopes “that it would prove salutary lesson to a class of colored women, who prefer the degrading position or being the harlot of some low white man to being the honored and honest wife of a man of her own race”(3). “These wretches flit around in borrowed plumes for a brief—very brief—span,” he almost sneers:

when the thin veneering, which they mistake for beauty, is worn off, and the miserable bags are thrown out to die, or some simple colored man, in misdirected kindness, takes them up. Unfortunately, the law does not allow us to kill off every species of the vermin. Hew to the line. Let the chips fall where they may. That’s about the SPECTATOR’S motto. (3)
Black women who engage in sexual relations with white men outside of wedlock are “miserable bags” and “vermin” who deserve to be killed. Social ostracism and physical death to such mothers who breed poor recruits to the race army becomes the motto of Peregrino’s race paper. Racial brotherhood is not only achieved through translation into local vernaculars but also by policing and even criminalizing black women’s bodies.

In a series of letters, entitled “Black and White,” “Friend of All” reads race relations in terms of labor: black workers and white employers. The employees are mostly “colored servant girls.” With instructions for workers and their employers, most of the series attends to the question of “familiarity” or “over familiarity” between white “masters” and “colored servant girls” (Friend of All, “Black and White” 3). Masters should refrain from being “familiar” with their domestic staff. In the first letter in the series, Friend of all, wonders “Shall I say it?” “Yes,” he continues,

I feel I must. Don’t seduce the colored servant girls! It is a mournful fact, that many a white man, who always has his mouth full about ‘those d—d niggers,’ does not think it beneath him to have improper relations with a ‘nigger.’ but alas, when an unfortunate child is born, they will not acknowledge the poor mite as their own, and the deluded mother is cast off, with the illegitimate infant to care for, in most cases without a penny of monetary help from the unnatural father. (emphasis added; Friend of All, “Relationship between White Folks and Black Folks” 4)

In this passage, white men are implored not to engage in sexual relations with black women. But in the previous letter, addressed to servant girls directly, black women are accused of not being

31 This is not unusual in the period. Other South African writers, think through race relations in terms of the labor market. Both Olive Schreiner and Sol T. Plaatje do so in The Story of an African Farm (1883) and Mhudi (1930). In Schreiner’s novel, black women’s friendship and love across the color line are cast the economy of white domesticity. Written in the 1910s, in Plaatje’s novel, the titular character, Mhudi, avoids this when she refuses to go work for her and her husband’s friends, and young Afrikaner couple about to be wed. See Victoria J. Collis-Buthelezi, “‘A Native Venture’: Sol (Solomon Tshekisho) Plaatje, Defining South African Literature.” Special Issue of XCP: Cross Cultural Poetics. 21/22 (2010), 118 – 136.
respectable. If servant girls are respectful to their masters, but “resent[ful]” of any such “over
familiarity” their masters “will respect you all the more,” Friend of All advises them (Friend of All,
“Black and White” 3). “Do not overdress, but dress neatly and in accordance with your station in
life” (3) he suggests.

While Florence Peregrino offers the reader a nascent proto-feminism in her rail against
marriage in “Is Marriage a Bargain?” (Peregrino, “Is Marriage a Bargain?” 6), much of the paper
concerns itself with getting black women to see the value of preserving the race. The virtues of
modest dress and intraracial marriage are the tools with which they should do so. Interracial rape
becomes a phantom of the slave past that can be avoided if only black women demand respect
from white “masters” through their dress. Friend of All’s admonitions mirror Peregrino’s own
ideas of black female respectability. In September of 1902, Peregrino informs his readers that
Thomas Bench, a white man who abducted “a colored girl” by the name of Mary Ann Gemmell,
found himself in court at Wale Street in the Cape Town city center. He had been charged after the
girl’s mother found them in Adderley Street. Upon looking at the evidence, the judge found him
guilty. Peregrino credits Mary Ann’s “mother for her efforts to protect her daughter,” but reminds
his readers that “it is much to be regretted that she had not nipped the evil in the bud...thus
protected her daughter’s chastity, instead of barring the gate after the loss of the steed” (Peregrino,
“A Lecherous Wretch Well Punished” 6). The editor rails against the number of such young, black
women who fall prey to the overtures of “white soldiers...is a sight which threatens to annoy the
future census man in...placing the abnormal population of the mixed multitude” (6). He ends with
the plaintive cry to black mothers:
Protect your daughters, and the courts will second your efforts, as was proven in this case. That girl of yours will look much better, and inspire more respect in a plain cotton gown than in finery which is the pride of shame. And no one is going to mistake her for a lady, simply because she is in borrowed plumes. (emphasis added; 6)

Mothers were expected to “protect [their] daughters.” Keep them in plain clothing that would not attract the white male gaze. Young women were asked to resent the overtures of white men and eschew “finery” and “borrowed plumes.”

The South African Spectator asks all non-white men to accept the label ‘black’ and strive to be “bright, manly black man.” To aide them in doing so, Peregrino uses English, Dutch/Afrikaans, and Xhosa to reveal a long and varied history of black civilization. He shows that black utopia is possible only if those of pure Negro-blood and the mixed multitude unite. At the same time, he suggests the chaos that can follow division between the two factions. Racial brotherhood is essential. But the passage above illustrates the way in which guarding the borders of the race was assigned to women.32 Whereas men are called on to enter the world through education, entrepreneurship, the church, and the franchise, black women are expected to engage in a kind of asceticism. Black women (and white men) are responsible for miscegenation. “For what proportion of the mixed population in your respective neighborhoods is the black man responsible?” asks Peregrino (Peregrino, “Miscegenation” 5).

Black men are expected to speak and read various local vernaculars, black women are called on to speak and read English. In some ways this reflects the relative ambivalence of the editor to what black men require to be bright, manly black men. If they need English to access the franchise, they also must not stoop to imitation. But deeply troubled by the number of black women who

procreate out of wedlock with white men, thereby reducing the number of race men and women,
Peregrino uses English and its ethos of Victorian respectability to press for a kind of moral
regeneration of black women and the black home. Yet he does not frame this as a battle between
white and black patriarchies. Rather, maintaining his belief in the British Empire and its “fair play”
and “justice for the weak,” he suggests that black women’s wombs are vulnerable to “recruits” sired
by white fathers because black women invite it.

South Africa and The Colored American

At the heart of The South African Spectator’s gendered notions of how to build the race is the
editor’s attempt to harness the British Empire and Britishness toward black progress. Many black
intellectuals of the period believed that the limited franchise in the Cape Colony would extend to
the rest of South Africa once the British won the war. After which it would only be a matter of
time before South Africa, with the Cape taking the lead, could become the black man’s utopia.
Compared to post-Reconstruction America, where black political power was under imminent
threat, the promised extension of the limited franchise made the Cape Colony and British
subjection attractive to many upwardly mobile and established black men (and women). But as I
argue above, the way in which British protection was perceived as a possible buttress to black
solidarity and progress was informed by the African American notion of jubilee. The movement of
people like Peregrino and organizations like the AME Church between the Diaspora and the Cape
made this possible, but the race paper was the conduit through which they did so. Notions of race,
jubilee, and racial brotherhood moved across the Atlantic through the pages of race papers like The
had its own sense of itself, its function as a mouthpiece for the race, and its own local context with
which to contend. While some strove for a more universal appeal others sought to speak to their
constituents. If the first two years of *The South African Spectator* reveal non-white attempts to define
black and colo(u)red identity in fin de siècle South Africa that marries diasporan, continental
African, and British definitions of race and citizenship across language and gender, the 1903 to
1904 Soga contributions to *The Colored American* expose attempts to introduce the results of this
work to the diaspora on a larger scale.

Soga’s tenure at *The Colored American* comes in the year and a half that preceded the take
over of the magazine. Attending to questions specific to the race rather than “the general reader,”
wedded to an international project of racial uplift, the fleeting traffic between South Africa and
the Diaspora in which Soga, Peregrino, and Hopkins engage offer an alternative definition of the
genre to what follows. T. Thomas Fortune’s essay, “What a Magazine Should be,” appears in the
first issue of *The Colored American Magazine* after the famous change in management that would see
Hopkins lose her editorship of the magazine to Frederick Moore, a key ally of Booker T.
Washington. The editor of *New York Age*, Fortune traces the genealogy of magazine literature from
Thomas Macaulay’s *Edinburgh Review* and Charles Dickens’ *Cornhill Magazine* (Fortune, “What a
Magazine Should Be” 394). Each “represent[ed] the two extremes of literature,—the statistical,
historical and argumentative and the imaginative and sentimental schools” (394). Though he
concedes that the definition of what constitutes the genre depends on the “point of view,” turning
to the African American periodical, he reveals in the evolution of the genre. To be effective for the
race the race periodical should respond to “the need of the Afro-American people...and...at the
same time, commend itself...to the general reader” (394).
On the contrary, Soga jumps into the debate between those in favor of gradualism, like Booker T. Washington, and those committed to strident political activism and higher education, like Hopkins and W. E. B. Du Bois. Peregrino arrived at Cape Town with his own embodied experience of what the limits of the genre were and what jubilee meant, but the situation on the ground made him sensitive to the question of language and translation in his attempt to define *The South African Spectator* as the black man’s paper. His collaboration with men like Soga informed *The South African Spectator*. At the same time, their radicalization into race work in South Africa extended across the sea to sister publications like *The Colored American*. The revision of that magazine that comes in 1904 is in part a response to this attempt among Soga, Peregrino, and Hopkins at globalizing the genre.

In this way reading Soga as a *Colored American* writer alongside *The South African Spectator* is essential to any attempt to unearth the exchange across the Atlantic between race men and women as they endeavored to define who belonged to the race and what their collective project might be. If Peregrino deemed the race paper central to this work, to do so, he leaned on other contemporary examples of the genre, namely *The Colored American*. He gleaned key constructs of black female sexuality from the magazine, such as “true womanhood” and “borrowed plumes” and altered them for his own local use. “[T]rue womanhood” becomes “decent” in the *Spectator*; the term “borrowed plumes” demarcates the ends of womanly decency. But it is important to note that its origins can be found in Hopkins’ own frustration with the portrayal of women in public life in *Unleaven Bread*, a novel by Judge Grant. The women’s movement had to be more than “the outward veneer of fuss, feathers, fine dress, and posing for public admiration” (Hopkins, “Women’s Department” 121). For Hopkins, rather than a sign of the race’s degeneration and
absorption, the stronger the movement, “the larger the percentage of women we shall find strutting about in the borrowed plumes of the truly great ones. No one loses confidence in the soundness of Uncle Sam’s currency because counterfeit greenbacks are constantly in circulation” (emphasis added; 121). Rather than a mark of immorality “borrowed plumes” signal the strengthening of the women’s movement. Yet Hopkins remains ambivalent about how closely black women should work with white toward women suffrage (and gender equality), rather than consider the matter in light of “the race problem” (122). Would the race benefit from the enfranchisement of white women? Should women lower themselves to engage in questions that extend beyond their access to property, their children, and their personal dignity to become nothing more than “the party ‘faithful?’” Herein lies the tension that provokes Peregrino to define the decent black woman as one whose race activism revolves around the (black) home and family. The answer is both a universal one for the race, and a peculiarly local one.

Thus when Allan Kirkland Soga begins his series for The Colored American Magazine, “Ethiopians of the Twentieth Century,” the American-based version of the genre was already embedded in the South African landscape. As Soga’s comments early in 1901 suggest, though he believed in uniting under the banner of one race, he strongly doubted that the Cape colo(u)red people would do so. Like Peregrino and Hopkins, miscegenation shaped his own attempt to achieve racial brotherhood. It is Soga who identifies black women’s sexual and reproductive desires as dangerous to building the race in the Cape. But by 1903, though intraracial difference remains a concern, Soga seems strictly focussed on the maintenance of prerogatives of masculinity in South Africa and the US. These include equal education (for boys) and the franchise.
Soga was the son of the first ordained African minister, Tiyo Soga, and a Scottish weaver, Janet Burnside Soga. His parents met in Edinburgh when Tiyo went there to study. Of mixed race, Soga defined himself as black and spoke Xhosa so fluently that he shocked Peregrino the first time the latter overhead him speak it because he spoke such easy and unaccented English that Peregrino assumed it was his mother tongue. As the ‘face’ of their joint efforts to deploy the genre in South Africa, Soga wrote to Hopkins. The two were so intertwined that, in her biographical sketch of Soga, Hopkins makes sure to mention that Soga founded the South African Native Press Association with Peregrino (Allen, “Mr. Alan Kirkland Soga” 115). As President, Soga worked closely with Peregrino, often sharing copy (115). Certainly Soga authored his contributions to The Colored American, but it is important to situate them as at least the byproduct of his collaboration with Peregrino and their attempt to foment interest in race work in South Africa among people of African descent abroad. Soga draws Peregrino in as a point of reference, not only in his letter to Hopkins, but in his contributions to the magazine as well. Soga opens “IV. Call the Black Man to Conference” with one such reference. He begins the essay:

It was the “South African Spectator” that remarked that “There is a tide in the affairs of men, which taken at the flood, leads on to fortune.” And so it appears by a happy coincidence that we are able to quote the views of the able editor of the “New York Age,” in support of...a great principle indeed, of a protected franchise. (Soga, “IV. Call the Black Man to Conference” 197)

T. Thomas Fortune, is the editor to whom Soga refers. The quote from The South African Spectator does end with the word “fortune”; quoting it allows a clever pun. But Peregrino’s periodical is mentioned in order to enter it into the reader’s consciousness. Through the opening the Spectator

33 Sarah A. Allen was one of Pauline Hopkins’ pen-names; this was her biography of Soga.

34 Also see The South African Spectator and Izwi Labantu.
becomes a shadow text to Soga’s inviting a host of questions from the reader: What is The South African Spectator? What was the context in which the remark—“There is a tide in the affairs of men, which taken at the flood, leads on to fortune”—was made? And how does it relate to Soga’s essay? If Soga’s Colored American writing is an early attempt to stitch together the race work in which black people in the US and in South Africa are engaged, Soga tells his reader that alongside his own organ, Izwi, The South African Spectator is instrumental to his efforts to do so.

Several of Soga’s Colored American essays were reprinted from Izwi Labantu; one could read them as part of that periodical. But if The South African Spectator grants us a purview into how some tried to mobilize diasporic notions of racial identity, reading Soga’s essays as part of The Colored American helps us to consider how some continental race men, “strangers” to the Diaspora, negotiated a system of relations between those on the continent and those in the Diaspora. The Colored American becomes a global race publication that works through South Africa and the Cape as a black utopia. Hopkins situates Soga’s work between photoessays on Jamaica, Frederick Douglass’ “Toussaint L’Ouverture,” and her final novel Of one Blood (1903). Soga, South Africa, and the dream of franchise and equal education, all toward black utopia, are put in conversation with reminisces of Haitian’s hero, Jamaica as an island paradise, and her own fictive search for African regeneration.

Prior to Soga’s 1903 entrance into the pages of The Colored American, the magazine’s editorial staff and and its readers were interested in South Africa. Pieces ran on Cetshwayo, the last king of the independent Zulu nation, and his great uncle, Shaka, the Zulu king who made the Zulu a nation. In fact, a photograph of Cetshwayo preceded chapters four and five of Hopkins’ novel Hagar’s Daughter in the April 1901 issue (Hamedoe, “Cetawajo, King of Zululand” 455). Arguably
South Africa, and other parts of the black world, animate the journal visually, ostensibly haunting a seemingly nation-bounded periodical through the medium of photography. But if Cetshwayo and Dinizulu seem to signal Africa an ancestral past of lost kingship, the photographs of “Bushman’s Pass” (the frontispiece for the August 1903 issue) and an untitled photograph of Rondebosch, one of Cape Town’s southern suburbs hinder attempts to interpret the magazine’s and Hopkins’ turn to Africa as fanciful or reductive (“Here and There” 531).Alongside this visual fixation with South Africa are Soga’s articles and musings. Contributions from a black man living in South Africa moves South Africa out of the past and into the readers’ present. No longer learning about great Zulu kings or tribal citizenship, readers in the Diaspora are exposed to a much more contemporary and personally comparable battle for citizenship. Hopkins allocates even more space to images of South Africa in addition to Soga’s columns.

A former magistrate and member of the civil service, Soga became editor of Izwi Labantu in 1899. Soga started Izwi in 1897 at East London with Walter Rubusana and Nathaniel Cyril Umhalla. Through Izwi, they hoped to counter John Tengo Jabavu’s Imvo and its pro-Boer stance. Rubusana served as editor until Soga took over. Soga headed the paper until 1909. In the 1920s he wrote a column for Umteteli waBantu entitled, “The Cult of Race Leadership.” In it, he tried to weave together the diasporan construct of the New Negro and the continental New African. Soga’s tenure as a contributor for The Colored American foregrounds his efforts at Umteteli. If he hoped to bring together the diasporan and continental African at Umteteli, in The Colored American we witness his realization that the British Empire would not secure the black man his jubilee. As such

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35 Cecil Rhodes apparently lent financial support to the venture.
he performs race collaboration sometimes against the US nation and the British empire as necessary. The New Negro and the New African become nearly interchangeable.

In all Soga wrote two series for *The Colored American* a poem entitled, “Patience.” The series were: “Ethiopians of the Twentieth Century” and “Call the Black Man to Conference.” “Ethiopians of the Twentieth Century” ran in four parts. Soga wrote the first three installments, Reverend Charles S. Morris, a survivor of the Wilmington Massacre of 1898, wrote the fourth. The Wilmington, North Carolina Massacre was a coup d’etat in which black and progressive white elected officials were unseated by white supremacists and black residents were expelled from the city on threat of death. Each of the four installments pertain to South Africa, black enfranchisement there, equal education, and defining the race. Soga’s contributions are actually open letters to the Colonial Secretary at the time, Joseph Chamberlain. While Morris offers a travel essay about his trip to Cape Town. Here, South Africans are privileged as the twentieth-century Africans and the question of black enfranchisement in the British colony of South Africa is put before the *Colored American* reader as central to the what it means to be African and black in the coming century.

“Ethiopians of the Twentieth Century” regals *Colored American* readers with photographs of South African landscape and life. The first installment offers photographs of King Dinizulu, of the Zulus with sketches of the Mooi River and a native wedding in Zululand (present day KwaZulu Natal) (Soga “Ethiopians of the Twentieth Century. I.” 433, 435, 436). In the second pictures of Government Avenue in Cape Town, a “Gold Hunter’s Hut,” and the Tugela River. The third shows the Umgeni River and cane-cutting in Natal as well as Arum Lilies. In the fourth and final
installment, Reverend Morris offers pictures of three important sites in Cape Town: the Cape Town Athletic Grounds; Groote Schuur (Cecil John Rhodes’ residence), and Parliament.

A random sampling of the photographs and sketches represented intimates how readers were invited to visualize South Africa as a mix of ‘tribal’ majesty, black modernity, industrialization, exploitation, greed, and governance. As they read of the British betrayal of black subjects and were invited to stand firm for their rights to the protected franchise and equal education, this was the complex image of Africa that they were invited to conjure. The photograph or the visual was important in *The Colored American*. Often working in tandem with the printed word to promote the race agenda of the editor, Soga’s essays and visual material were part of Hopkins construction of the magazine as a force for racial regeneration.

The second series, “Call the Black Man to Conference,” ran from the end of 1903 through March 1904. There were six installments. The first two enter squarely into the raging debate on Booker T. Washington’s agenda for the race. Writing as “a stranger remotely situated from the centre of disturbance...in the discussion of the respective merits of Industrial versus Higher Education,” Soga offers a synopsis of what he believes gave rise to “the Booker Washington craze” (Soga “Call the Black Man to Conference” 868). The next two speak to T. Thomas Fortune and his opinion on the protected franchise. The final installment addresses education.

“Ethiopians of the Twentieth Century” and “Call the Black Man to Conference,” both address the curtailing of black political power at the start of the twentieth-century. They document the comparison that the race paper as a genre makes possible for black thinkers. Certainly, those in America reading *The Colored American Magazine* were able to ‘visit’ Cape Town without leaving their parlors. Likewise readers in South Africa could ‘venture’ to the US without boarding a ship.
Yet magazine not only invited its readers to build a comparative lexicon between the “heres and
theres” of the race, the magazine itself came to function as an alternative space through the
representation of multiple sites in the black world. If language and translation became a means of
cohesion in *The South African Spectator*, the explicit representation of various spaces engendered a
coherent ‘space’ of racial belonging that becomes impossible in the nation-space and the empire.

“Ethiopians of the Twentieth Century” tells of the strain black South Africans face in the
wake of the Anglo-Boer War, in which they have become the “black menace” in the face of “the
solid front” of “Briton and Boer” (Soga, “Ethiopians of the Twentieth Century. II. Questions
Affecting the Natives and Colored People Resident in British South Africa” 565). “Call the Black
Man to Conference” addresses the unfolding drama between those who support Du Bois and
Higher education and those who support Washington and Industrial education in black America.
It also relates the particularities of black struggle in South Africa to that in America. Toward the
end of his second open letter to Chamberlain, the second installment of “Ethiopians of the
Twentieth Century,” Soga explains to the Colonial Secretary that black people in South Africa
have more than their own “experience” to make them unwilling to accept Boer leaders’ promises to
treat them fairly and justly (566). They also have that of African Americans. Soga cites “ex-
Governor Pinchback,” the first African American governor in the US. “It is noticeable,” Pinchback
claimed, “that wherever colored men have been deprived of the ballot, unjust legislation has
speedily followed, race antagonism has been intensified, and lawlessness and outrage against the
race increased” (566). In the third installment of “Call the Black Man to Conference,” Soga begins
by delineating efforts to raise the franchise in the Cape Colony, but he ends with a long excerpt
from an editorial published in *The Public*, a Chicago-based periodical, in which the author defends
“Equality before the law [as] a universal principle” (Soga, “III. Call the Black Man to Conference” 95). Thus the assertion that ends the article is about the rights of African American. It is a direct quote from the article in The Public: “the legal rights of the American Negro in respect of his life, his liberty, his pursuits and his property, ought to be precisely the same as those of the American white man” (95). As a black “stranger” Soga is able to speak to what he deems the race problem in America. At the same time, he ruminates on the threat to the black man’s continued access to the ballot in the Cape Colony. The race paper allows Soga to connect more directly the connection between the two. They become conjoined.

Writing to an immediate local readership and a wider one in the Diaspora, the genre allows Soga to create a kind of neither-space through the race paper: neither the Cape, nor the US. Soga has to deploy the genre differently from Peregrino. First, concerned with the possible loss of black voting rights both in South Africa and the US, Soga focuses on black men and writes to a black male audience. Men were the ones with the vote. Peregrino too, was concerned with the vote. The key difference between the two is that by 1904, the post-war Reconstruction as a time of jubilation for the race seems chimerical. “We thought,” Soga reflects, “that the [black man] w[as] now to be received with confidence within the political family circle as true citizens of the Empire...to share in the coming prosperity which has been so eloquently described by the great advocates of the Commonwealth” (Soga, “Ethiopians of the Twentieth Century. II. Questions Affecting the Natives and Colored People Resident in British South Africa” 565). By 1904, the belief that the British flag would protect the race had been shaken. South Africa and British protection no longer serve as an option for the race. A new place has to be found. Though still loyal to the Crown, Soga’s
Colored American’s writing reveal someone searching for that new place and in the absence of solid
ground, the genre of the race paper becomes that space.

Let us look at Soga’s response to the questions of the Boston Catechism intended for
Booker T. Washington in “II. Call the Black Man to Conference:”

In the present season of anxiety and almost despair which possesses an element of
the race there are two things which I wish to say as strongly as I may:

1. Let no man of the race become discouraged or hopeless. There are in this country,
   North and South, men who mean to see that justice is meted out to the race. Such a
   man is Judge Jones of Alabama, to whom more credit should be given for blotting
   out that infamous system of peonage that any other.

2. Let us keep before us the fact that almost without exception every race or nation that
   has ever got upon its feet has done so through struggle and trial and persecution. No
   one should seek to close his eyes to the truth that the race is passing through a very
   serious and trying period of its development; a period that calls for the use of our
   ripest thought and sober judgement. (565).

The article appeared first Izwi Labantu (September 29, 1903), but this passage is taken verbatim
from Booker T. Washington’s speech at Louisville, Kentucky on the advantages of his gradual
approach. Immediately before ventriloquizing it, Soga refers to the speech and makes plain that, in
his view, speech destabilized much of what Washington’s detractors claimed. He does not however,
identify what follows as Washington’s. Initially published for his South African readers then
republished in The Colored American, the essay plays on ventriloquy and periodical circulation, Soga
dislocates the text from speech to essay and the speaker/writer from African American to South
African. As editor, Hopkins allows him to do so, both of them pushing a closer union between
diasporan and continental race men and women.

Read together, The South African Spectator and Soga’s Colored American writing suggest that
the South African question was important to race men and women on both sides of the Atlantic.
Both explore the violence meted out on black bodies across the Southern United States in “lynching bees” and the coercive use of black women’s bodies by white men, despite the laws against miscegenation. In the US Reconstruction had given way to Jim Crow and the curtailing of gains made by African Americans in terms of the franchise, education, and economic prosperity. For many the British, as the first European power to abolish the slave trade and slavery, were the most advanced in their stance against racial prejudice and inequality.

What is perhaps most manifest in the cultural production of the Peregrinos, namely Francis Sr., is the overriding belief by many black people (both subjects of the British Empire and not) in the necessity of the extension of the British Empire for the success of the race. They are not interested in racial “absorption,” as Peregrino terms it. Imperial belonging is not understood as a step toward becoming white, rather it is essential to the preservation of the race. Race work and empire-building are interlocked activities. Without the empire, the race cannot be built. To read this as an early Afro-pessimism would be to misread the activism of such race men entirely. It is not that they do not believe that Africa can build itself. Instead the ideals of the British Empire—fairplay, justice for the weak, and stickativeness, buzzwords that litter The South African Spectator—are integral aspects of their own labor for race progress. They wanted equality under the law as well as race pride, all under the auspices of Empire.

Soga foray’s into The Colored American is not a rejection of Peregrino’s steadfast belief in the British Empire, but a sign that many black intellectuals were beginning to lose faith in it. Peregrino had been active in the campaign against suspending the Constitution in 1902, even in opposition to Soga. As more of them realized that the end of the war meant the consolidation of whiteness, under the protection of the British flag, many began, to search for a new space to which to attach
their hopes. If Peregrino’s race paper was unable to make the Cape that space, Soga (and Peregrino) turned to Hopkins. With her, Soga endeavored to build it on the pages of The Colored American Magazine.
In January 1919, on the docks at Cape Town a smattering of dockworkers started a trade union. Coloured and native, they lived in District Six, the Docks Location and Ndabeni. District Six was a mixed-race suburb created in 1867, where most of the coloured members lived. The Docks Location was living quarters on the wharf for single men. Ndabeni was the first native ‘location’ erected in Cape Town; there married native men lived with their families. By coming together, these dockworkers hoped that they would improve their lot on the docks, mitigate the sharp rise in the cost of living following World War I, and ameliorate their material conditions as non-Europeans living in the city of Cape Town. They called the union the Industrial and Commercial Workers’ Union (ICU).

The ICU was born amidst worldwide dissatisfaction with the living and working conditions after the first World War. 1919 was the year in which riots swept several seaports in the transatlantic region, largely around issues of race. White workers, returning home after the war, were uneasy with the growing influx of Africans, Caribbeans, and Asians flooding Europe’s ports. In Britain alone at least nine ports were sites of riots (Jenkins 1). Many of the foreign-born black workers in the dockyards of South Africa found themselves stranded in port cities in the region. As

1 Coloured and native (or bantu) are used to refer to persons of mixed-race and indigenous ancestry respectively. Though anachronistic to some readers, I use them because these were the terms in use during the 1920s. Moreover, as I show in this essay, the very terms of racial identity were in flux at the time, particularly in the early years of the union. Black and non-European often appear interchangeably here to refer to coloureds and natives, and sometimes Indians.

2 Completed in 1902, it was built in response to the Bubonic Plague. Maynard Swanson has called this shift toward segregation that ensued in urban centers in the Cape Colony, such as Cape Town and Port Elizabeth, the sanitation syndrome. See Swanson.
white servicemen returned from the war, they demanded to return to their previous jobs on ships, many of which had been filled by black seamen during the war (Cobley, ““Far from Home”” 357). As a race-based union, the ICU’s unique relationship to the wider world was not lost on Clements Kadalie, one of the union’s founders. He pointed to the impetus postwar realities gave in starting the union (Kadalie, My Life and the ICU 1). Their first strike bespeaks this; it would turn out to be a thankless collaboration with the white Cape Federation of Labor Unions around the exorbitant cost of food in the country (42).

Conscious of the vulnerability of workers of all races but aware of the exclusion of black workers from local and global discussions around labor rights, the ICU leadership followed in the vein of earlier black Victorians, like Williams, Dean, the Peregrinos, and the early APO, in its attempt to unify coloureds and natives. Following the Anglo-Boer War (1899 – 1902) the state sought to make these two distinct racial categories that would occupy disparate spaces. Coloureds were urban, natives were rural; the first within the city, the second on its the outskirts. Similarly, ICU leadership understood print as central to its program of circulating information, ideas, and achieving prosperity.

Like the editor of The South African Spectator, Francis Z. Peregrino, it privileged the periodical as the genre through which to constitute this racial brotherhood. But the ICU was the

3 I return to Kadalie in more detail in Chapter four.

4 Once the government conceded to the demands by Cape Federation of Labor Unions to stop the exportation of food-goods to Europe, the ICU strikers were abandoned by the Cape Federation of Labor Unions.

5 The ICU was the first union and the first non-European organization in South Africa to enroll female membership when it started its women’s arm in 1920. I return to this later in this chapter.
first broad-based institution to attempt this. Writing in 1938, C. L. R. James claimed that two types of “Negro revolutionary activity” emerged in interwar South Africa: “the Bondelzwarts revolt and the Industrial and Commercial Workers’ Union” (James, A History of Pan-African Revolt 86).

For James, the Bondelzwarts revolt was anachronistic in its time. The ICU was a new, modern kind of resistance. The only “real parallel” of which was the Haitian Revolution (91). The union and the revolution shared “an instinctive capacity for organization” and had talented leaders drawn from its masses. In this way the ICU and its periodicals precipitated a marked shift away from small-scale elite mobilization toward a more popular and concretized engagement with the black worker than previously achieved in black resistance. It did so through print. In its periodicals we see the growing desire to give mass-organizational form to poly-ethnic black collaboration around the question of labor in South Africa as part of a global conversation among marginalized peoples of color.

After the 1910 Union of South Africa, the ICU was the first organization that actively sought and gained the participation of both Coloureds and Natives and tried to articulate a coherent and inclusive black identity. It was also the first organization to name such an identity

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6 When the African Peoples Organization (APO) was first founded in 1902 “native” leaders like Sol Plaatje were counted among its membership. However, by 1912 the need for an organization that championed “native” rights in particular was felt and the South African Native National Congress (later renamed the African National Congress) was formed. While the APO often partnered with other anti-segregationist, and later anti-apartheid groups, it never experienced the large-scale popularity that the ICU did. In fact, even the ANC, seen as too elitist and conciliatory, was eclipsed by the ICU at its zenith in the 1920s.

7 The Union of South Africa helped to harden coloured identity. Prior to 1904, the Cape Colony’s census labeled all natives and coloureds living in its cities “non-Europeans.” Each non-European group was enumerated, but the official description of all was “non-European.” The change in 1904 toward disaggregating each from a larger whole signaled the hardening of the notion that coloureds were racially distinct from natives. For more on the emergence of colouredness as an ethnic identity in South Africa see Adhikari, Not White Enough, Not Black Enough; Erasmus.
“black” rather than “coloured.” At its inaugural meeting Clements Kadalie, a native from Nyasaland (modern day Malawi), was elected its national secretary. Elected president was William Fife, a coloured who was president of the Parow branch of the Universal Negro Improvement Association of South Africa (UNIASA). Fife was also active in the African People’s Organization (APO), an organization that advocated on behalf of coloureds. Other members of the executive were: S. M. Bennett Ncwana, a Xhosa, a journalist, and a political agitator, who served in the first World War as part of the Native Labour Contingent, and; J. G. Gumbs, a West Indian chemist and dockworker, who was president of the ICU from 1923 until his death in 1928 (Tyamzashe 4). At least at the level of the executive, the ICU sought to mix coloured and native members as well as those from the diaspora into a “heterogeneous blackness” (Stephens 6).

With coloured and native southern Africans and Afro-Caribbean and African American membership, the ICU was part of a history of global black resistance. If twentieth-century African American publications give witness to the heated debates over the function of African American literature—“art-for-art’s sake” or propaganda—so too the ICU journals demonstrate these tensions in the cultivation of a global, heterogeneous black print and literary aesthetics. From its

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8 As I explore in chapter two, Francis Z. Peregrino attempted to inscribe a US notion of “coloredness” in his journal and through his organizational activities, using the term “the black man.”

9 The APO, or the African Political (later Peoples) Organization was started in Cape Town in 1902 in response to the Union of South Africa. The APO sent a deputation to the king and initially included ‘Natives’ as well. See Adikari, Not White Enough, Not Black Enough.

10 Ncwana founded the African Ex-Servicemen’s League. In 1940 he wrote a pamphlet entitled Souvenir of the S.S. Mendi to memorialize the 607 African servicemen who died on the S.S. Mendi in 1917 at the Isle of Wight and raise funds for their families. Souvenir lists each soldier, etching him into the historical record, lest he be forgotten. The war disillusioned many black people in South Africa. ‘Native’ recruits were not allowed to bear arms. Given sticks and assegais, they had to dig trenches and do other kinds of manual labor, sometimes in direct lines of fire.

11 This debate plays out in the UNIA journal, Negro World, and W. E. B. Du Bois’ The Crisis. Some like Eric Walrond, an associate editor of the Negro World from 1921 to 1923, maintain that art should be for its own sake while others, like Du Bois, believe that Negro art is propaganda. See Gates and Jarrett; Johnson and Johnson.
inception the ICU seemed convinced that instrumental writing was not enough to express its concerns, it needed more open-ended literary writing; the periodical offered the union a way into “the literary.”

Throughout its lifespan, the ICU remained committed to the periodical as the form in which it could best articulate an identity for itself and its urban black readership that attended to race and class. It eclipsed the African National Congress, which many felt was too conciliatory and disconnected from the plight of the black everyman. Its early years, 1919 to 1924, reveal the union’s desire for a coherent black identity, inclusive of both coloureds and natives, and at times both sexes. Non-racialism emerged as an ideal, often in contradistinction to black unity, toward which their members should strive only in the middle years, 1925 to 1929. The concerns of both periods inflect the ICU’s periodicals. At the union’s inception at Cape Town there was *The Black Man* (1919 – 1921). In the heady years in the city of gold, Johannesburg, when the membership is said to have reached 100,000 and white sympathizers—both liberal and communist—befriended the union, there was *The Workers Herald* (1923 – 1929). During its last sputters of life in East London, there was *New Africa* (1929). The ICUyaseNatal, the body that the Durban chapter formed after seceding from the ICU, had a Zulu-language newsletter titled *Udibi Lwase Afrika*, or *African Mixtures* in English. *Udibi* was the only ICU-affiliated periodical to be published almost exclusively in Zulu or any other indigenous African language. *The Black Man* was an English-

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12 Despite the occasional use of the possessive apostrophe after Workers within the journal itself, I write the title of the periodical as *The Workers Herald*. I take my cue from the first heading of journal in which a black man, ensconced in the letter “H” of herald, blows a bugle and thus “heralds” the prospective reader to pick it up and read it. This first heading of the periodical suggests that the word “herald” in the title is intended as a verb. Making the *Herald* an action or series of actions that the readers/workers partake in, rather than something that they possess. It was always meant to be a discursive site that is remade with each reading, not a static entity frozen in its initial moment of production.

13 The May and June issues are available at the Jagger Library, University of Cape Town, and the Cory Library, Rhodes University, respectively. I consider it in the longer version of this chapter.
medium periodical. *The Workers Herald* appears in English, Zulu, Xhosa, and Sotho, but English dominates (Switzer and Switzer 55, 63).


Around the ICU there arose a cacophony of texts. Yet, for the ICU, the periodical occupied pride of place as the genre in which to write about the black urban experience in South Africa. Trade unionists tasked with securing better wages and softening the blow of cost of living increases, why did these men write? Why did they insist on using the periodical to make their writing public; or, how did they use and define “the literary” and to what end?

What follows is the first attempt to attend to these questions and render the ICU’s significance as a black cultural and literary movement through a close reading of how blackness

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¹⁴ Both women tried to rid the ICU of its communist influence; Lewis from South Africa and Holtby from London. They tried to help the union organize itself more along the lines of traditional British trade unionism. I explore their attempts in the following chapter.
figures in its first periodical, *The Black Man*, and its second, and most widely circulated, *The Workers Herald*, published independently out of Cape Town. *The Black Man* was not the first black periodical published and circulated in South Africa, but it was certainly one of the first ones to move beyond bourgeois, elite concerns.\(^{15}\) To produce a black periodical in South Africa during the interwar period was not an easy enterprise. Les and Donna Switzer explain that between 1911 and 1930 “the Black Press” faced tremendous adversity in the form of: reduced or no access to news, denied opportunities for capitalization, insufficient infrastructure like “newsprint, equipment, buildings, skilled tradesmen and distribution agents,” market share, high rates of black illiteracy, and hostility toward urbanized blacks paired with “the rural and regional disposition of a largely ethnic-oriented audience” (Switzer and Switzer 6 – 7). Yet, in this climate of economic deprivation and hostility amplified by World War I, the ICU leadership prioritized periodical publication. Of the five periodicals known to be in circulation from the Cape in 1921 and 1926 and the two in 1930, three——*The Black Man*, *The Workers Herald*, and *New Africa*——were organs of the ICU. Only *New Africa* was launched from East London; the first two were started from Cape Town.

ICU periodicals were written for “the here and now,” and for “‘the everywhere[,]’ ‘the over there’ [and] ‘the beyond’” (Mokoena 12).\(^{16}\) Any of these possible presents and futures were deemed impossible almost as soon as they were printed. But the sustained efforts to print them nonetheless, to circulate them, and to use the periodical to foster a democratic dialogic space as well as a black public space, were literary endeavors bound by the political, economic, and social

\(^{15}\) In the preceding chapter, I examine Francis Zaccheus Peregrino’s *The South African Spectator* (1901 – 1919), but the first black periodical in South Africa was probably John Tengo Jabavu’s *Imvo Zabantsundu* in 1884. For more detailed discussion of Jabavu’s *Imvo Zabantsundu*, see Switzer and Switzer 4.

\(^{16}\) I am working from Hlonipha Mokoena’s assertion that writing in the vernacular (Zulu) was “writing in the here and now” and not for ‘elsewhere’ or the ‘beyond’ for late-nineteenth-century Zulu intellectual, Magema Fuze in *Magema Fuze: The Making of a Kholwa Intellectual*. 
conditions of the time. Despite the odds *The Black Man* remained in production for three years; *The Workers Herald* for six. With circulation upwards of 4,000 it exceeded the highest recorded circulation for a black periodical before the 1930s (Switzer and Switzer 23). ICU periodicals were produced to demonstrate that the black man was a “civilized” man of (English) letters and in this way worthy of equal pay.\(^\text{17}\) Mostly in English, they also encouraged non-Europeans, from supposedly different racial and ethnic lineages, to cohere under one identity.\(^\text{18}\) They are important records of the ICU as a literary and cultural institution in Africa and its diaspora. Written from Cape Town (then Johannesburg in the case of *The Workers Herald*) and explicit in its interest in a kind of multiple black community that included diasporic Africans, coloureds, and natives, it occupies a vexed place in the historiography of the struggles for liberation in South Africa and reveals a lacuna in the study of the African diaspora that has only been illuminated sporadically.\(^\text{19}\)

My reading of *The Black Man* is premised on the following: First, that it iterates an imagined black community caught between the flagging British Empire and the racist, exclusionary South African ‘white settler’ state. Second, that it does not rehearse colonialism as a rupture from pre-colonial cultural wholeness (Holden 7; Gikandi, “Pan-Africanism and Cosmopolitanism”), but tries to fashion an alternative to ‘ancestry.’ *The Black Man* uses the diaspora and the figure of the diasporic African, largely through Garveyism, to materialize a black community of the present that

\(^{17}\) I am referring here to the “Beskaafde Arbeidsbeleid” in Afrikaans or, “civilized labor policy.” The Masters and Servants Act was passed in 1856 to guide the relationship between employer and employee. However, the civilized labor policy was consolidated under the Pact Government in the 1920s with: the Industrial Conciliation Act No. 11 of 1924, the Minimum Wages Act No. 27 of 1925, the Mines and Works Amendment Act No. 25 of 1926. For the non-European, then, proving he was “civilized” was surely a material concern.

\(^{18}\) In chapter 4, I attend to A. W. G. Champion’s use of the indigenous African vernacular, Zulu, Clements Kadalie’s ‘silencing’ of indigenous African vernaculars in his autobiography.

\(^{19}\) See Hill and Pirio; Vinson.
included natives and coloureds and men and women. The colonial modernity of the New World, in which black people cannot easily lay claim to distinguishable pre-colonial African pasts, makes possible the refusal of pre-colonial ontologies structured around ‘ancestors.’ This emphasis on blackness, at least with its Garveyist overtones, contrasts the preoccupation with transcending the racialized black community into the deracialized, universal community of labor evident in The Workers Herald. Both periodicals, however, offer alternative spaces for democracy to those denied it by the empire and the nation in which they reside.

The Black Man and The Workers Herald shuffle racial and ethnic labels as they struggle to force the recognition of the black worker as part of the universal community of labor that the communist slogan, “Workers of the world, unite!” that Marx and Engels reified in The Communist Manifesto in 1848. At the same time, they constitute a community of selves that were almost always already foreclosed in the time and place in which they were published—interwar, segregationist South Africa. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s definition of literature (in relation to philosophy) as that which “figures the impossible” (Spivak 112) undergirds my reading of these periodicals as literature; attempts to figure impossible protagonists—the black man and the deracialized black worker. Impossible because at the moments in which these periodicals try to bring such protagonists to life through their readers, these kinds of selves are being foreclosed.

Yet between 1919 and 1921, when The Black Man was published, who was defined as native and who was defined as coloured in the city was sometimes indecipherable as a rule of racial ordering. Rather the division between the two was often predicated on one’s facility with the trappings of “civilization,” such as language (English and High Dutch), the printing press, literacy, formal education, western dress, and Christianity. The ICU played on this indecipherability. For
much of its life the union’s executive maintained this ethnic and racial diversity, even after its headquarters moved from Cape Town to Johannesburg and despite the increasingly native profile of its membership and the expulsion of ‘the communists’ in 1926.\textsuperscript{20} Up to 1928, Clements Kadalie wrote in the union’s revised manifesto that “[t]ribal and colour prejudice had to be buried and it is a credit to the Coloured people of Cape Town who...joined the great pilgrimage towards the land of promise. They joined the new movement and disregarded colour prejudice. And they supplied the sinews of war.”\textsuperscript{21} Both Kadalie and his brother, Robert, married coloured women (Wickins 20).

At any one time the national executive comprised coloureds, natives, West Indians (often defined as ‘coloured’), and Indians. In addition to those previously listed there was: James La Guma, who rejected the label coloured, and R. de Norman, who identified as Indian. La Guma served as general secretary and became a communist activist, while de Norman, served as chairman of the Cape Town branch for much of the union’s lifetime (85).\textbf{The Black Man} most explicitly reflects the union’s desire to meld into one, non-European communities through their common concerns. In print for a longer period of time, \textbf{The Workers Herald} is more inchoate in its articulation of a single agenda. At times we sense a keen desire for racial unity among the various black ethnicities. At others, cross-racial collaboration appears to be the priority. I read the publication of poetry and cartoons in the periodical as an attempt to attend to both race and labor organization. At the same time, the use of such artistic forms is not only an expedient response to the problem of print illiteracy. It also shows the ICU’s periodicals to be part of the debates about art and propaganda.

\textsuperscript{20} The National Council passed a motion that communists could not be on the ICU’s executive. In essence, they had to choose between the Communist Party of South Africa and the ICU. Three members of the executive left the ICU as a result: James La Guma, John Gomas, and Eddie Khaile. Thomas Mbeki, however, remained (Wickins 106 – 8).

\textsuperscript{21} For more on white liberal anxiety about ICU links to communism see W. G. Ballinger Papers, Manuscripts and Archives, University of Cape Town.
playing out in the rest of the black world in the 1920s. Writers like Eric Walrond, Hubert H.
Harrison, and Zora Neale Hurston debated the question in Marcus Garvey’s *Negro World* (Martin,

**The Limits of the Black Man**

Early in 1923, the young, relatively obscure writer, and political activist, who had edited *The Black
Man*, S. M. Bennett Ncwana eloquently articulated the irony of the vast majority of white South
Africans’ resistance to the possible expansion of the voting rights of black people in the country.

Ncwana resembled those black Victorians who preceded him, but experienced deep
disillusionment with Cape Liberalism and its implication for the black South African, mastery of
“civilization” for the sole purpose of accessing the rights of the “civilized.” He writes that:

> If any one takes a deeper view of the black problem in South Africa he will find that
> beneath the question of land tenure lies that of political rights, and that though public
> opinion in certain respects differs very widely, the Union Parliament recognises the fact
> that a minority of the Native population of South Africa have given full proof that they are
> worthy of the franchise. The spirit of hostility against the petition for the removal of the
colour bar should not have caused surprise, but it is a startling revelation that has greatly
> disturbed the minds of both Native and coloured peoples of the Union...The laudable view
> of the intelligent South African Native is that it is impossible to civilise an individual and
> at the same time refuse him the right of political liberty. The question of equal rights is
> held by him, and rightly so, as the rock-bottom of scientific civilisation without which there
> can be no attainment to the highest happiness of mankind. (emphasis added; Ncwana,
> “Native Voters’ Association”)

Ncwana suggests in the above passage that natives and coloureds should not have been surprised at
“[t]he spirit of hostility” against lifting the color bar in South Africa, but surely the utopian
promise of the Cape informed their bewilderment. In the imaginary of the local black elite (native

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22 For more on Cape Liberalism see Rich.
and coloured), the Cape still operated as a beacon of the utopian possible: if one acquired education and property, one could become a (hu)man and ascend into the polity. By definition, however, the Native South African intellectual would recognize the fallacy of the ‘civilizing mission’ when political rights from the very people it was meant to civilize.

Ncwana’s slippage from coloured and native to native is telling. On one hand, it suggests that only natives could recognize the lie; coloureds could not. Certainly, in the first two decades of the century, access to the qualified franchise was disproportionately denied natives in the Cape, while increasingly, coloureds asserted a political, legal and social identity separate from their so-called native brethren. Concomitantly, native might be read as a way of identifying those who were the intellectual force of both groups, at least as far as Ncwana was concerned. Ensconced in a black periodical, Ncwana’s slippage speaks to the unfixed nature of such categories as well as his own intellectual project for the genre. The periodical was meant to help readers define themselves and their racial community. This process of self-definition demanded that they recognize not only themselves and each other as linked, but also recognized the civilizing mission as an illusion and their disappointment in it as one of key ties that bound them together.

In Ethnicity Inc. Jean and John Comaroff, writing about the commodification of ethnicity in post-apartheid southern Africa, explain that “the producers of culture are also its consumers, seeing and sensing and listening to themselves enact their identity—and in the process, objectifying their own subjectivity...to (re)recognize its existence, to grasp it, to domesticate it, to act on and with it ... ” (Comaroff and Comaroff 26). This mode of recognition of one’s subjectivity uses the grammar of authenticity, tradition, custom, and tribe. While Ncwana asserts the necessity of a similar practice of recognition whereby one is producing and consuming one’s own culture, he
does not posit the “traditional” to do so. If both desire a what Charles Taylor calls “a politics of equal recognition,” Ncwana yearns for the recognition of “individual identity that emerges at the end of the eighteenth century” (Taylor 37, 28). The racial community that Ncwana tries to corral in *The Black Man* does not portend authenticity. They do not depend of narratives of their existence since the beginning of time. Rather they depend upon the recent annals of colonial archives. They thrive on its entries of transatlantic slavery, conquest, frontier zones, and race, but they also call for the fulfillment of universal rights. Here difference is not intrinsic (as in the case tribal or ethnic identities), but constructed by the legal and social codes of the colonial enterprise. Peregrino’s idealized British Empire are being recognized as inaccessible and thus, the black man must recognize himself as part of a different community within the family of man.

*Civilization* is impossible without full citizenship and thus, “there can be no attainment to the highest happiness of mankind.” It is a failed humanism. I use humanism here to signify the process of making human. Ncwana reveals the duplicity of the Law of (the Empire):

23 citizenship can only be achieved through civilization, the civilized are citizens, thus those who are not citizens can never be fully civilized (and *human*) but remain in perpetual limbo, straddling that liminal space that is not-yet citizen and therein not exactly human (Bhabha 84).

As a black intellectual of the post-Victorian Age, Ncwana attempts a kind of resistance from “within” the technologies of empire and civilization that identifies the hollowness of the British

23 Spivak argues that Jean Rhys’s rewriting shows that Bertha becomes ‘mad’ only in “reaction” to “the duplicity” in her stepbrother’s use of the word “legally.” It is this that maddens Rochester’s first wife in Rhys’s version, she is not innately mad by virtue of her colonial origins as in *Jane Eyre* (Spivak 125). Also see Charlotte Brontë 210; Rhys 150.

24 Despite the seeming futility of doing so, Spivak suggests that scholars must “resist from within” remembering that “it should not be possible, in principle, to read nineteenth-century British literature without remembering that imperialism, understood as England’s social mission, was a crucial part of the cultural representation of England to the English” (Spivak 113). I extend the 19th-century in the colonial theater into the first decades of the 20th-century because a 19th-century model of liberal empire is at work here.
imperial and the South African white-settler rhetoric of ‘civilizing missions.’ In the above passage
he reveals not only that they are incapable of achieving their proposed objectives, but instead do
something even more sinister: while they do not make citizens of the so-called inferior races, they
render them not-yet citizens and not exactly human. His (re)cognition of this failed humanism
leads not only to his rejection of it, but also to a rejection of the British Empire and the South
African settler state as sites from which humanness is achievable. At the same time, Ncwana’s shift
from “[n]ative and coloured peoples” to “[t]he native” in the passage moves away from a multiple
blackness to blackness narrowly defined. It signals the ways in which native voters were particularly
vulnerable, but it also illustrates the desire to cultivate a ‘heterogeneous blackness’ and the
instability of such a frame of belonging. The activation of a humanity for the black self, with black
including a multitude of ‘others,’ I want to argue, is the twin-project that Ncwana attempts as
editor of the first ICU periodical, The Black Man between 1919 and 1921. This move from a black
identity with multiple registers (coloured and native, diasporic and continental) to a singular
(native) becomes problematic in the articulation of a radical black politics and aesthetics in 1920s
South Africa. While Steve Biko will try to re-assert a heterogenous blackness, one that can
accommodate difference, it is the latter, singular notion, that dominates in the South African
context. I argue that this has as much to do with the policy of retribalization ushered in by the
Native Land Act of 1913 as the disintegration of physical engagements between Africa and the
diaspora in South African cities, namely Cape Town, justified under the Prohibited Immigrant Act
Perhaps equally as important to the Peregrinos in the previous chapter, here we see an attempt to implement this kind of black identity broadly and the extent to which, increasingly cut off from the rest of the black world, such a project becomes ephemeral.

In 1919, despite the difficulty experienced by black entrepreneurs in publishing Clements Kadalie, William Fife, and S.M. Bennett Ncwana started the Black Man Company Ltd. They explain the company’s twofold objectives in the August 1920 issue as: to “advocate and assist any movement that has as its object [Native and Coloured,] upliftment”; and to take control of the very apparatus of publishing and “purchase a printing plant with necessary equipment” (Ncwana, “Black Man Company Ltd.” 2). The result was The Black Man, an English-language monthly periodical to disseminate “black news” from around the world to its mostly South(ern) Africa readers.

Only five issues of The Black Man remain. They are all from 1920, for the months of August, September, October, November and December. Each is four pages long; each page comprises three columns. The Black Man appears in the center of the first page in significantly larger font. The subtitles of issues 2 and 3 of Volume 1 are: “A Journal propagating the interests of Workers throughout the African Continent” and; “Official Organ of the Industrial and

25 Despite their absence from the grand narrative of immigration to South Africa, there are examples of several diasporic blacks unable to enter the country in the 1910s as “American Negroes” came to be understood as a “black peril” by white officialdom in South Africa. In 1917, the AME minister Herbert Payne and his new bride Bessie Mae were denied entry, until fellow passenger, Sol T. Plaatje petitioned on their behalf. The Paynes had travelled to South Africa to serve at the National Baptist Convention mission at Middledrift in the Eastern Cape while Reverend James East went on sabbatical. While they were granted a series of six months’ temporary residence permits they were never granted permission to stay indefinitely. Deemed ‘undesirable immigrants,’ in accordance with the 1913 act they were some of the first diasporic blacks to be denied entry or residence in the country. In 1923 a Grenadian domestic helper en route to South Rhodesia (modern day Zimbabwe) was denied entry at the Cape Town docks as an ‘undesirable.’ For more see Vinson, Chapter one: “American Negroes as Racial Models: From ‘Honorary Whites’ to ‘Black Perils,’” The Americans are Coming! 13 – 33. For more on immigration and the creation of the South African nation see Peberdy. Peberdy’s history of black migration to the country follows the official story of conscripted or coercive labor migrations to the Rand and Kimberley for mining as well as farm labor migration.
Commercial Workers Union of South Africa.” The other issues only bear: “A Journal propagating the interests of Workers throughout the African Continent,” signaling that the official relationship between the journal and the union was interrupted. On the left of The Black Man are the journal’s advertising rates and a note informing the reader that it was “[r]egistered at the [Post Office] as a newspaper.” On the right, are the subscription fees.

In the main, the journal gives news about the wrongs committed against black people across the globe, with special emphasis on those living in South Africa. Advertisements for local, black-owned businesses intersperse the news and editorial content of the periodical, as if to show that that journal was not only interested in building a coterie of advertisers to sustain itself financially, but that its editor and managers took seriously its commitment to black economic self-determination. Its “Brief News of the Month” column, on the second page of each issue, offers the reader a window into the cultural lives of the journal’s editor and its readers. As editor, S. M. Bennett Ncwana controlled its editorial content. He was presumably its only writer, or at least the only one named in the issues available to us. There are rarely any shifts in tone and perspective to suggest another writer on staff. For my reading of The Black Man that follows I have assumed Ncwana to be its author. However, when I believe the writer is not Ncwana I delineate this in citation.

Important here is the discursive space around race and class in South Africa that Ncwana and his readers opened with The Black Man and how they perceived the rest of the (black) world through the prism of Garveyism. In this reading of the periodical I want to focus on the ways in which Ncwana used The Black Man to imagine into being a black (predominantly male) subjectivity, made up of the diaspora and the continent, coloureds and natives, who could take hold of a
The “Brief News of the Month” in each issue, reveals a community of non-Europeans, “Coloureds and Natives,” participating together in social, cultural, and political activities. One such example is the announcement for the Pickwick Co-operative Club’s show. It promises the performance of “the Claremont Choristers, under Mr. Bennet[t] Ncwana...in St. Paul’s schoolroom, Buitengracht Street on November 16, 1920, in aid of the Port Elizabeth victims.”

The announcement explains that Julia Fife, daughter of Mr. William Fife, a member of the ICU executive and part owner of The Black Man, “will sing the National Anthem of the Native races ‘Nkosi Sikelela i-Afrika’; Miss Harvey will sing a native battle song ‘Iminj’ ifikile’; Mr. Luther will appear as a typical Indian from Madras” (Ncwana, “Brief News of the Month” 3). From the announcement we see a heterogeneous black community that includes Coloureds and ‘Natives’ as well as Indians, if only in spirit. Miss Julia Fife’s photograph appears with the announcement. She seems phenotypically ‘Coloured,’ yet she performed ‘the anthem of the Native races.’ Her father, William Fife, promotes The Black Man as president of the ICU, but is also active in the historically ‘Coloured’ political institution, the APO. Thus, the same photograph of Julia (and her sister Clara) is housed in the APO photo collection at the National Library of South Africa in Cape Town.

This heterogenous and inclusive black community, however, needed a sense of commonness, or commonality of interests. Ncwana uses the diaspora and the presentness it embodies as the source of his invention, eschewing “the ancestors,” unlike many of his contemporaries, such as H.  

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26 In October 1920 “21 men and women—African and Coloured”—were shot dead in Port Elizabeth by South African police and some white civilians. Black people in the city had gone on strike under the leadership of ICU branch secretary, Sam Masabalala. Masabalala was arrested. When his supporters protested his arrest, the violence ensued. For more on the ICU’s engagement with this incident (Kadalie, My Life and the ICU 51).
I. E. Dhlomo, who mined the pre-colonial past for ancestor-heroes who can serve as role models for the anti-colonial present and postcolonial future.\textsuperscript{27}

In his speech before the July meeting of the Goodwood branch of the UNIASA, reported in the August issue,\textsuperscript{28} Ncwana beseeches those in attendance to join him and:

\begin{quote}
...show our cordial appreciation of the very first step taken by the Hon. Marcus Garvey to show his solidarity with us. We should ourselves set a great example by acknowledging the community of interest, and above all, that community of sacrifice on which alone the Negro movement can permanently rest. It will, therefore, depend upon how we treat this movement. It is not a movement inaugurated by us, but one that comes to us from our children abroad. Our faith and determination is being weighed in the scale. Liberty and freedom calls upon you Africans to respond. (emphasis added; Ncwana, “Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Community’s League” 4).
\end{quote}

In his speech, Ncwana accepts Marcus Garvey self-styling as the Provisional President of Africa, calling him “the Hon[orable] Marcus Garvey.” The communities of interest and sacrifice of which Ncwana speaks are black people both on the continent and in the diaspora who have a common interest in racial equality and justice and thus must all sacrifice. This community is one that black people in Cape Town, and his larger South(ern) African readership, must take a hand in building. This is the only way to realize “Africa for the Africans.”

As manager of \textit{The Black Man}, Kadalie also attended the meeting and reportedly said:

\begin{quote}
Our dear brothers abroad expect every man and woman in Africa, every patriotic and loyal black man, to respond to the call for liberty. This is a movement, which assures every man and woman of his or her salvation. We must, therefore, unite with racial pride that at last Africa will be redeemed and all her sons will return where nature first put them. (2)
\end{quote}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[27] I will return to this in a discussion of the \textit{African Register Yearly Register}.
\item[28] Blurring of the two organizations was not one-sided. Marcus Garvey often confused the ICU and the UNIASA, describing \textit{The Black Man} in the UNIA’s \textit{Negro World} as an UNIA organ. He would later riff off of the journal’s title in several of his own future publishing endeavors. In 1922 Garvey proposed the \textit{Blackman} journal. In Jamaica he published a daily newspaper called \textit{Blackman} (1929 – 1933). Between 1933 and 1939 he published \textit{Blackman} magazine.
\end{footnotes}
Notice to whom or what the “patriotic and loyal black man” of Africa is expected to be patriotic and loyal in this passage—to the movement initiated by “[thei]r dear brothers abroad,” not the British Crown or the South African state. The race’s liberty depends upon the realization of a shared racial community (“united with racial pride that at last Africa will be redeemed”) among those of the diaspora and all non-Europeans on the continent. While there is an appeal to the African roots of those in the diaspora simultaneously there is the inclusion of “every man and woman in Africa” who is not liberated.

Both editor and manager of the journal understand their readers and the black people of southern Africa to be part of the ‘big tent’ of the Negro movement/Pan-Africanism that Garvey’s UNIA instantiates. The ‘Negro movement’ may not have sprung from them but it is understood to be initiated by Africans abroad, “our children.” The last line of Kadalie’s speech evokes Garvey’s “Africa for the Africans,” echoing Ncwana: “We must...unite with racial pride that at last Africa will be redeemed and all her sons will return where nature first put them.” This desire for the restoration of ‘Africa’ coupled with The Black Man company’s objective to plant the seeds of economic self-determination (through co-operatives) referred to earlier resembles Garvey and the UNIA’s notion of the self-made black man, economically independent of European patronage.

In an advertisement for The Black Man in the same August issue as the “Abridged Prospectus,” the lines between the journal and the UNIA blur further. The advertisement begins with the following question to the reader: “Do you acknowledge your responsibility in the building of the African civilisation?” Presuming the reader responds in the affirmative, it continues:

The publishers...are deeply interested in the uplift of their unfortunate race...who are still licking the dust of the earth...We have been moved by the tender touch of the Hon. Marcus Garvey to appeal to the men and women of [the] Negro race to save the freedom and
liberty of their future generation...You are called upon to lay the foundation stone of that loftier element of human character which your father were unaware of. Are you, therefore, not bound by that most pressing and indispensable duty to identify your name with the cause, and the only cause in which a brotherly feeling could not have been more deeply expressed...Self-help, self-development, self-reliance is the test of all lower orders of human kind. Your subscription to “The Black Man” will appease the hungry souls of your children. “The Black Man” is the mouthpiece of the working class of whom you are one...Fill in the attached form and send it to us with your subscription to-day. (Newana, “Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Community’s League” 4).

Garvey is acknowledged as the Honourable Marcus Garvey in this advertisement as in Newana’s speech that I quoted earlier. Thus, not only does the journal use Garvey and his ideas as inspiration for ‘race’ uplift but it almost operates as a de facto part of the Garvey organization, but this was not some unidirectional hero worship by homely South Africans hoping for black Americans to rescue them from their shackled existence on the continent. The advertisement speaks of its readers as the ancestors of future generations of Africans. They are the ancestors whose “[s]elf-help, self-development, self-reliance” will save the souls of their descendants.

In his M.A. thesis on Garveyism in South Africa, Alexander Ball suggests that in crossing the Atlantic, Garveyism became an “essentially...emigrationist ideology and accordingly it had a large millennial appeal” rather than “a social, political and economic program” (Ball 84). Robert Trent Vinson identifies the 1910s through the 1930s as the “time of the [African] Americans” during which black South Africans understood Garveyites and New World blacks to be their saviors. In his recent history of the Garvey movement in South Africa, The Americans Are Coming!: Dreams of African American Liberation in Segregationist South Africa, Vinson argues that African Americans resident in South Africa offered models of resistance to black South Africans, who even envisioned them as “potential liberators” (Vinson, The Americans Are Coming! 2).
However, Ncwana shows that Garveyism did not take hold purely as an uncomplicated emigrationist ideology or a call to millenarianism, nor was it a simple transfer from the African American vanguard into empty (South) African vessels. Vinson’s own use of ‘sea kaffir,’ a term black people in South Africa used to refer to New World Negroes (Stephens 21),\(^{29}\) problematizes this historiography (Vinson, “Sea Kaffirs” 285). The ‘sea kaffir’ was foreign in that he was “of the sea,” but indigenized by his common experience of racism (“kaffir” being a racial epithet used to refer to indigenous South Africans). In sailing back to Africa, these New World Negroes became some thing altogether different another kind of permutation that grafted the New World onto the Old and the continent onto the diaspora. Ncwana does not use the term “sea kaffirs.”\(^{30}\) Yet Ncwana’s notion of blackness reveals just one of the ways in which black people in South Africa used the diaspora to craft new identities rooted in their local context that allowed them to name the processes of oppression to which they were subjected and conceive of their liberation. What emerges in The Black Man is neither millenarianism nor the passive belief in American messiahs. The periodical uses the diasporic African to remake both the continental African and the New World Negro as “the black man.”

At the time, many black people living in South African cities were misrecognized as American Negroes. Clements Kadalie, for instance, appears in Leonard Barnes’s Caliban in Africa.

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\(^{29}\) Stephens writes of Marcus Garvey, Claude McKay and C.L.R. James as “New World Negroes.” I use New World here to signal the black internationalist dimension of Ncwana’s notion of a black identity, which he calls forth with the title of his paper, “The Black Man.” Ncwana’s notion of blackness resonates with the current turn toward worlding early twentieth-century ‘Negroes’ that Edwards’ The Practice of Diaspora and Stephens’ Black Empire exemplify. Additionally, I use New World Negro here to emphasize the diasporic African from the Americas as a figure of a New World colonial modernity.

\(^{30}\) Ncwana’s closest reference to this appears in “Coloureds and Natives,” an article I read below , in which he uses the term “kaffirs.”
as “a native of Nyasaland, educated in America” (Barnes 102). It is unclear why Barnes believed Kadalie was educated in the US, but he understands Kadalie to be an anomalous leader, with unimaginable resolve and dedication, because of this ‘American’ education. In his autobiography, *My Life and the ICU*, Kadalie explains that several of the state police mistook him for “that American chap” as did many others on either side of the racial divide “since [he] could not speak any of the South African native languages” (Kadalie, *My Life and the ICU* 114).

Misreading urban black people in South Africa as American often allowed white officialdom to make novel their intelligence, dress, style, and progressive demands on the state to acknowledge them as equals. In short, if they were American Negroes then they could be acknowledged without challenging widespread notions of black South African inferiority. At the same time, self-fashioning as American Negroes enabled many black people in South Africa to engage with their peers and the state from positions of power that would not have been granted otherwise. As the British Empire waned the New World Negro offered them new ways in which to use English and print as hallmarks of modernity that were not South African and therein afforded them a frame of belonging outside of the South African state while bolstering their claims on South African cities as the push to remove black families from the urban landscape intensified.32

31 Others actively fashioned themselves as American Negroes, like Wellington Buthelezi, or Dr. Bradford Wellington, who taught his followers that a fleet of ships would bring black people from the other side of the Atlantic to ‘save’ those on the continent from the yoke of colonization. His performance of this identity was so complete that when on trial, he refused to acknowledge his Zuluness/South Africanness, and remained an American Negro. Dr. James Thaele, the first editor of the ICU’s *Workers’ Herald*, and organizer in both the ICU and the Western Cape ANC. Many of the West Indians living at the Cape also did so.

32 The Natives Land Act of 1913 which made native land tenure communal and restricted it to “tribal” lands equalling some 7 per cent of South Africa. The Urban Areas Act followed in1923. It divided South Africa into urban and rural areas, such that native males were only allowed to be in urban areas if authorized to work by Native advisory boards. The Glen Grey Act of 1894 was in some way a precursor to these as it individualized land tenure in the Eastern Cape and imposed taxes on Xhosa males to force them to work on the mines. It is the same Glen Grey Act Henry Sylvester that Williams writes about in *The British Negro: A Factor in Empire*, which I discuss in Chapter one.
The time of the Americans was not simply a period during which it was hoped that New World Negroes would arrive in South Africa and liberate local blacks; it was a time of chaotic identity-making, -shifting, and exchange between those on the continent and those in the diaspora. Embodying the figure of the diasporic African enabled black men in South Africa to assert a speaking-subjectivity (whether deemed a sage or a threat) to which those in control of the state and cultural apparatuses would listen.

Yet if the figure of the diasporic African helped black people in South Africa carve out a discursive space from which to articulate an urban belonging as we have seen in the previous chapters, they also understood South Africa, Cape Town most especially, to be a site of salvation for those in the diaspora. In the December issue, Newana publishes “An Appeal to the Sons of Africa: Credit to ‘The Black Man’” and a poem entitled, “A Call to Thee,” by J.A.G. Both were sent to the editor for publication by “the Cape Coloured Citizens of the Borough of Oudtshoorn and District.” The poem follows:

Ye sons of Africa, arise—
Arise and leave the foreign skies.
'Tis Afric calls to thee,
Thou art bound why not free?
They stole you from your native land.
They came, yes, many a foreign band;
Paupers most of them.
Ye dusky sons of Ham,
Now is the time, arise.
Sons of Afric, be wise,
We suffer under the yoke
Strong as the ancient oak.
Take the clue and roam
Back to this land, 'tis home. (J. A. G. 2)
Through this fourteen-line poem of rhyming couplets, the editor, readers, and the poet beg the New World Negro (“sons of Africa”) to return (“leave foreign skies”) to Africa (“this land, ’tis home”). The poem acknowledges the mutual suffering of those under foreign skies and those at home. The New World Negro is “bound,” while the continental African “suffer[s] under the yoke.” The diaspora and those on the continent both exist in a state of unfreedom. Unmooring themselves from geo-political, territorialized notions of “home” and belonging will enable diasporic Africans all to save themselves. “Take the clue and roam” is a call for the New World Negro to save himself by joining with those at home, but theirs will not be a nostalgic return to a traditional African. In fact, it is not a call to return but to “roam.”

Writing from South Africa, as part of the “Oudsthoorn black community,” J. A. G. is calling the diasporic African to return to (South) Africa as a site of unified black heterogeneity born out of encounters with (colonial) modernity—slavery, conquest, and industrialization—not to a romanticized, pre-colonial Africa. The “[b]ack” is a turn toward an (urban) black modernity. It is a call to mobilize against the contemporary systems of oppression that are the products of the rise of industry and capital in South Africa.

“A Call to Thee” was published nearly five years before Alain Locke’s seminal The New Negro, in which W.E.B. DuBois’s “The Negro Mind Reaches Out” appears. In it, DuBois says that: “[l]ed by American Negroes the Negroes of the world are reaching out hands toward each other to know, to sympathize, to enquire” (emphasis added; Locke 412 – 413). In “A Call to Thee” we see the desire to ‘reach out’ across the diaspora and the continent for knowledge and sympathy. That

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33 In The Invention of Africa, V. Y. Mudimbe debunks the false dichotomies of tradition and modernity, urban and rural, oral and written etc. He argues that thinking Africa in such binaries is a characteristic of “Europocentricism” (Mudimbe 5).
neither Ncwana or his readers are ‘American Negroes’ says something about the reciprocity that was envisioned by editor, writer(s), and readers for a heterogenous blackness from Cape Town immediately after World War I. The ‘return’ to Africa of the diasporic African is not only a source of potential liberation for black South Africans, but for the diaspora too.

In the “Brief News of the Month” column in the September 1920 issue, Ncwana identifies the three most significant events to take place on the 1st of August, 1920 as: The Black Man’s one-year anniversary, the 86th anniversary of the emancipation of slaves in the West Indies in 1834 and the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) Convention in New York.\footnote{Afrikaner historiography of the Great Trek(s) shows the importance of slave emancipation as a catalyst for some of the treks out the Cape. Many of the Boers who left did so to escape the reach of British rule largely around the question of slaveholding and whether or not emancipation should extend to their slaves as British subjects.} Ignoring the Cape’s own history of slavery, and the emancipation of slaves that took place there at the same time that it occurred in the British West Indies, Ncwana uses the colonial modernity of the New World and its slave history to create an alternative ancestry for modern, black people (all non-Europeans) in Cape Town. I read The Black Man’s invocation of the emancipation of slaves in the West Indies and its silence on the end of slavery this also brought to the Cape as Ncwana’s attempt to make a community in the present around shared oppression that denies all claims to indigeneity, even that of the descendants of ex-slaves at the Cape. This allows the Cape to serve as a site of belonging for all black people resident in it, whether they are newcomers or generations of their family had lived there. The “OUDTSHOORN BLACK COMMUNITY” who submitted J.A.G.’s poem offer prescient words:

...the dawn is breaking. Shall we hear the call and stand together once and for all regardless of the different social sects, which more or less retard the progress of our noble race. To you who claim Africa as the origin of your birth shall this call go unanswered? You have proven yourselves men to fight the battles of your oppressors
in the past....Why can’t you show the same majesty of manhood and co-operate with these who are trying to show the European nation their wrongs and evils upon the subject races?...Africans! The time for dreaming is past. Now is the opportune time to join your efforts with those who have dauntlessly faced the common foe. Throughout the Union of South Africa this pest and insult will ever strike your face: “Europeans only! Europeans only!” Until we succeed in removing this degradation to the race, rest assured that no real and formidable progress can be laid down. Remember that it is you who delay this progress of our race. It is you—the man who is doing well in bad times; you who live on the sweat and blood of the struggling. (Oudtshoorn Black Community, 2)

Claiming the diaspora as a site of commonality allowed all non-Europeans living in urban South Africa to lay claim to authentic urban, African identities, inclusive of all “social sects.” These are: natives and coloureds, diasporic and continental Africans, the community of interest and sacrifice. The continuum of ancestors-fathers-children collapses in the present, bringing together their possible futures to remake their present.

Yet the instability of racial categories persists. It is most evident in the debate on women’s role in racial uplift, trade unionism, and salvation. The ICU was the first union and non-European organization to enroll and recruit female membership in South Africa. Women were integral to defining the broad black community of the ICU and The Black Man. In “The I.C.U[,] Female Branch,” which appears in the September 1920 issue of the journal, the writer announces the formation of the female branch. The writer reports that “the chairman[, Mr. S. Reagan,] dwelt on the necessity of organization among female workers” while the president, William Fife, he writes, …went so far in describing how the worker is being exploited, especially the coloured girl engaged in factories and domestic service. He begged them earnestly to lay aside the colour prejudice among themselves but rather come to the front unitedly and find out a solution

35 I am not sure as to the author of this article. The prose style is awkward and stilted and does not read like the rest of the journal articles that seem largely attributable to S.M. Bennett Ncwana. If one reads Ncwana’s Souvenir of the S.S. Mendhi one will see that Ncwana’s prose is much smoother. Turns of phrase used in this article such as “find out a solution” seem uncharacteristic.
to the problem...The I.C.U., an organization controlled by the coloured men themselves, deserve[s] support by every man and woman of African race. (emphasis added, “I. C. U. Female Branch” 1)

Both men stress the importance of organizing among female workers, but of most significance here is Fife’s slippage between coloured and African such that any fixed notion of either as distinct from the other seems elusive. He portrays “the coloured girl in factories and domestic service,” as the most vulnerable of their lot around whom black people must unite, to fight “the common foe” that oppresses black and coloured women. After Fife, Ncwana is said to have:

condemned the selfishness of men among the black races by not encouraging our women folk in linking up with any movement we are connected of. As the I.C.U. . . . realised its responsibility towards our race as a whole irrespective of sex it was the duty of every lady member present to go out as a missionary in the field of industries. (“I. C. U. Female Branch” 2)

Here the responsible black man is he who encourages black women to participate publicly in organizations geared toward racial uplift and the dutiful black woman is she who proselytizes on behalf of the organization. Fife’s and Ncwana’s readings of the place of women in the (black) community at once position her as the object of race work and trade unionism—it is to save her youth and her innocence that the black community must be mobilized—and as the vessel, the instrument, of race work.36 It is the black girl (a particular kind of black girl, “coloured”) who requires the unification of the race in all its various hues and shades and the black woman who must go out and do the field work that will liberate her.

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36 In the following chapter we see the black woman’s body featured again as vessel for race work and of the future generations in my reading of Ethelreda Lewis’s novel, _Will'd Deer_ (1933).
In her biography of Amy Jacques Garvey, *The Veiled Garvey*, Ula Y. Taylor describes Marcus Garvey’s second wife and editor of the first two printed volumes of his speeches and writings as a “community feminist.” “[C]ommunity feminists,” she explains,

are women who may or may not live in a coverture relationship; either way, their activism is focused on assisting both the men and the women in their lives—whether husbands or sisters, fathers or mothers, sons or daughters—along with initiating and participating in activities to “uplift” their communities. Despite this “helpmate” focus, community feminists are undeniably feminists in that their activism discerns the configuration of oppressive power relations, shatters masculinist claims of women as intellectually inferior, and seeks to empower women by expanding their roles and options...Of crucial relevance to this theory is the interplay between helpmate and leadership roles, both of which come up repeatedly in Jacques Garvey’s writings. (Taylor 64)

Taylor’s “community feminism” is useful in helping us think through the ICU black woman imagined in the journal. At once the membership of the ICU Female Branch is asked to “help” and to “lead” the community by joining the union and convincing others to join. Were they not to allow these women to join them the male members would be ‘selfish.’ According to “The I.C.U. Female Branch,” successful trade unionism in requires that black men and women work in partnership. In this way it subverts notions of male superiority. Yet, for the black woman to be Woman she must relinquish herself as an individual and save souls by getting men and women of the race to join the union. She must adopt “communitarian ideas,” Taylor explains, that require thinking of “the self as collective, interdependent and relational.” She comes into being by letting go of her claims to individuality (Taylor 64).

Fife’s slippage from “coloured girl’ to “African race” exemplifies the tension between the individualized object of race work and the race itself, but it also points to the similarity between the collectivism expected of ICU women and the various ‘social sects’ in the heterogenous black
community at the Cape. The ‘girl’ as symbolic of the ‘race,’ reveals its fissures as a collective identity. Note that Fife speaks of the ICU as “an organization controlled by the coloured men themselves” whose support derives from “every man and woman of African race,” but are coloured and African the same?

“Coloureds and Natives,” an August 1920 article, makes clear the tensions around forging this racial community. Ncwana expresses sadness at “the leaders of the coloured section [perceived intention] to widen the gulf of social demarcation” between native and coloured. Referring to the APO, Ncwana explains that:

They are organising politically on the same principles as the Nationalist party;\(^\text{37}\) as yet we have not grasped the policy of the A.P.O. with their unfortunate brethren the Natives, but the general feeling amongst the well-to-do and educated class is for a break with the Natives...a deputation of influential coloured Nationalists interviewed their leaders in Parliament with a view of persuading the Railway administration to set aside separate coaches for use by coloured people only; they felt they were being degraded by the administration in mixing them with kaffirs...We regret to remark that the leaders of the coloured section...who are supposed to lead their people on the sound principles of [black] Nationalism, are doing so at the expense of the black man. We will not allow the misguided leaders of the coloured section to violate the honour of our manhood; this game has been going on for a considerable time; we think it is time they stopped it. This misguided class of the coloured have gone far to show that they have nothing to do with the future of our country; we find that they are not prepared to be called Natives, if by Native you mean a black man, nor are they ready to style themselves negroes because it is applied to every black man irrespective of colour; they would rather have you call them non-European if by non-European you mean the next person to the white man...Where will the coloured go to when the time comes? Will not the history of the coloured man of to-day be an impediment to their future generation who must dip down their buckets where they are? [H]owever...amongst the blind mass, there are true patriots of the African cause...If Africa is our home then we must discard such petty feelings. Coloured man! this is your country you must not be deceived it is here where your children’s destiny is measured; your unfortunate brother who you are despising to-day for admission in the white man’s paradise, is your very backbone! Unite! be one! and all! (Ncwana, “Coloureds and Natives” 2).

\(^{37}\) The Nationalist Party introduced apartheid in 1948 and remained in power until the release of Nelson Mandela in 1990.
This is perhaps one of Ncwana’s clearest and most eloquent calls for the unification of all coloureds, natives, and the diaspora, under the label “black.” He speaks of his readers in the present as the ancestors of future black (coloured and native) children who will all be Africans, imploring his readers to be the right side of history for the sake of their children and the honor and manhood of the black race(s). The article reveals the tumultuous nature of a black heterogeneity that can include all of the Oudtshoorn Black Community’s “subject races of The Black Man.”

Immediately following, however, is a report on the Ward Six (later District 6) municipal elections in which Mr. A. Ismail and Dr. Abdurahman are not only congratulated on their electoral victories but commended as champions of “the Black races (Indians included)...[and t]he Coloured and Indian (Native included) Ratepayers of Ward Six.” The juxtaposition of Ncwana’s salvo against coloured ambivalence and his joy at the electoral victories of two ‘coloured,’ black men in The Black Man illustrates the fraught nature of race-making and collectivism in the Cape. From issue to issue, article to article, sentence to sentence, the terms of inclusion in the ‘black race’ that The Black Man invokes remain in flux.

**ICU, or Iseeyou: Toward a Poetics?**

By 1921 the partnership among Ncwana, Kadalie, and Fife dissolved and The Black Man fell out of print. Another mouthpiece followed in May of 1923 called The Workers Herald. Published until 1928, it was the longest running ICU periodical. It had the highest circulation of any black publication in South Africa from 1911 to 1930. In 1978, the historian P. L. Wickins wrote in his
book on the union that “[a] thorough study of [it]...is essential.” In her remarkable study of the union’s influence in rural South Africa between 1924 and 1930, Helen Bradford attends to ICU as recorded in oral historical traditions in the countryside. To date the ICU has not been considered in terms of its literary significance and its role in black print culture in the interwar period, but when the union is thought about in conjunction with print it is *The Workers Herald* to which most refer.

If we consider *The Workers Herald* as an integral part of the ICU’s story, following on the heels of *The Black Man*, and part of a global black print culture as well as an international labor movement, we begin to see it as a sign of a shift in what revolution might mean in the interwar period and the new forms black resistance and expression were to take. *The Workers Herald* offers a departure from *The Black Man* in three key ways. Each of which evince the changing print praxis on the ground in South Africa and across the black world. First, the editorial control of it is more diffuse than its forerunner. When it first started James Thaele edited it. Thaele was an ANC leader in the Western Cape. When Kadalie and Thaele had a falling out, Kadalie and Henri Danielle Tyamzashe took over as editor and sub-editor. For the duration of Kadalie’s sojourn in Europe in 1927, A. W. G. Champion, another union official who would secede with the Natal branch upon Kadalie’s return, acted as national secretary and tried to assert control over the journal. There is no one editorial vision sustained throughout its production.

Second, it ran for a longer period of time and had the highest circulation of a black publication before 1930. To some extent *The Workers Herald* reveals the nature of the changes taking shape to black radicalism locally and globally more so that its predecessor. With such a large

and diverse readership/audience its content had to appeal to elites, intellectuals, and common folk alike. Perhaps because of this, it is in The Workers Herald that we see art and propaganda conflated. Adorning its pages are ideological poetry and cartoons meant to illustrate the ICU’s prowess and its critique of racism and capitalism.

Ultimately, the journal also demonstrates the union’s move out of Cape Town to Johannesburg. With this move comes a change in the demographics of its support base. In Cape Town the union was the provenance of dockworkers, a motley crew of coloureds, natives, diasporic Africans, and Indians. In Johannesburg the majority of its members worked in the mines. According to Kadalie, The Workers Herald was to bring forth the union’s “invasion of the mines” (Wckenc 71). 39 With this move and the changing membership profile, comes a shift from the English-only The Black Man to the English, Afrikaans, and Xhosa Herald to, finally, the Sotho, Zulu, Xhosa, and English one. This new cartography precipitates the marginalization of Cape Town from the national story of black resistance and the provincializing of the South African Struggle from a real diasporic presence in the country. The diaspora becomes important again in the 1960s and the 1980s, but more as a symbolic partner and the force behind divestment. At the same time it foreshadows the exclusion of Afrikaans as a language of a heterogeneous blackness and its co-optation by strident white nationalism.40

39 Also see the Cape Times 18 January 1923.

40 Alan Gregor Cobley invokes the existence of “physical linkages” between Africa and the diaspora in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries beyond the “spiritual, ideological, or cultural” points of communion that we often assume about when thinking about Africa and its Diaspora in the New World (“‘Far From Home’” 349). As to the question of language, the first Afrikaans texts were written in Arabic script. That Afrikaans was initially the language of the ex-slave masses is explored the following works (Davids, “The ‘Coloured’ Image of Afrikaans in Nineteenth Century Cape Town,” “Words that Slaves Made: A Socio-Linguistic Study”; Den Besten, “Double Negation and the Genesis of Afrikaans”).
The Workers Herald articulates the new, yet shaky emphasis of the union on worker-solidarity some times in lieu of a polymorphous “black man.” And as it flounders to inscribe its readers and writers as part of the universal community of workers, the journal reveals the sedimentation of a profound awareness of the British Empire’s failure for its black subjects among the petit bourgeoisie. Vivian Bickford-Smith writes of “[t]he betrayal of the creole elites” by the British Empire. The period of betrayal to which he refers spans 1880 to 1920. But whereas Henry Sylvester Williams, Captain Harry Dean, and the Peregrinos seemed to maintain hope that the British Empire would right itself in terms of its black subjects, for the leadership of the ICU and the editorial staff of its periodicals the hope had begun to wane. By the time The Workers Herald goes into print the vestiges of a cultural attachment to the British Empire—Ncwana’s Pickwick Co-operative Club and the high society “Brief News of the Month” column—are gone.

The July 21, 1923 issue begins with two editorial pieces. The first, by Clements Kadalie, is entitled, “What of the Future?” The second, “‘Icabod thy Glory is Departed,’” is by James Thaele. Kadalie opens with the refrain:

I wonder how many of the African workers do realise that they are destined to play an important part in the labour movement in South Africa and the continent. We shall make no mistakes about it, the times ahead of us are very serious, retrenchment is in the air, and our Parliament is engaged legislating for the good of one section of the community—the “poor whites.” Thus we can sum up the situation that truly we are faced with...economic strangulation. (Kadalie, “What of the Future?” 1).

Faced with the crippling effects of the Anglo-Boer War and World War I and guided by the abundance of gold and diamonds on the Rand and in Kimberley, the Union government privileges race, crafting a “civilized labor” policy to solve the “poor white” problem. Kadalie decries this. He

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41 For more see Bickford-Smith.
agrees that “white men must be given a chance in life,” but wonders “what is being done by Parliament on behalf of thousands upon thousands of unemployed black souls who endure the same hardships and suffer similar wounds of starvation, poorly clothed and sheltered” (Kadalie, “What of the Future?” 1). Invoking the sheer number of mineworkers, houseboys, and other black workers in Johannesburg, he pushes for a turn to “organization” and the “industrial weapon” by black labor on the continent. Picking up on the importance of “seeing” this (and sight becomes a key aspect of the ICU political and literary project), he concludes: “DO THEY MEAN US WHEN THEY SAY ‘WE HAVE EARS AND WILL NOT HEAR, EYES AND WILL NOT SEE?’” (1).

While Kadalie’s “What of the Future?” points to where black labor needs to go in order to ameliorate its circumstances as a race and a class, Thaele’s “‘Icabod thy Glory is Departed’” clearly articulates what it needs to let go of. “Fellow men and women of the African race,” Thaele implores:

the ‘Victorian Era’ of yore has come and gone, perhaps gone for ever...Island Empire as one on whose dominion the sun never sets; it was illustrative of broad, liberal-minded men, men of broad vision, men who never allowed their mental horizon to suffer from person idiosyncrasies; they were scholars in evolutionary history, and as such, they knew that water would always seek its level until the equilibrium is reached. True as it is of this element, so equally true it is of races and nations of the world, otherwise we would not read of rebellions and revolutions. Russia rebelled and revolted against the Capitalistic dynasty of the Romanoffs, and now she is on the verge of reaching an economic equilibrium to meet the doctrine of ‘Demand and Supply’ for her peasant producer...the Bondelswartz...revolted...

Somewhere or other, the Island Empire has greatly suffered from social disintegration, as evinced by the Dependencies like Ireland and others...commonly called ‘The British Commonwealth.’ This Commonwealth grants Dominion status to these Dependencies, or Colonies, so as to govern themselves.

It is this privilege, or autonomy, which here in South Africa, has been abused constantly by the ‘Powers that be.’ Indeed they have proved themselves to be the Biblical Pharoahs, so far as the political position of the black man is concerned...

The leading spirit that dominates the administrative affairs of the Union is none other than...Smuts...His doctrine to make 'the land of our forefathers' the white man’s
country has become rampant, if not obnoxious, and with it, like an express train, he is going at full speed; God only knows when and where this man [is going] to stop.

Of the classificatory group, of the Anglo-Saxon race, General Smuts belongs to the reactionary sect, which is popularly called here in the Orient, ‘Boers.’..and the majority of them are lacking in culture and refinement, their book knowledge carry them no further than the cosmogonies of Moses, which they read not in the light of higher criticism, nor that of allegory, but as a literal transcript for emulation...They are several centuries younger in point of evolution than the English. Hence to them a black man is more a creature of instincts than a man of reason. (emphasis added; Thaele, “Icabod Thy Glory Is Departed” 1.”

I quote from this thought piece at length because it offers the clearest admission of disillusionment with the possibilities of Victorianism for the creation of an equitable society to which black intellectuals like Thaele cleaved well into the twentieth-century. The old Empire was rich with the possibility for upward mobility, if not automatic equality. It was a space of “culture and refinement,” reading and “higher criticism.” Its degeneration meant the rise of white-settler nations and descent into a naked literalism. Henry Sylvester Williams’ hope that the Empire would lead to a black union “at a future date” all around the “British Negro” seems trite and hollow for this editor of The Workers Herald. A union was not so much in the future for black radical intellectuals in the 1920s, but necessary in the present. Yet it could not be a race-based union, at least not at the exclusion of class.

In A Taste of Freedom: The ICU in Rural South Africa, 1924 – 1930, Helen Bradford explains that “[o]n the one hand, members of [the ICU leadership] resemble capitalists: they either own small-scale property or exercise a managerial role over the exploited and oppressed. On the other hand, they resemble the working class in performing either manual or mental labour. Small wonder that they are notorious for simultaneously condensing conflicting interests and wavering
between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat” (Bradford 63). Disillusioned with what came to be known as the Cape Liberal Tradition and the more global promise of Victorian liberal empire the writers and readers of _The Workers Herald_ were keenly aware of their downward mobility despite having reached their “intelligent stage” as race. Kadalie and Thaele’s articles announce the loss of the possible future hoped for by black Victorians.

Some thirty-seven scattered issues of _The Workers Herald_ remain spanning 1923 to 1928. It was four pages long in 1923 with English and Afrikaans text. By 1925 it was eight pages long with a substantial portion of the English text translated into Zulu and Sotho. Unlike _The Black Man_, there was no set format for the periodical. Typically, however, there was an editorial column. In the middle period—1925 to 1927—there was a section called “Black Man’s Burden.” On the heels of the communists’ expulsion from the union, from 1926 onward the novelist Ethelreda Lewis wrote a literary column called “The Bookshelf,” through which she aimed to promoted a purely literary reading and writing practice in her readers. These last two column headings reveal the conflict laid bare in the journal between a urgent political critique of race and a dogmatic attempt to divorce reading, writing, and literary aesthetics from it.

By its final remaining issue in December of 1928, _The Workers Herald_ ceased be explicitly concerned with the black man as a racial category was no longer the central concern of the dialogue that the ICU’s second periodical tries to evoke among its community of readers and writers. Two black figures adorn the “T” and the “H” of _The Workers Herald_ on the cover of the May

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42 Les Switzer argues that “the petty bourgeoisie was fragmenting downward at an accelerated pace after Union in 1910, and alliances were frequent between class fractions that might otherwise have been differentially placed in the social relations of capitalist production” (Switzer, “The Ambiguities of Protest in South Africa” 87).

43 For more see Kadalie, “What of the Future?” 1.
1923 issue. Two years later, when the ICU moved the union’s headquarters and the editorial desk to Johannesburg, the two figures were removed. But a globe, with Africa at its center, was put between “Workers” and “Herald” in the heading. On the final, December 1928 issue there is only text. The first invokes the “African Worker” twice. By 1928 it is removed from the subtitle and the periodical referred to as “[t]he only African Labour Journal.” Such an ambiguous title could mean that it is the only journal of African workers, making it a race-centered journal. Or it could be read as a claim to being the only journal about labor issues in Africa and therein claiming a cross-racial worker emphasis.

3.2 Masthead, *The Workers Herald*, May 1923. Courtesy National Library of South Africa, Cape Town Campus.\(^{44}\)


What the final masthead of the *Herald* demonstrates is the extent to which a primary concern over the journal’s lifespan was whether race or labor should dominate.

To an extent this was most poignant in the use of poetry in its pages. At times watered down, poetry as well as cartoons, became a vital form for the articulation of a universal worker-hero. One poem from 1925 demonstrates the union’s attempt to transcend race as the central category around which to organize the community. At once a work of literature, an anthem, and a political manifesto, it points to the periodical as a site not only of dialogue, but also a source of oral literature from which its readers can recite poetry to others.

\(^{44}\) The last issue to use this was April 2, 1925, Volume 1, Number 13.
The second stanza of the poem reveals that the ICU, the I-C-U, I-see-you, as a union, was constructed to “raise the blackman’s status” (ICU Poem, The ICU, line 8). The poem invokes the immediate, material concerns of a trade union, such as wages and the cost of living. Yet the union envisioned here is not limited to these concerns. The third stanza reveals it as an “all-in movement,” a collective unified by a shared vision of racial uplift and the restoration of humanity: “Union means an all-in movement/None outside to scab on us;/With folded arms we’ll stand like statues/Sing our songs but make no rumpus” (lines 9 – 12). Yet theirs will not be a victory by physical might and externalized violence, rather they will win by mental stealth; “Brains not Bombs” (lines 13 – 16). The union’s members stand “like statues” as part of a “phalanx,” in the following stanza, prepared for battle (lines 14 – 20). Here the poem turns away from its initial pretense of a long measure rhyme scheme. The change from “the blackman” to “workers only” in the last stanza illuminates this, universalizing and pluralizing the subject of concern. In the last stanza, labor binds the ICU/I-see-you as an endeavor of racial uplift and humanism. In the first and last lines of this stanza: “I.C.U. spells workers only,/I.C.U. – fraternity/I.C.U. means liberation;/ I.C.U. – “Labour holds the key.”

In the last stanza “workers only” and “Labour holds the key” open and foreclose the way to the Jacobin ideals of “liberty and fraternity” ensconced in the second and third lines. Labor bookends these two, standing in the absence of the third Jacobin ideal, equality. The poem illustrates the extent to which many ICU writers understood the ICU’s struggle for the material liberation and equality of the ‘blackman’ to be tethered to literary praxis. It is the “I” seeing the

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45 At its zenith the union was referred to as “I see you, White Man!”
“you.” In that moment of apprehension both become free, and the “strictly industrial character” of the trade union melts into a union of souls (Roux 153).

Another poem, entitled “Workers of Africa,” appeared in the September 1923 issue. It foreshadows the way in which salvation, vision, and racial transcendence are tied to poetry in the 1925 poem. It begins with a similar onomatopoeic use of ICU: “‘I.C.U.’ in oppression, toil, and woe” working in the mines and in the fields to create the wealth that others reap (N. B. 1, line 1). The next stanza begins with sight too. “But what avails the seeing?” N. B. asks. He offers the following in response to his own question: “It’s you that should see and know” (line 7). If the first stanza is about the union’s ability to comprehend through sight the sheer oppression of the African worker, the next speaks to need for the worker’s ability to see this. The next turns to the worker’s salvation through organizing. “Put aside your soul-wrecking apathy,” the writer cries. Instead, “[n]ever think the word impossible/But say these words, ‘I can.’” The poem closes on the salvo that all that the reader seeks can be realized by “supporting the ‘I.C.U.’” (lines 12 – 16). The ICU not only sees the plight of the African worker here, but brings the ability to see it to the worker.

These poems illustrate the twin-desire to put forth a program of racial and worker solidarity that was a typical feature of ICU poetry in this period (1923 - 1928). In the same issue in which “Workers of Africa” appeared, W. Green, the secretary of the Cape Unemployment Committee and member of the South African Communist Party, asked “whether there is any more reason for the union of coloured and black worker, than there is for the white and coloured or the black, white and coloured?” (Green 4). While the editor at the time, James Thaele, railed only three pages prior that the Herald was not meant to fuel “race hatred,” he asserted that it was in defense of his
“abused race.” The race-based community of native and coloured that Green challenged, Thaele found necessary. In 1925 the subscription advertisement asked readers: “Are you a race man?” Then readers are invited to subscribe to the Herald because it was a “race journal” committed to the plight of the African worker (“Subscription Advertisement, ‘Are You a Race Man?’” 1). Clearly race and labor jostled for pride of place as the union and the journal’s priority.

The effort to wrench together race and labor as important concerns for readers of The Herald is perhaps even more apparent in the cartoons published in the journal between 1925 and 1927. In the issues that remain there are seven cartoons. All drawn by the cartoonist J. Scott, “[a] young coloured man” who was “small in stature” (Kadale, My Life and the ICU 85). Only referred to once in Kadale’s autobiography and by his surname, Kadale identifies him as the person responsible for the murals housed in the ICU’s Workers’ Hall in Johannesburg. From his self-portrait, reproduced in several issues of the Herald, we know his first initial. Under his name, in parenthesis, is the descriptor, “[a b]lack [m]an.” He identifies himself as “Cartoonist to the ‘Workers’ Herald’” (Scott, “Self Portrait” 2).

Each of Scott’s cartoons depict the nature of race relations between black and white in the country. The first sits next to the African American bookseller Jack Barnard’s “Sports news” column. In his advertisements for his bookshop that he put in The Workers Herald, he referred to himself as Jolly Jack. He was the only authorized agent for the Negro World in South Africa. Barnard

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wrote on boxing events for the *Herald*. Typically the matches he reported involved white and black opponents.\(^4^7\)


The cartoon is titled “Coming Events” and features a large black figure in silhouette with “I. C. U. Africa” in white capital letters on his waistband (Scott, “Coming Events” 7). His profile reminds one of Jack Johnson, the African American heavyweight boxer who knocked out Jim Jeffries in

\(^{47}\) Robert Trent Vinson discusses the impact of the 1910 victory of Jack Johnson over Jim Jeffries on South African race relations. For more see Vinson, *The Americans are Coming!: Dreams of African American Liberation in Segregationist South Africa*, 24 – 27.
1910 in Australia in the first known match between a white and black man. “I. C. U. Africa” punches a smaller white man with “CAPITALISM” on his waistband. Four black workers, one of whom is a woman, look on. Importation of footage of the Johnson-Jeffries fight was banned in 1912. The segregationist state feared that the image of a black man knocking out a white man might prove too incendiary from the black masses. By offering a visual representation of the ICU’s victory in the boxing ring and portraying a black audience seeing it all within the cartoon, Scott played on white fears. But he also make visible to all consumers of the journal (literate, semi-literate, or illiterate) the “seeing” referred to in the poems mentioned above. Capitalism becomes a finite being that can be seen and fought. Similar to the “Workers of Africa” poem the union occupies the first person (“I”) that sees (C) the worker (U) suffering. In tackling the source of the suffering, “capitalism,” the ICU helps the worker see, the very thing for which the second stanza of that poem calls.

The second cartoon also illustrates the black worker’s prowess and ability to topple capitalism through sight. It depicts a Samson figure48 toppling the two pillars to which he is chained. One is “imperial capitalism”; the other is “racial prejudice.”

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48 There was also a painting of a Samson figure on one of the walls at the ICU’s Workers’ Hall.
When he breaks them, the multitude of white people that they hold up fall too. But important in this image is the inscription at the bottom: “when he awakes.” The Black Samson has only to open his eyes, to wake up, and see (Scott, “When He Awakes” 1).

The next two, which appear in the June and August 1926 issues, show the black man less as a person of brute strength who needs only see his strength. Instead he is drawn as equal in size and dress to the white man. In June the black man stands in the foreground in a three-piece suit and tie pondering what segregation portends (Scott, “General Hertzog’s proposed solution to the Native
Problem as embodied in his recent Bills laid before Parliament has given the Non-European people food for thought” 1).


“Segregation eh,” he thinks to himself, “back to the days of slavery?” A white man, presumably Hertzog as the cartoon comes in response to Hertzog’s segregation bills, walks menacingly toward the black thinker. He holds a bat in his right hand and the threatened bills in the other. Behind him lie the skyscrapers of the 'civilized' city, before him the pensive black man. All that separates the two is a fence. Here it is not the black man’s brute strength that is made manifest but his
tendency toward reason, a quality lacking in the white. The fence comes to contain the excesses of the white order under which they lived as though it is it that is uncivilized, wild, and barbaric.

In August, Scott depicts the arrest of two ICU leaders. “PACT,” for the Pact government in office at the time is written, on the arresting officer’s Helmut. A rand baron, with “Capitalism” down his vest, stands smugly with his legs crossed as the police takes care of the black “agitators.” Next to him is a white worker (Scott, “African Trade Unionism Is Undergoing Persecution under the Nationalist-Labour Government of South Africa” 1).
Despite having campaigned for the Pact government in the 1924 election, the ICU is betrayed by them. The white worker too, fails to stand together with his black brothers. Capitalism wins.

But by October of the same year, Scott offers black and white unity. “Socialism,” the subtitle reads, “can only be brought about by unity of all Workers, irrespective of colour or
creed” (Scott, “Coming Events” 1). Victory rises out of the black and white hands clasped at the center of the cartoon. Three white figures stand to his right and three black men to his left. The black man shaking hands with his white brethren appears native, while the two other men behind him appear to be Indian and coloured.

This visual representation of a triad of blackness comes again in the final available illustration from *The Workers Herald*. In it, Hertzog features as a gladiator. He holds a scroll in his left hand on which is written, “higher status.” The lion waiting to be released upon the three “awaiting their fate” has “government” on his paw. The three prey are identified as “native,” “coloured,” and
“Indian” (Scott, “Within a Few Days the Union Parliament Opens. It Will Be a ‘Nativ E’ Session. This Cartoon Depicts the Actual Position” 1).

3.9 Within a Few Days the Union Parliament Opens. It Will Be a ‘Nativ E’ Session. 1926. The Workers Herald.

The cartoon that appears in the issue between these two shows the ICU scoring a goal in a soccer match against white oligarchy (Scott, “Goal” 1).
These seven cartoons articulate a praxis of seeing in its production of print, poetry, and art in the heyday of the ICU. Similar to the two poems I read above Scott’s cartoons resonate on a popular level. They were meant to engage *The Herald* reader in the kind of “higher criticism” of which Thaele writes in “Icabod thy Glory is Departed.” To some extent the poetry and literal cartoons published in *The Workers Herald* reflect the need to reach a mixed audience, some of whom could read, while others could not, or at least could not read very well. But the choice of
watered down poetry and illustration was also about the working out of an aesthetics. What was the purpose of art for a downwardly mobile group of people disenchanted with the Englishness in which it had been educated, but equally suspicious of the Boer nationalism taking root?

As forms of artistic expression they appeared alongside Shakespeare, translations of Communist Party Workers’ Hymns into Sotho, and articles about race consciousness. At the same time articles by liberals like the novelists Ethelreda Lewis and Winifred Holtby featured in its pages. While Holtby wrote in a fairly political vein, Lewis felt her role as the “Bookshelf” columnist was to keep “purely doggerel propaganda” at bay (Lewis, “The Bookshelf” 4). “This is a literary not a political Bookshelf,” she admonished readers who submitted political poetry (4). Poems like “Workers of Africa,” or Jaslag’s “Awake! Africa,” were juxtaposed with carefully selected poetry from Harlem Renaissance poets like Countee Cullen and Claude McKay. Lewis uses only part of Cullen’s “Heritage,” strategically excluding one of the poems most famous refrains, “What is Africa to me?” Rather she emphasizes his brotherly affection for Joseph Conrad and reproduces the section of “Heritage” in which a black Christian speaks to Christ. The section ends with the following lines: “Lord forgive me if my need/Sometimes shapes a human creed” (4). From McKay she reproduces some of his least polemical works—“Like a Strong Tree” and “The Tropics in New York.” She invokes McKay in order “to show [her readers] what sort of thoughts can be woven into poetry in everyday life by men of dark blood” (4). McKay poetry follows her declaration that the “Bookshelf” is literary, not political.

49 A passage is quoted from Shakespeare’s Measure for Measure, Act II, Scene 2. It appears under the title, “A Reminder to Our Legislators,” The Workers Herald, Volume 1, Number 14, 2.

50 The latter of which Lewis praises in her column, but refuses to put forward in the column because it “dwelt on propaganda subjects.” For more see Ethelreda Lewis, “The Bookshelf.” The Workers Herald. Volume 6, Number 31, 4.
In T.D. Mweli Skota’s *The African Yearly Register*, some ICU leaders have entries, others do not, namely S. M. Bennett Ncwana. Many of the ICU leadership were second sons of newly middle class families, or simply the first to get any kind of formal schooling in their families. Their grasp on the black middle class was tentative. Their own access to the pre-colonial through their ancestors was often shaky or undesired. In *The Register*, ‘modernizing’ heroes like Shaka of the Zulu and Moshoeshoe of the Sotho are valorized as the ancestors of the black middle class in South Africa. While not Christian or literate and thus modern, both Shaka and Moshoeshoe were recuperable as African leaders because they were seen as “progressive.” By Tim Couzens’s count the word progressive “appears fourteen times in eighty-five portraits...[it] is clearly the ideological touchstone or keyword of the whole book” (Couzens 7). The progressivism embodied here, in which the ancestor serves as a guide through the present or a way of understanding and living in one’s present, strikes a delicate balance of the pre-colonial past and ancestor and the modern (Christian) literary African hero (33). This is not what we see in *The Black Man* or *The Workers Herald*. Perhaps the absence of pre-colonial ancestors and their descent from the ‘wrong’ pedigree are what result in the omission of some of ICU leaders over others.

Couzens suggests that *The Register* announced the New African in 1930. H. I. E. Dhlomo, one of the contributors to *The Register*, offers the definition of the New African hero in 1945 as opposed to the “tribal African” and the “Neither-nor African” as “mostly...organized urban

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51 See T.D. Mweli Skota Papers, 1930 – 1974, University of Witswatersrand. The Register meant to be a biographical anthology of the who’s who of black folk in South Africa. It was black nationalist and pan-Africanist in scope; Skota wanted to link black South Africans to blacks across the globe like, Emperor Haile Selassie, Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther (first black Anglican bishop), and Booker T. Washington.

52 There are entries on the ICU, A. M. Jabavu, Henri D. Tyamzashe, and A.W.G. Champion. Jabavu and Tyamzashe came from old, black, Christian convert families and attended Lovedale. Champion, educated at Adams College, was one of the contributors for the *Register*. 
workers who are awakening to the issues at stake and to the power of organ[ized] intelligently-led mass action and of progressive thinking African intellectuals and leaders” (Dhlomo, “African Attitudes to Europeans” 33). This definition seems far more fitting for the ICU and what it tried to do a quarter century before Dhlomo defined the New African.

At times crude and unrefined, ICU periodicals were produced under extreme adversity. The ICU leadership, sitting as it did on the periphery of the non-European bourgeoisie(s) in South Africa and at the coalface of the civilized labor policy, opposed the attempts by the government to create tracks for separate development based on race (34). It resisted the pass system and organized amongst female workers when other representative bodies were unwilling to do either.53 This awareness of the fallacy of the promise of “civilization” while using its technologies (English and the printing press) was characteristic of the ICU and its use of “the literary.” Clements Kadalie wrote of the union’s leadership, most especially himself, in his autobiography as being in possession of “literary education.”54 But the literary for the ICU had to be in the direct service of ameliorating the black man’s material condition. In this way the call for “‘literature [for the South African Bantu] in its truest sense’” made by R.H.W. Shepherd, editor of South African Outlook and principal of Lovedale, in Literature for the South African Bantu would not have rung true for them.55 Literature in its truest sense to them was not literature’s for literature sake, or even for the ‘bantu,’

53 The African National Congress (ANC) would not openly resist the pass system until 1948, and even then passes were seen as a woman’s issue. Formed in 1931, the Women’s League would not be allowed to join the ANC until 1943.

54 Clements Kadalie, My Life and the ICU: The Autobiography of a Black Trade Unionist in South Africa, (London: Frank Cass, 1970), 48, 52. Kadalie introduces the term, “literary education,” in his autobiography. He takes it from Don Fraser’s The New Africa, from which he quotes at the end of chapter 2, “The Birth of the ICU.” For Fraser, Kadalie’s literary education distinguished him from the rest of the natives. For Kadalie, his literary education (in English) makes him an effective leader and the true hero. The anti-hero is the man without it.

but literature for the black man. In a letter Kadalie wrote to Eddie Roux on learning that Roux
described Kadalie “A ROGUE AS ANY OF THE OTHERS” to their mutual friend, Norman Leys,
Kadalie accused Roux of being “afraid to get I.C.U. literature, because it will prove to you
conclusively of its progress under the new regime.”

The ICU worked tirelessly to attend to the paucity of platforms for cultural and political
expression that Dhlomo bemoaned. It attempted to foster “a powerful independent African press”
and build capacity “for publication and even pamphleteering.” As a form, the periodical allowed
black writers to write and disseminate their writing quickly. Relatively brief, they could self-publish
each issue or afford to have it published; important since their writing was unwelcome and money
was scare. As my reading has shown, it allowed them to engage each other and their readership in a
dialogue about who they were and what was of interest to them, providing a space for democracy
and citizenship in a country in which they were denied full citizenship and democratic agency.

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56 Letter from Clements Kadalie to E. R. Roux, 10 October 1928. Campbell Collections, University of KwaZulu Natal. The regime of which Kadalie wrote was the one he helped usher in, after his return from Europe and the expulsion of the communists in 1926. The union did not progress under this new regime but fractured and failed.

H O P E
By the 1930s the ICU was a spent force. It had fractured at least three times amidst the various internecine battles within its leadership. As a union it had only one successful strike to its name. Yet, as I argue in the previous chapter, the ICU was not only a labor union. It was also a cultural movement through which black radicals tried to redirect the black Victorian ethos, in the wake of their betrayal by the British Empire. As the leadership grappled to come to terms with the union’s failure, several turned away from the periodical and toward auto/biography. As a genre, the periodical allowed them to re-imagine their racial community and its most pressing concerns as having to do with working conditions and the quality of workers’ lives, rather than propriety, as was the case with Peregrino’s *South African Spectator*. As they picked up the pieces, auto/biography helped them examine the shortcomings of their movement and sometimes, repurpose its failure to give hope to the future. In the face of literary representations of black Victorianism as moribund or farcical and state-led efforts to retribalize Africans and provincialize black South African modernity from the rest of the black world, auto/biography allowed them to assert the ‘realness’ of their existence.

In this chapter I examine Clements Kadalie’s use of the genre to lay claim to the black Victorian tradition and some of its demands on the British Empire in *My Life and the ICU: The Autobiography of a Black Trade Unionist in South Africa* (1946).¹ Read alongside Ethelreda Lewis’ novel, *Wild Deer* (1933), I argue that Kadalie tries to diffuse Lewis’ contention that black

¹ I abbreviate the title of Kadalie’s autobiography to *My Life and the ICU* for the rest of the chapter.
Victorianism was nothing more than shallow mimicry and local black modernities, bankrupt. In some ways the 1930s and 1940s saw the battle for liberalism ensue between embattled black victorians and white liberals disillusioned by the very ideas of ‘progress’ and ‘civilization’ that animated earlier liberal imaginings of British Empire. Lewis’ novel and Kadalie’s autobiography contend with what the black man’s place should be in the empire after the first World War around the question of what to do with the detribalized native. Should black men be retribalized or allowed full access to the imperial or national polity? But a comparative reading of their texts reveals the extent to which this question was increasingly tied to (white) women’s relatively new power in the empire, South Africa, and Britain.

When Williams, Peregrino, Soga, and Hopkins wrote, women did not have the vote. The franchise was a race issue to the extent that black men were either being denied the legal right to vote, or their votes were in danger of suppression. The political equality that earlier black Victorians tried to access was then the provenance of white men. That is not to say that race men and women did not champion women’s rights, but that universal suffrage was denied white women as well. But by the time Lewis and Kadalie wrote, white women had the vote.

At the start of the twentieth-century, Olive Schreiner famously left the Cape Women’s Enfranchisement League because it endorsed a universal white franchise that would exclude the black masses. According to Carolyn Burdett, the author of The Story of an African Farm advocated that women should “‘join in’ and at the same time . . . transform the course of progress of modernity” (Burdett 176). She understood the Native Question to be the same as the Labor Question. But as South Africa began to take shape after the Anglo-Boer War, Schreiner became
disenchanted. She pushed for labor organizing across the color line. She researched figures like Toussaint L’Ouverture and read W. E. B. DuBois (13).

The Union of South Africa rendered false Schreiner’s hope that equal rights for all—for women, workers, and against racism—would remain central to the women’s movement. Between 1918 and 1928 the United Kingdom granted white women suffrage. In the US, the nineteenth amendment passed in 1920, giving women the right to vote. In South Africa, in 1930 white women were granted the right to vote. If in the US black people were not legally denied the vote but prevented from voting nonetheless, in South Africa universal white suffrage came as many black men were already being removed from the voter roll. Thus in 1930, white women were given the vote as many black men were denied it. Kadalie faced expulsion from East London and the voter roll in that same year.

I situate Lewis and Kadalie’s partnership in the long, if fraught legacy of collaboration between black (male) radicals and white (female) liberals in southern Africa, and South Africa in particular. ‘Black peril’—the fear that white women would be raped by black men—often made such collaboration difficult and were often scripted into menacing scenes of racially deviant heteronormative reproduction.2 Frederick Douglass’ collaboration with suffragists like Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony demonstrate that this kind on partnership between rights activists was not limited to South Africa. In the US South black men could be lynched for looking at white women. Such terrorism in the US stemmed from a similar desire to thwart black (male) political equality. Black men were hypersexualized; lynching protected white women’s virtue. Lynching was another form of policing black male power; ‘black peril’ under another name. Yet

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particular to the southern African context was the political purchase of the tribal and the increasing demand for mine labor on the Rand and in Kimberley.

In the 1920s and 1930s there was conflict between white workers and black workers. Periodically, the ICU tried to partner with white labor, but was often snubbed or betrayed (Kadaile, “The Aristocracy of White Labor” 23). As J. Scott’s cartoons from The Workers Herald reveal this was a central concern. If black workers received the same rights, wages, and protections as white ones, poor whites were encouraged to believe that they would lose the privileges that their whiteness afforded them. Relationships between black men and white women were deemed threatening. Two decades his senior, Lewis was lampooned as Kadalie’s mistress (Tim Couzens, “Introduction” xii – xiii). I want to locate this kind of collaboration in South Africa—between black (male) radicals and white (female) liberals—where the protection of white women’s virtue and that of the sanctity of the white family often served as justification for removing black men from the urban landscape, or retribalizing the native.

I argue that, in 1946, writing from segregationist South Africa as apartheid loomed, Kadalie turns to the routes of imperial circulation charted in imperial adventure fiction like Joseph Conrad’s novella, Heart of Darkness (1902). If postcolonial African writers from other national contexts reject such narratives as glorifications of Western might, Kadalie harnesses them to identify himself as a reader and therefore ‘civilized.’ But as women’s suffrage seemed to erode the fantasy of universal brotherhood under the aegis of empire, he also tries to access the male

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3 C. T. Loram, a liberal leader and specialist in education, leveled the charge.

brotherhood made possible by the imperial adventure narrative. I argue that as if to re-activate Cecil Rhodes’ “equal rights for all civilized men,” Kadalie lays claim to the imperial map and a certain mode of (English) “literary education” in order to hold onto his place in South Africa.

Conversely, the extension of the right to vote to women in the decades following World War I saw women enter public intellectual discourse in an unprecedented fashion. Some redirected their energies spent working for women’s rights to the struggles for equality by black and colonized peoples. But for many these subjects of late empire became sites of mission. Ethelreda Lewis and her liberal set often engaged with the ICU as a site of mission. In *Wild Deer*, Lewis presents an intellectually bankrupt local, black, urban elite unable to salvage the African race. For Lewis, the only option for the redemption of the race is partnership between white liberal females and African American males, all under the trusteeship of Afrikaner males (retribalization). I contend that Lewis’ novel reconsolidates the borders that kept white women at home in the metropole while young men went out to the colonies to become men of means.

The native question in South Africa was sometimes articulated as the threat of excessive and virulent black male sexuality that left unbridled could result in the savage raping of white women. At the same time, the need for labor to fully exploit the country’s mineral wealth instigated retribalization—casting the rural areas as the ‘true’ home of the African native. As more ‘tribal,’ native men had to live in town without their wives or families, the question of what to do with black men in the absence of black women emerged (McClintock 114 – 115). The allegory of nation, which is often tied to (re)production, becomes made more complex.
In his autobiography, Kadalie interweaves personal correspondence, his experience as the secretary of the union, social histories, and imperial adventure fiction to claim coevalness as an interlocutor and thereby lay claim to the colonial city.

In the final chapter of his autobiography Kadalie explains the ICU in the context of the post-World War world:

...the ICU was inaugurated early in January 1919, as the aftermath of the first Great War. Africans, as well as other non-Europeans, had just returned from the war more disillusioned than ever. The war was supposed to make the world safe for heroes. Unemployment was raising its ugly head. The rising cost of living was making the necessities of life unattainable...Amidst this uncertainty we witnessed the formation of the first trade union of the non-Europeans of South Africa. (emphasis added, Kadalie My Life and the ICU 220)

The first World War “was supposed to make the world safe for heroes.” Yet for blacks resident in South Africa after the war, many of whom had served, were not received as heroes. The world was not safer for them. In part, My Life and the ICU stands as that safe space.

Kadalie collapses the boundaries between colony and metropole in order to reactivate liberal empire in the face of a virulent white-settler nationalism according to which he—foreign, black, urban and English-speaking—could not exist. Kadalie uses autobiography to show how African modernity contaminates the metropole. In so doing, he authenticates urban black life. I want to argue that, in some ways, he does so in response to Lewis’ novelistic representation of “the raw native,” steeped in customary mores and most comfortable in the countryside, as the only authentic black African.

The ICU incited black workers across Southern Africa. Some were tenant farmers who had lost their right to rent or own land with the Natives Land Act of 1913, under which black South Africans could only occupy 13 per cent of the land. and the use of land to stem white pauperism
(Bradford 23). But whether in the city or in the countryside the ICU attracted those who were most at risk of being alienated from the colonial body politic. As private property rights for blacks evaporated and black families were deemed anathema to South African cities the ICU attracted a cross-section of those marginalized because of their race. But by 1930 the union had fractured three times. In 1927, the Durban branch seceded out of loyalty to A. W. G. Champion. They renamed themselves the ICU yaseNatal. Kadalie left the mother body in 1928 because of a disagreement with the European Advisor, William Ballinger. Ballinger has come to South Africa from England in response to Kadalie’s request for a British trade unionist to lead the ICU’s reform. Kadalie and his followers formed the Independent ICU. As leader of the Independent ICU, Kadalie attempted a General Strike from East London in 1930. Kadalie and other leaders on the strike committee were arrested. Resident in East London for the rest of his life, Kadalie spent his days running a cafe there and fighting the threat of removal from the city. In the end he was never quite able to make the world a safe place for himself.

As I show in my reading of the ICU’s periodical in the previous chapter, from the perspective of its leadership, literariness was vital to the ICU. If the ICU’s periodicals illustrate a desire to articulate a race-centered subjectivity that resonated with black masses at home and abroad and oppressed peoples around the world, the autobiographies that its leadership produced in the years after its demise reveal a hope to record the radical, black male worker-hero that the union had made possible, albeit for a fleeting moment. And in the recording, they offer the union to future generations as a sign of hope, despite its dismal failure.

Most of the leadership were part of an educated global black elite—hailing from South Africa, the Caribbean, the rest of Africa, and the United States. ICU literature reveals their
commitment to that community. Trained as a chemist, the West Indian president of the ICU, J. G. Gumbs, became a dockworker at Cape Town. Henri Danielle Tyamzashe, sub-editor of The Workers Herald, trained as a printer at Lovedale; Clements Kadalie, the national secretary of the union, a teacher. As the union spread beyond the Cape Town docks many of the branch secretaries were disaffected teachers. They faced low wages, a curriculum that increasingly emphasized industrial training, and had often become teachers because of the color bar in other professions. Gilbert Coka was one such branch secretary. He wrote his autobiography in which he stresses the centrality of the ICU in his own personal and political awakening. Some, like A. W. G. Champion and Clements Kadalie, were second sons who could not hope to benefit from their fathers’ wealth because of their unfortunate place in the birth order. Others were immigrants fleeing poverty and hoping for the opportunity to acquire wealth. Yet by the 1920s, the 1913 Immigrants Regulation Act was frequently invoked to declare black diasporan clergy, domestic workers, businessmen, and
tourists “Prohibited Immigrants,” curtailing the possibilities for certain kinds of black migrants.\(^5\)

Clements Kadalie, perhaps the most known of the ICU leadership, was nearly deported under the act. In his autobiography, *My Life and the ICU*, he recounts the experience, citing the deportation order (Kadalie, *My Life and the ICU* 46). Others were abandoned in Cape Town as white seamen, in search of work, returned from the war. Anti-diaspora immigrant practices were meant to cut black South Africa off from the rest of the black world and reduce the sheer number of non-Europeans in the Union. With the 1913 Natives Land Act and the 1923 Urban Areas Act, the state aimed to dwarf the black middle class and decimate black urban life. The ICU offered respite from black downward mobility and official efforts at retribalization and provincialization.\(^6\) It was essential for many of the leadership that they take stock of why their union failed. At least three

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\(^5\) I am referring to section (a) of Act No. 22 of 1913, which regulated entrance into the country and movement between the provinces within the Union of South Africa. Those persons who the Minister of the Interior found wanting on “economic grounds or on account of standards or habits of life” could be deemed “prohibited immigrants” and banned from entering the country. The law most obviously halted Asian migration to South Africa, but it was also used to refuse those from African diaspora entrance. South African and British colonial dispatches and correspondence reveal its use to pre-empt Marcus Garvey and other two other UNIA officials’ (William Ferris, editor of *Negro World* and Henrietta Vinton Davis) possible attempts to enter the country:

Reference your J. 340 of 17.3.21. It is understood that Marcus Garvey President General of Universal Negro Improvement Association, accompanied by William Ferris, Editor of Negro World, and Henrietta Vinton Davis, Assistant President General, and various secretaries, propose speaking tour of the world and intend to visit Union of South Africa. They are prohibited immigrants to Union and should not be granted any facilities to enable them to proceed to South Africa. Report any information you may have about proposed tour. Warn all controls. (Robert A. Hill, *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers: Africa for the Africans, 1923-1945*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 156; italics mine.

Certainly there was concern about what Garvey and his followers could do if allowed to land in South Africa. But as I mention in the previous chapter, even conservative Ethiopian African American preachers were barred from entry or forced out. In 1923 a Grenadian domestic worker of a British couple taking up residence in Southern Rhodesia was refused entry at Cape Town and made to wait at the docks for months. Eventually her employers succeeded in gaining her entry (113. National Archives, Cape Town Campus). For more on the ‘official’ narrative regarding black migration into South Africa see Sally Peberdy, *Selecting Immigrants: National Identity and South Africa’s Immigration Policies, 1910-2008*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2009.

\(^6\) For more discussion see Helen Bradford’s chapter on the ICU leadership, “Educated and Civilized Agitators: The Social Origins and Character of ICU Leadership, 1924 - 1930,” in her book *A Taste of Freedom: The ICU in Rural South Africa 1924 – 1930*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1987). By “provincialization” I mean the process by which blacks in South Africa were cut off from the rest of the black world as a result of these processes.
former leaders wrote autobiographies. They are: Kadalie, Coka, and Champion. H. D. Tyamzashe wrote a biography/report on the demise of the union for the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) entitled, “Summarised History of the Industrial and Commercial Workers’ Union of Africa: I.C.U.” My Life and the ICU is an important ICU auto/biography to read because it uses the genre of autobiography to unseat some truth claims about empire. With the exception of Tyamzashe’s report to SAIRR, Kadalie’s is the only text produced after Lewis’ novel. Perhaps because it is written so long after the ICU’s demise, it is the only one that addresses the centrality of the city to black trade unionism in Africa and thus can be placed in conversation with Lewis around this. Kadalie makes explicit what the stakes of “the literary” are to the movement. In this way, Kadalie’s autobiography speaks to the question of what modern African literature is.

Written in 1946, My Life and the ICU locates the ICU in relation to way to the African mine workers strike that year. But the autobiography also punctuates the relatively long period of retrospection by those in the union’s upper echelons that began with A. W. G. Champion’s autobiography, Mehlomadala (1929), a brief autobiography as an apologia for his role in the fracturing of the ICU in 1928 when the Natal branch seceded from the mother body. In his declaration of the union as the “real parallel” of the Haitian Revolution, in A History of Pan-African Revolt, C. L. R. James compares Kadalie’s and Champion’s different styles of leadership precisely in terms of literariness. Kadalie exudes a definitive black revolutionary heroism that James’ readers might typically associate with Toussaint L’Ouverture. Champion is rough and uncultured.

“Champion,” James explains, “was the very opposite of Kadalie in everything. More backward in outlook than Kadalie, who was aware of the working-class movement as an international force, he
saw very little beyond Zululand, or Natal, and he was more organizer than orator” (James, A History 91).

James holds onto Kadali’s penchant for oratory, writing, and reading in the old public/mission school tradition, in which James himself was reared. But both Kadali and Champion present themselves as literary in their autobiographies. Champion publishes his own poetry in Mehlomadala, as well as a poem he claims a student at Amanzimtoti Institute, E. C. Jali, wrote in celebration of Champion’s work amongst his people. Kadali speaks of “literary education” as the central quality a radical black hero must have. He borrows the term from Donald Fraser’s book, The New Africa. Fraser writes of the union and Kadali in his book. Fraser divides Kadali’s training into two categories: the “literary education” that he had received at the Scottish Mission at Livingstonia; and the “intensive education” that Kadali went on to receive as a railway worker in Rhodesia and as a labor leader at Cape Town. The latter, according to Fraser, would shock his former teachers (Kadalie, My Life and the ICU 47). Yet during his tenure as editor of The Workers Herald, Kadali consistently used the periodical as more than a medium for the dissemination of information. He is invested in “the literary” in his work as a labor leader.

At the same time, in the decades following the ICU’s disintegration, white writing by both liberals and communists involved with the union tended to view the union as having failed either because it was too radical (in the case of the liberals) or not radical enough (in the case of the communists). Ethelreda Lewis, a liberal novelist who worked closely with the union from 1926 onward, deemed the leadership “poor hybrids” (cOUZENS, “Introduction” xxi); Eddie Roux, a

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7 James attended the Queen’s Royal College (QRC) in Port of Spain, Trinidad. QRC was established by British colonial officials to provide a public school option for their own sons and offer an alternative to the mission schools in Trinidad, which were predominantly Roman Catholic.
former leader in the Communist Party of South Africa, refers to their leadership style as “hamba kahle” (or go carefully) in his history of black resistance in South Africa, *Time Longer than Rope: The Black Man’s Struggle for Freedom in South Africa* (1964). Roux uses “hamba kahle” to depict those members of the leadership who remained after the communists were purged from the union in 1926. “Hamba kahle” is a parting greeting in Zulu and Xhosa, typically translated as “travel well” or “go well.” Roux uses it to insinuate the ‘conservatism’ of some factions of its leadership who accommodated white liberal calls for co-operation, expulsion of ‘the communists’ and a less radical approach. Nonetheless, Roux maintains that Kadalie was “the tough politician, the leader, the orator who swayed the multitude...essentially a poet” (Roux 164). Here too, literariness, or how effectively the leadership approximated literariness, becomes the central criterion by which it was judged. In one letter to Roux, Kadalie claims that Roux was scared to read ICU literature following the expulsion of the communists because he would have to recognize how good ICU literature was (Kadalie “Letter). For Lewis, the union failed precisely because its leaders wanted too badly to be urban, civilized residents of the (colonial) city. Kadalie and company surface in her novel, *Wild Deer* as “poor hybrids,” or hollowed out mimic men corrupted by debauchery, poor schooling, and affectation. Robert de la Harpe, a Paul Robeson-esque African American singer, is the only viable savior of black South Africans in her novel.

Despite Roux’s criticism, *My Life and the ICU* responds to white liberal, not communist, critiques of the ICU and black Victorianism. Hence the union’s participation in the Economic and Wages Commission in 1925 becomes central to the union’s work in the text. At the Commission, Kadalie writes, “we gave detailed lists showing the cost of living of an African civilized family...I am anxious to have them recorded in this work” (emphasis added, Kadalie, *My Life and the*
ICU 74). His autobiographical project is meant to make visible the experience of the “civilized” (read modern/urban) African family. Yet much as My Life and the ICU is about the preservation of the colonial city as an authentically African terrain that must house African families, Kadali’s wife and son appear once in the narrative. With the exception of the first chapter, he rarely mentions his brothers, both of whom lived in South Africa and were active in the union. The African family for which he labors recedes into the background. In its place Kadali devotes narrative space to England, Europe, and white liberal women like Lewis and Winifred Holtby. He writes of prospective white female co-workers who refuse to work with him and therein thwart his prospects for upward mobility. Remembering his trip to Europe, he intimates his long buried hope of finding “a European girl” to return with him to work as secretary for the ICU. If the role of black (coloured and native) women is a concern in the ICU’s first periodical, Kadali evades it in My Life and the ICU, one of the last ICU texts. What does this mean for our study of black victorianism as a radical politics in South Africa and about the South African question before the start of grand apartheid?
A ‘Harlem Adventurer’: African American Travel and Black Modernity

Ethelreda Lewis is probably best known for her role in shaping the 1927 memoir Trader Horn: A Young Man’s Astounding Adventures in 19th Century Equatorial Africa. It tells the story Alfred Aloysius “Trader” Horn, an ivory trader in central Africa, who showed up at her door one morning a shadow of his former self. In 1931 the book was made into a movie by MGM Studios; it was the first non-documentary film to be shot on location in Africa. At the same time, she was also active in the ICU. Kadalie’s trip to Europe from 1927 to 1928 was orchestrated, in part, by Lewis and some of her friends in England. She introduced the British novelist Winifred Holtby to Kadalie, the ICU, and its cause. Two of Holtby’s novels address the plight of the African proletariat as Kadalie introduced it to her. An ardent feminist, Holtby wrote the first critical study of Virginia Woolf in 1932. As its title suggests Virginia Woolf: A Critical Memoir, the book combined literary criticism, biography, and autobiography. She was a member of the feminist group, Six Point, and wrote for the feminist journal Time and Tide, eventually serving on its editorial board. The actress Dame Sybil Thorndike, another patron of the ICU, learned of it from Lewis. A lecturer at the University of the Witswatersrand, Margaret Hodgson became familiar with the union through Lewis. Hodgson would go on to marry William G. Ballinger, the European advisor to the ICU, and become a native representative in parliament. Mabel Palmer, a Fabian, a liberal, and a feminist

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8 The book is borrows from the picaresque novel to document Horn’s adventures in the ‘wilds’ of Africa, hunting and fighting unruly ‘savages.’ All while he liberates slaves, a princess, and meets Cecil Rhodes.

9 The original starred: Harry Carey as Trader Horn; Edwina Booth as Nina Trent; Duncan Renaldo as Perú; Mutia Omoolu as Horn’s “Native” translator; and Olive Carey as Edith Trent. Lewis was one of the writers on the film. It has been remade three times in 1934, 1970, and 1973.

teaching at the University of Natal was part of the contingent of white female helpmates to the union. Even Sarah Gertrude Millin was swept up in the sea of white liberal (female) effort involved in the ICU. If the union was part of a larger black world and expressed a global dissatisfaction with the treatment of peoples of African descent, it also animated several of interwar Britain’s and South Africa’s new women.

C. L. R. James argues in A History of Pan-African Revolt that the central difference between the Haitian Revolution and the ICU, as a revolution, was the absence of a corresponding force in the metropole (James, A History 91). According to James, “whereas there was a French Revolution in 1794 rooting out the old order in France, needing the Black revolution, and sending out encouragement, organizers and arms, there was nothing like that in Britain. Seen in that historical perspective, the Kadalie movement can be understood for the profoundly important thing it was” (91). Yet the Kadalie movement was part of something revolutionary in Britain: the rise of a new kind of woman, working, writing, and active in political affairs. Often using friendship as the metaphor for their collaborative forays in letters, art, politics, and activism, these women worked together to carve out a new space for themselves in the body politic.11 For women like Lewis and Holtby, the ICU and Kadalie especially became sites of altruistic work integral to the activation of their own independent professional and intellectual lives.12


12 Vera Brittain can also be included in this circle as her own biography of her friendship with Holtby, Testament of Friendship, delves into Holtby’s time in South Africa and maturation precisely though her work there with Lewis, Kadalie, and the ICU. See Vera Brittain, Testament of Friendship. London: Virago, 1980. The Jamaican poet, Una Marson, who met Winifred Holtby in 1934, is another figure who should be counted here. Though her friendship with Holtby was after the ICU’s heyday, Marson became interested in Holtby after reading Mandoa, Mandoa! and was keen to know more about her work in South Africa. According to Marson’s biographer, Jarrett-Macauley, meeting Marson pushed Holtby to “explore the similarity between black and female experience,” most notably in a letter to Norman Leys (Delia Jarrett-Macauley, 76). Leys was also a friend of Kadalie’s.
Holtby met Kadalie while touring South Africa as a representative of the League of Nations. Since her childhood, she longed to travel to ‘far away places.’ The League of Nations enabled her to fulfill that dream. She described Kadalie to her friend and collaborator, Vera Brittain, as: “an extremist, suspicious, sensitive, vain, sincere” (Couzens, “Introduction” x). In her own biography of Holtby, Brittain recounts that Holtby “thought [Kadalie] vain, sensitive, suspicious, but according to his own standards sincere” (Brittain 216 – 217). Whatever her opinion of Kadalie, Holtby wrote several book reviews in *The Workers Herald*. Her experience in South Africa, particularly with Kadalie and the ICU, informed her novels *The Land of Green Ginger* (1927) and *Mandoa, Mandoa!* (1933). But perhaps most important to my reading of Clements Kadalie’s particular notion of “literary education,” was Holtby’s role in the creation of the ICU library.

Nearly two decades before the first non-European public libraries were launched in Johannesburg, Holtby and Lewis held a book-drive to stock the union’s new library. The library advanced Kadalie’s notion of the ICU Hall as a cultural center for the black man.

The library may have reflected Kadalie’s desire to cultivate an ICU intellectual scene, but Holtby did not consider him well-read. In her view Kadalie understood himself to be “the legendary ‘Black Man from the North’ who was ordained to save the black people of the South from their white oppressors” like Nelson, the main character in George Heaton Nicholls’ *Bayete!*. King of the Ndebele and a Bishop in an Ethiopian church, Nelson had studied at an African-

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American university in the American South under the tutelage of Mr. Lincoln, himself an amalgam of Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Du Bois. But for Holtby, “[Kadalie]’s reading was limited and disconnected” (Brittain 237).

While Holtby thought Kadalie severely under read, Lewis assumed that the readers of *The Workers Herald* and ICU members were not part of a reading culture. Publishing her own versions of Harlem Renaissance poetry and Negro spirituals as “Reader” in *The Workers Herald*, Lewis used the figure of the African American to model retribalization for South Africa’s black literati.14 Les Switzer writes that Lewis’ “interest in the ICU was motivated by a crude form of racial paternalism” towards the union’s black membership (Switzer, “Moderate and Militant Voices” 162). Certainly, read against the writings of Kadalie, H. D. Tyamzashe, James Thaele, and other ICU writers within the covers of *The Workers Herald*, we witness Lewis and Holtby’s inability to see what ICU writers worked to make visible to their readers. Reading, writing, poetry, and art were necessary tools in their revolutionary arsenal. Next to Lewis’ selective reproductions of Claude McKay and Countee Cullen in the “Bookshelf” were advertisements for Jolly Jack Barnard’s book shop at which he sold *Negro World*, *The Messenger*, *Crisis*, and other American Negro literature as well as local books in English, Zulu, Sotho and other indigenous languages (“Books! Books! Books!” 7). Barnard was the official agent for both *The Workers Herald* and *Negro World*. Located at 171 Commissioner Street in the heart of the Johannesburg city center, “Jack Barnard’s Well-Known Book Shop” was known to Lewis and her set.15 Kadalie wrote for *The Messenger*, yet Lewis and Holtby doubted the breadth of his library. They continued to believe steadfastly that black South Africans needed their trusteeship.

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14 See chapter three of this dissertation in which I consider Lewis’ “Bookshelf” columns in *The Workers Herald* under the pen name “Reader.”

15 This is the name of the shop provided in the advertisement. Barnard appears in the novel as Paul Peregrine.
And their inability or unwillingness to see is in part what I want to argue animates Kadalie’s own impulse to write an autobiography about black colonial reading.

At times limited by their own racist paternalism, Lewis and Holtby co-opted the ICU as a site of mission and promise that could revolutionize not only Britain and Europe, but their own roles in society. For Winifred Holtby her work with the ICU went hand-in-hand with her role in the League of Nations; for Ethelreda Lewis it undergirds her commitment to retribalization as a means by which to heal the so-called native and the European alike. If France had Haiti, some portion of the women’s movement in Britain had the ICU. What were their ideals? What were their motives? Why and how did the ICU understand its own need for extricating itself from them in order to gain the liberation of its adherents? Any answers to these questions are enmeshed in an understanding of the notions of education that both sides espoused. Lewis and Wild Deer are perhaps the clearest examples of the 1920 new woman response to black (male) radical heroism in South Africa.

Lewis was born in England. She settled in South Africa in 1902, marrying Joseph Lewis, a science student she had met while they were both studying at Cambridge (Couzens, “Introduction” vii). For over two decades she focused her energies on her husband and family. In 1923, however, she finished her first novel and sailed to England to publish it. She met Winifred Holtby and Vera Brittain who helped her find a publisher for The Harp. She followed in 1927 with the adventures of Trader Horn. Her next two novels, The Four Handsome Negresses: The Record of a Voyage (1931) and Wild Deer (1933), were published under the pseudonym, R. Hernekin Baptist.

In his introduction to the re-release of the novel, Tim Couzens explains that Lewis decided to use the pseudonym Baptist in order to hide from the fame she gained through her involvement
with the Trader Horn books and the movie. Yet it seems evident that this choice was also about maintaining the appropriate public distance from black people, black men in particular, and thereby uphold the virtue of white womanhood. In a sketch of Sarah Gertrude Millin that she wrote for *The Bookman*, Lewis reveals her strident commitment to distinct race and gender roles in society. She begins the sketch: “Perhaps you may think that a woman who writes a novel a year, in addition to weekly reviews and articles, must have little of the *Hausfrau* about her. But there you would be wrong. The home of Mrs. Millin has a bright beauty about it, and air of present joy...It looks as if it had never known a Monday morning in its life” (Lewis, “Mrs. Millin” 190 – 191) Her description of Mrs. Millin reflects something of her own notions of what a successful white woman writer should look like. Despite her professional accolades, a woman writer had to maintain a clean and visually pleasing home. Part of this domesticity was to keep (black) female servants, who not only keep the home, but also give the (white) woman writer the space to write enable and help her to enforce racial boundaries:

As we were sitting over tea and talk...her cook came into the room with a fresh brew. Cook is one of God’s Stepchildren, a Cape colored woman of the old decent type which makes splendid servants. The talk, which had been all on the problems of the half caste, was magically switched off by her mistress as the woman approached, to an impersonal subject...With a Stepchild in the kitchen, keeping sensible control of the house in the quiet morning hours while her mistress is writing, and with a Zulu houseboy, there are few servant troubles in the house of Millin. (emphasis added, 191)

God’s Stepchildren, of course, refers to Millin’s eponymous novel in which she considers the tragedy of miscegenation through the ‘half-caste’ offspring of interracial unions. Lewis describes Sarah Gertrude Millin’s domestic bliss as the ideal for the South African woman writer. Holding Millin’s home together, are her black servants.
With such strict race and gender codes, had Lewis published her later novels under her name, it would have been difficult for her to be seen as a virtuous, upstanding white woman in segregationist South Africa. *The Four Handsome Negresses* critiqued the transatlantic slave trade, slavery, and the rabid exploitation of the African continent; *Wild Deer* promulgated an African American as the only salvation for the black South African. Yet her involvement with the ICU made Lewis appear not only too sympathetic to black causes, but part of a deviant sexual relationship. Under the pseudonym, R. Hernekin Baptist, she could skirt her fame and come to terms with what she saw as the failure of a detribalized native elite without fear of reprisal for her betrayal as a white woman. In the novel, Lewis presents her ideal vision of race relations in South Africa: interracial male friendship. She had spent much of her three years with the union writing to powerful, liberal, white men in South Africa (such as Phil Millin, Sarah Gertrude Millin’s husband, and Dr. Henderson, the principal at Lovedale), pleading with them to get involved with the ICU. None answered her call. Published under the pseudonym R. Hernekin Baptist, presumably a white man, the novel was meant to demonstrate this kind of idealized interracial friendship.

In *Wild Deer* Lewis romanticizes Robert de la Harpe, a Robeson-esque singer on tour in South Africa, as the right kind of black hero. He would save black South Africa from the vice grip of its artificial modernity and perhaps chart the appropriate course for diasporic attempts at return. Disillusioned with Harlem and his cultured (and mulatto) wife, de la Harpe sets off for South Africa in order to find his lost essence and purpose. On board he meets Miss Ruth Grainger, a young, white South African woman on her way home to Goldburg, the mining city on the Rand. Both Ruth and de la Harpe moved by the stark state of race relations in South Africa. The two
start a friendship on board that they continue as de la Harpe tours the country. After a horrible concert in Goldburg, de la Harpe proposes to Miss Grainger, but both reject the prospective union as a possibility. Miss Grainger must be his intellectual partner in his struggle to save the black race. Disenchanted with urban life and thwarted in love, de la Harpe relinquishes the South African city and joins Brand Colenbrander, a Dutch lawyer and landowner, on a trip to his rural home. The descendant of the first white chief of the Maca tribe, Colenbrander convinces de la Harpe to stay with the Macas, and persuades the Macas to allow “this strange negro” to settle amongst them (Lewis 322). Colenbrander negotiates a marriage for de la Harpe with the daughter of the head chief, orchestrating de la Harpe’s retribalization and the Macas’ entrance into black modernity. Moredi, a young black, African chief gives de la Harpe a “passport” to go as Moredi’s personal guest to his uncle’s kraal. Yet only de la Harpe ‘returns’ to tribal life.

This plot line is important not only because it reveals the patriarchal, racial hierarchy that pervades Lewis’ vision of black redemption. If the Macas represent all that is ideal and noble of black South Africa, de la Harpe, the African American, is the only one who can safely convey them into modernity. To do so, he must be guided by his white (male) patron, Colenbrander. At the same time, Moredi’s momentary entrance provides one of several local black foils to de la Harpe. If he is not portrayed as a bad person in the novel, he is not given the status of hero either. Of to England to try and make entreaties to the Crown on his tribe’s behalf, he inverts de la Harpe’s journey. But as quickly as he enters the novel, he off its pages. Instead de la Harpe seems to usurp his place in a tribe. Even though it is not that of Moredi’s people, it is the Macas who are idealized as all that is good and worthy; de la Harpe will be their savior. The native black man’s journey to
England is rendered inconsequential and with it the very activities and impetus of black Victorianism, at least when deployed by native southern Africans.

The novel’s title, *Wild Deer*, comes from William Blake’s “Auguries of Innocence.” The epigraph of the book is taken from the line from which the title springs: “The wild deer wandering here and there/Keeps the human soul from care.” Lewis had thought of titling it “Waterboy” after one of Paul Robeson’s song (Couzens, “Introduction” xxii). The part one of the novel is titled “Waterboy.” It begins with the opening lyrics of the song: “Waterboy, where are you hiding?” But if waterboy alludes to Robeson, the “poor hybrids,” or black victorians as I have called them, were the wild deer. Taken together, the title, the novel’s epigraph, and the epigraph of the first section of the novel suggest a dissatisfaction with the wild deer and a fervent hope that the Waterboy would arrive to save humanity where the wild deer failed. The second section of the novel is called “Slimes.” In it de la Harpe goes to Johannesburg and sees the slums in which urban blacks dwell. The final section is called “Here and There.” In it de la Harpe is retribalized.

Lewis seemed to have genuinely sympathized with the ICU. There was a comraderie among them. Despite his conviction that white involvement killed the ICU, Tyamzashe exempted her from any share in that blame (Tyamzashe 49). Yet Lewis work with the union was often predicated on an unwillingness to see the fruitful possibilities of a locally-derived black modernity(ies). The failure of white liberals to make this recognition, stymies urban, black attempts to enjoy the benefits of equal recognition. The desire to protect the purity of the home from the Zulu houseboy that features in Lewis’ sketch of Sarah Getrude Millin is also about this need to maintain racial boundaries as well as colonial borders. To keep the races separate and the mark the colony from

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16 This refers to the discussion in the preceding chapter about S. M. Bennett Ncwana’s use of “recognize,” Jean and John Comaroff’s (re)cognition, and Charles Taylor’s “politics of recognition.”
the metropole the detribalized native had to be excised from the colonial city. De la Harpe
promises his complete removal. Not only would this reverse the progression of the industrial
revolution, it would also remove the problem of the American Negro from America.

But the crude ways in which gold, mining, finance, and war mangled ‘good,’ liberal white
men is also that to which Lewis is responding. The voyage with which the novel begins—Robert
de la Harpe and Ruth Grainger aboard a ship from England—performs the interconnectedness of
the metropolitan and the colonial worlds.

By the novel’s end, de la Harpe finally succumbs to his desire for his native wife. The novel
ends with the consummation of their marriage. But in their most intimate moment as husband
and wife, de la Harpe’s wife functions as nothing more than a vessel, a hapless womb, devoid of
intellect or culture. “Her docile body was all he needed,” the narrator tells us:

this flawless vessel made for the safe keeping of his racial heritage, the life-spring of a
thousand ancestors...For safe keeping, for hidden growth, birth, blooming—that new life
which is the only immortality man may seize for himself...

In the profound creative joy of the male he felt no need for the responding cry of a
mate. He craved only this dumb meekness of the empty vessel, of the intellect still sleeping. This
was no longer a human being he overshadowed but Africa herself, a nation to be. (Lewis 347)

If de la Harpe’s first wife is cunning and castrates him—“always slyly baff[ing] his desire for a
child”—his second allows him to (re)produce himself through her (346). He does not “need” her
to “respond,” only “[h]er docile body.” Lewis’ pen denies the validity of indigenous African female
consent and personhood, making de la Harpe’s wife a mere conduit for a reproductive transaction.
At the same time the erasure of her body and her essence also gives way to the annihilation of the
other bodies that populate (black) Africa. Through impregnation de la Harpe mutates her from “a
human being” into “Africa herself.” She becomes the continent. But it is a space in abeyance, “a
nation to be.” As such the (black) men and women who live in it also cease to be human, stuck in a perpetual gestation, like “sleeping beauty.” It is this removal that motivates the novel, which Lewis deemed “the last word that I shall want to write on the subject of native life” (Couzens, “Introduction” xxxii). She leaves the nation to be and its citizens stuck in perpetual abeyance.

We could surely read this as a sign of Lewis’ trenchant racism. But I am more interested in the ways in which the plot allows Lewis to resolve her own disenchantment with progress and civilization. Whether trivialized or subordinate, the African American hero in Wild Deer offers Lewis an alternative to the educated urban African elite. They appear corrupted facsimiles of the free, ‘raw,’ tribal native. Winifred Holtby reads the novel as a clear charge by Lewis against machinery as “inherently evil and destructive,” but Lewis appears less disenchanted with machinery as such. Rather her disillusion appears to spring from the machinery by which black colonial selves are produced, the machinery of colonial education.

In the native club, at which de la Harpe stays while in Goldburg, his dream of Africa “collaps[es]”:

Here, in a town of seething negro poverty it had almost shocked him to find a class of native men teachers being instructed in the nature of pure English by an earnest spectacled young Englishwoman. (161)

The lecturer warns her attentive students to avoid the use of “over-Latini[z]ed Victorian English” (161). “The look of patient stupor in those dark faces remind[s de la Harpe] of oxen driven in a team on undecipherable errands,” the narrator explains (161). Their fathers are still “sitting in blankets in their kraal,” the club manager beams. But it distresses de la Harpe “that

17 Also see Ethelreda Lewis to Winifred Holtby, 3 December 1933, HCL d4 f7.
while all those native men could speak their teacher’s language fluently, she knew nothing of theirs; knew nothing of their mentality nor plane of inherited intelligence” (161). De la Harpe wants to shake these students from their stupor. What use are “lectures on elementary economics, hygiene, civic life...[and service]” when they disconnect the listeners from the poverty consuming their people (162)? To de la Harpe they are not yet ready for the education being given to them. He goes on to describe them as “animals,” lacking “curiosity,” and “boy[s] of fifteen,” who are only interested in him because of his fine clothing (162). His musical gifts do not entice them. Here colonial education is not the palliative for the problems facing the black race. Instead it disconnects Africans from “their mentality” and “inherited intelligence.” They do not learn to think from it, but rather learn to mimic.

Lewis views hybridity askance, shying away from any thorough engagement with Cape Town when de la Harpe and Miss Grainger disembark there. The ICU’s place within a larger, multiple black identity is not one to which Lewis can acquiesce. The union’s exponential growth disturbed her too. She wrote to Holtby of her wish to keep it confined to the city. In response to the growing crisis of mining greed, capitalism, and industrialization that created the “Slimes” as Goldburg is called in the novel, Lewis hoped that retribalization might save South Africa from itself and Europe too.

If Holtby remains committed to trusteeship and Lewis retribalization, both are sustained by their refusal to apprehend the experiences of black labor and acknowledge a kind of reading practice. “We don’t mind their intellectual superiority,” contends Ruth Grainger’s mother, “But as for social equality with us we simply don’t let ourselves realise it; any more than we allow ourselves to realise that Jesus was as dark as your Indian greengrocer” (89). Lewis cannot re-cognize their
intellectual ability and continue to refuse social equality. Even de la Harpe is granted continued access to the supposed centers of intellectual and cultural life. De la Harpe concedes to Colenbrander’s suggestion that he stay with the Macas on the condition that he would return to London and Harlem yearly to perform. His home amongst the Macas is graced with a piano.

Lewis taps into black modernity as defined from Harlem in order to maintain the borders around the crumbling metropole and metropolitan culture. She picks de la Harpe because he is an African American, but he can only aide in the restoration of Africa if he acquiesces to retribalization. Colenbrander tells de la Harpe:

There’ve been one or two countrymen of yours with the vision to Return...Thinking of Haiti...Henri Christophe...Toussaint L’Ouverture...their way is suicide. Race suicide...Even if an army of Garvey followers could land without opposition...[a]ny grandiose, over-ambitious move in these days, would bring the air-force...There’s only one way to do it and that is to save the native from contact with the civilization. Even if that contact does come from someone of their own color in passionate sympathy with them. (273)

Civilization is the problem. While de la Harpe’s race makes him a good candidate to help “keep Africa quiet” and make it a black man’s land again, he can only do this work if he is willing to relinquish any faith in the civilizing mission (272).

Robeson and the Harlem Renaissance poets allow Lewis to disavow black victorianism and urban, black colonial life while acknowledging diasporic black modernity. The Harlem Renaissance becomes a way to refuse black South Africa coevalness in the taxonomy of the Empire. Its fetishization of Africa as a site/source of otherness (past), markedly different from Europe (and modernity), allows Lewis to maintain her own notions of an authentic Africanness.

According to Les Switzer, Lewis “projected a subordinate, trivialized image of the African American as a role model for African readers,” but the African American is more than that in the
novel. De la Harpe was not the only African American character in the novel. There were two others: Paul Peregrine, an amalgam of Jolly Jack Barnard and Francis Z. Peregrino, and de la Harpe’s first wife. Peregrine owns a social club in the Slimes. It is the kind of establishment at which the ICU would have had its dances. There is a veneer of “civilized” and Western culture: the men dress in tops and tails and do not dance with the ladies. But once the Europeans leave the “primitive” instruments—the drums and “the kafir-piano”—come out because Peregrine was never sure how much he could “control” his clients (137). Goldburg is a lucrative place for a man like Peregrine. Yet he decries the futility of his own version of transatlantic exchange from the New World to Africa. “This old Africa’ll take me and squeeze the life out o’ me, I often think, before I see Harlem again,” he confesses to de la Harpe, “She’ll get her revenge some day.” The revenge will be for “[m]aking money outa teaching black innocents all about town life, Harlem life. They’re all —grown-up—there. Know what they’re doing. Here they’re—just kids from the country” (Lewis 141). “Old Africa,” he confides in de la Harpe, is always waiting to creep back in (141).

Without “[t]he sanctuary of a common speech,” as one European says, Peregrine and de la Harpe safely exist in modernity. Harlem becomes a New Africa, an authentic one, unlike Goldburg, where modernity and newness can only be facsimiled. Harlem’s rezoning as New Africa must be considered in terms of the very construction of the New African in South Africa at that time. The New African read the literature of the Harlem Renaissance. The New African wove together the old (tradition, communal ownership, custom) and the new (Christianity, individual property rights, the book). For Kadalie, New Africa is tied to cultivation of a “literary education” alive to the contingencies of being black in the late colonial period. One such contingency is the black (often male) laborer’s tethering to the city. As we will see in the next section, this is an authentic part of
the New Africa in Kadalie's conceptualization of it. It is one of the key differences between Lewis' and Kadalie's New Africa: the authenticity of the African worker. Harlem as New Africa offers Lewis a cartography of the black world that best fits how she believes the black man in South Africa should be brought into modernity, if at all. The African American hero and anti-hero are not so much trivialized as Switzer suggests, but made to stand in for black modernity. As a metonym for black modernity, de la Harpe is subsumed by the tribal.

Lewis' desire to place such a modernity elsewhere was not only the result of imbibing South African racism. The brutality of the first World War left Lewis disheartened by the excesses of "the Machine Age" (Couzens, "Introduction xxiv). "More Africans fell as a result of the violent death of one white aristocrat in Serbia," de la Harpe thinks to himself, "than would perish in fifty years of natural savage warfare." The narrator mourns the (ab)use of black labor "as camp scavenger, as auxiliary troops, as the mournful figure of Labo[r]" during the war. The idea of a black republic is not frowned up either. Even if imperfect it would still be better than white rule (Lewis 165). The dreams of black empire espoused by Marcus Garvey and Henri Christophe are praised (164). As one reviewer contends, it was "the most passionate and convincing representation of the case for the black man against the white man that I have ever read" (qtd. in Couzens "Introduction" xxiv). For her part Lewis believed passionately in the redemptive capacity of such a man as de la Harpe. In February of 1933 she wrote to Winifred Holtby about the difficulty she experienced in her search for a publisher. "I am fighting for the only book I shall ever write that gives my emotions about Africa," Lewis reveals, "Two readers have said there could no such American negro as de la Harpe. There is..." (Couzens, "Introduction" xxiv). He was Paul Robeson.
Certainly Lewis was invested in the idea of Robeson visiting South Africa. In 1935, Holtby, an acquaintance of the Robesons, tried to exert her influence to convince the Robesons to visit the country. Lewis began to dream of Paul starring in a film version of *Wild Deer* once there. The visit failed to materialize when the Ballingers seemed to politicize Robeson’s visit more than Paul liked. According to Robeson’s biographers, Sheila Tully Boyle and Andrew Bunie, W. G. Ballinger announced that Robeson “had decided to move to Africa” to “share the life of the natives” and work for the rights of black people from South Africa (Boyle and Bunie 318).

For Lewis the African American man epitomizes modern man. The African American man will not revitalize Old Africa, rather Old Africa must reenergize him. He needs only to open himself to the process. What Peregrine sees as menacing—that “Old Africa’s just waiting outside” for the Harlem jazz to stop (Lewis 141)—de la Harpe sees as inviting. Colenbrander too, as the white chief of the Macas, is reinvigorated because he understands his role in the modern, machine age, to be secondary to his rural life among the Macas. De la Harpe is not only a fictionalization of Robeson, but also represents Lewis too “as an artist too long separated from h[er] base and h[er] inspirations” (Couzens, “Introduction” xxiv). An artist sufficiently disconnected from Africa—without an African mother tongue or knowledge of its mores—de la Harpe can never be like the poor hybrids and newly ‘civilized’ who dance in Peregrine’s hall. From elsewhere, de la Harpe is not like the Graingers’ houseboy, himself invested in maintaining the distance between the two races within South Africa. De la Harpe is at once like Lewis, but his sex and gender grant him access to rebirth through retribalization. His race does not enable him to slough off the grunge and grime of the city. Instead his two forays into ‘tribal’ life happen only with the sanction of men:
Moredi, the chief of Bantuland, and Brand Colenbrander, the white chief of the Macas (Lewis 246).

When the audience nearly kills him after his concert in Goldburg, Ruth saves his life by confessing that she was the (white) woman with whom he went for a drive. But ultimately, her sex constricts her to the city limits where family and patriarchy can protect her. The two part in agreement that their union would never work. Neither can condescend to find the other attractive enough. Further, neither white nor black would accept it. Yet Ruth bristles at de la Harpe’s admission that he does not find her attractive. He does not offer her marriage, but partnership, working “[a]part and together as necessity arises...[o]nly obeying, as far as possible, the conventions which are a part of a native’s conception of decency in white people...” (230). It is a partnership, however, that will impugn Ruth’s reputation. She would be seen as his consort. Unmarried and unmarriable, she is unable to exert influence in the world to bring about the changes they both desire. By submitting to his terms and native propriety she sacrifices her chances of a ‘proper life’ in white society. Yet she cannot escape to native life either. As a “Harlem adventurer,” only de la Harpe can do this (24).

The African American hero becomes a new kind of adventurer, reminiscent of the imperial adventurer of old, but because he is not British or white, he is not compromised or complicit in the fallacy of the British civilizing mission that went hand-in-hand with the imperial adventurer. Ruth explains British imperial practice as one that “will make war on the Boers in defence of British interests in a rich land of gold but—do not make war in defence of the African native . . . Can it be because there is no financial gain in a war undertaken for the black man?” No longer the mandate of the Crown it is a war waged by a small militia of “missionaries . . . Magistrates . . . a few
journalists and lecturers and other laymen.” It is “that small army” that de la Harpe joins (Lewis 206). He is not joining with his black brethren but with the old stalwarts of the crumbling empire.

What differentiates them most profoundly is gender. To go into the untouched heart of Africa one must be an adventurer. To be an adventurer, one must be male. But the African American becomes another kind of adventurer who being both untarnished by the shifts in imperialism and new enough to it, is not “exhausted” the other members of “that small army.” But if Ruth Grainger is not an adventurer, neither are the black women in the novel. Miss Grainger is de la Harpe’s intellectual equal with whom he cannot be sexually intimate. While de la Harpe and Peregrine speak for themselves within the text, the only other African American character, de la Harpe’s first wife, never does. Like her husband’s second, Maca wife we only hear her thoughts and words through de la Harpe’s recitation and interpretation of them. No “intellectual interests” of her own, his first wife made his own intellectual growth impossible. She was “[s]exually...insatiable, exacting, coarse,” a “savage woman without the balancing dignity of childbearing, of manual labor, the meekness and order of the elemental mate” (163). Black women become mechanical necessities in the (re)production process of the black race. (Neither Mrs. de la Harpe is the “community feminist” envisioned in The Black Man.)

Eslanda Goode Robeson’s African Journey shows that life did not necessarily follow fiction. Paul Robeson never travelled to South Africa. Instead it was his wife, Eslanda Goode Robeson, and their son Pauli, who eventually visited South Africa in 1936. Goode Robeson was an anthropologist who studied with Jomo Kenyatta in Bronislaw Malinowski’s seminars at the London School of Economics, graduating in 1937 with a master’s degree. She earned her PhD from Hartford Seminary in 1945. That same year, Goode Robeson published parts of her field
diaries from her sojourn through southern Africa and Uganda. In *African Journey* she reveals a real-life African American male who we cannot faithfully align with de la Harpe. Robeson was unable to bear heat well. He fathered a child with his wife, and often entrusted most of his major career decisions to her. In *African Journey* we see an African American woman “off on high adventure” into “the heart of Africa” (Goode Robeson 20; 17), without an adult male. Her travel challenges the two central assumptions of the novel. First, that local blacks are unable to move effectively within the circuits of modernity. Her narrative includes descriptions and photographs of black South Africans living in the cities and in the countryside villages and towns. Some wear traditional clothing and live in traditional rondavel homes. Most are neither traditional and rural nor untraditional and urban. Goode Robeson does not conflate authenticity with the countryside. She also dispenses with the idea that the Harlem adventurer must be male and needs white friends to vouchsafe for him (or her) before local blacks (rural or urban) would accept them. “I soon became fed up,” she explains in her preface, “with white students and teachers ‘interpreting’ the Negro mind and character to me. Especially when I felt, as I did very often, that their interpretation was wrong” (14). Often denigrated as “European” by white “experts,” Goode Robeson wants desperately to prove that she was not European and that her racial heritage allotted her special knowledge. Harlem adventurers were not intrinsically different from “the primitive African.” Education and culture were not the exclusive property of a particular racial group, rather it was a question of access to “schools” and “money” (15).

‘Parsons and Editors’: The Contours of an African Literary Tradition
In combining literary criticism, substantial quotations from various texts, letters, and other documents, Clements Kadalie’s autobiography, *My Life and the ICU*, valorizes precisely the strategy of black victorianism that Ethelreda Lewis disavows in *Wild Deer* and Eslanda Goode Robeson believes essential in *African Journey*—“literary education.” Lewis, of course, was not the only liberal to refute the usefulness of such a training. Cecil Rhodes, whose “equal rights for all civilized men South of the Zambezi” was often used by black Victorians to lay claim to voting rights, worried that schools for blacks in South Africa “only turned out ‘parsons and editors’” (Fraser 133). Institutions like Livingstonia (in Nyasaland) and Lovedale (in South Africa) ‘ruined’ their charge for anything but the “literary professions” (133). Certainly, neither the bulk of the ICU’s membership nor its leadership were fully employed in the literary professions. In part, the erosion of such employment opportunities drove the radicalization of blacks in town and in the countryside, making the ANC fairly obsolete in the 1920s.\(^\text{19}\) In leading the charge against the state’s onslaught, Kadalie presents the ICU’s literary production as essential to the cultivation of a reading practice that could help downtrodden blacks transform their circumstances and foster a race- and labor-based community. In this way, Donald Fraser’s assertion in *New Africa* that “literary training is necessary for intelligent life” must have resonated deeply with Kadalie (135). *My Life and the ICU* becomes a manifesto for this kind of training and life for black workers.

Two hundred and twenty four pages in length, *My Life and the ICU* comprises sixteen chapters. It begins with a description of Kadalie’s life in Nyasaland. However, with the exception of the first chapter, the autobiography deals with Kadalie’s experience as a national leader in the ICU. Chapter two attends to the union’s birth. The autobiography ends with a chapter entitled, “What

\(^{19}\) The ICU pushed for anti-pass demonstrations and petitions where the ANC did not, because most of the ANC’s leadership were fairly well-established and well-heeled.
of the ICU?” in which Kadalie gestures to the future of African trade unionism after the ICU’s demise and the start of apartheid. It doubles back to where the narrative began. Two chapters bisect the text—“My Trip to Europe” and “On the International Stage.” In them Kadalie recounts his trip to Europe as a representative of the ICU and black labor in South Africa. He offers his most explicit and poignant critique of the ways in which imperial adventure narratives chart the space between the metropole and the colony. In so doing, these chapters disrupt the dichotomy between the two places and the two authentic selves that each is meant to conjure—the cosmopolitan European and the raw native—validating instead the poor hybrid’s place in such a world.

When Kadalie reminisces that “[he] sailed from the Cape Town Docks as a ‘‘missionary in reverse,’ with a new mission to Europe” (Kadalie, *My Life and the ICU* 129), he levels an implicit critique of *Wild Deer* and refracts one of the most notable pieces of imperial adventure fiction set in Africa, Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*. In the two chapters on his trip to Europe his world as the autobiographical subject resembles the one depicted by the “large shining map marked with all the colors of a rainbow” (Conrad 7). Marlow describes the map hanging from the wall at the Company’s office as covered with:

a vast amount of red—good to see at any time because one knows that some real work is done in there—a deuce of a lot of blue, a little green, smears of orange, and, on the East Coast, a purple patch...However, I wasn’t going to any of these. I was going into the yellow. Dead in the centre. And the river was there—fascinating—deadly—like a snake. (7)

The red, of course, denotes the British empire. Sailing from Cape Town to Southampton, Kadalie’s site of mission is not rural or urban black South Africa. He is not going to save his poor native brother from himself as de la Harpe. Instead he sees it as “[his] duty” as a trade unionist “to
penetrate so deep into the heart of Europe unaccompanied...to tell the story of a New Africa in the making” (Kadalie, My Life and the ICU 129). Note that he replaces darkness with Europe. It is not the Heart of Darkness, but the heart of Europe. Darkness becomes a metonym for Europe; Austria becomes the “heart of Europe” (129). If Kadalie, as I will show, criticizes England and British imperialism, he takes a dim view of Austria and the international labor movement.

It is now commonplace that Joseph Conrad’s Heart of Darkness is one of the colonial texts that many postcolonial writers responded to and revised in the years following formal decolonization. Most of these texts have to do with Africa and Africans, and the ways in which both are imagined. But Kadalie’s autobiography demonstrates how the novella speaks to an alternative conceptualization of the modern African literary. Modern African literature often begins with Chinua Achebe’s novel Things Fall Apart (1959) and his essays on Heart of Darkness and defining African literature. In “English and the African Writer” Achebe defines African literature as national or ethnic literatures authored by Africans. When others try to define it in terms of how African experiences are handled, Achebe bristles. By such a definition, “Conrad, a Pole writing in English produced African literature!” (Achebe, “English” 27). In part, Achebe’s definition of African literature is a rejection of Conrad and the imperial fiction with which he was associated.

In order to call a (postcolonial) African literary tradition into existence, Achebe needs to refuse Conrad. His intellectual inheritance resembles that of Pan-Africanists such as C. L. R. James, George Padmore, Jomo Kenyatta, and Kwame Nkrumah, all of whom Simon Gikandi calls “colonial Victorians.” Kadalie’s reading of Conrad’s fiction is also the story of his coming of age and understanding himself to be an African. In that moment of (re)cognition of his African

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subjectivity, he smarts at the betrayal of a kind of modern, urban African subject that understood himself to be part of the empire. Achebe uses the language of birth, kinship, and nation to name what African literature is and what it is not. A Pole writing in English cannot produce it, neither can an African writing on the Caribbean produce Caribbean literature. (Of course the latter assertion only makes sense when considered in terms of the formal decolonization of European Empires in the 1950s and 1960s as some of these categories of citizenship are clearly born of new and muscular postcolonial nationalisms.) Conrad is an ancestor who must be denied in order for African literature to be born as a literature of independent nations.

If Achebe’s novel, Things Fall Apart, and his criticism of Conrad stand at the inception of a modern and postcolonial African literary history, so too must Conrad and the kind of imperial male adventure narratives that Heart of Darkness represents. Following on from this, critical reading

21 In The Education of a British-Protected Child Achebe explains that:
[a]s a young boy reared in the (colonial victorian) public school tradition he did not see [himself] as an African in those books. I took sides with the white men against the savages. In other words, I went through my first level of schooling thinking I was of the party of the white man in his hair-raising adventures and narrow escapes. The white man was good and reasonable and smart and courageous. The savages arrayed against him were sinister and stupid, never anything higher than cunning. I hated their guts. But a time came when I reached the appropriate age and realized that these writers had pulled a fast one on me! I was not on Marlowe’s boat steaming up the Congo in ‘Heart of Darkness’; rather, I was one of those unattractive beings jumping up and down on the riverbank, making horrid faces.

22 Achebe makes this claim in regards to Peter Abrahams, the South African novelist and Pan-Africanist, who had moved to Jamaica in 1957. Abrahams offers precisely this kind of novel only a year later with This Island Now (1966).

23 In Conscripts of Modernity: The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment David Scott offers a reading of C. L. R. James’ The Black Jacobins in which he compares the 1938 and 1963 editions. The first, Scott argues, was written with an eye toward decolonization on the African continent, while the latter edition, with the new appendix on Caribbean revolutionary heroes, from Toussaint to Castro, turns the text decidedly toward the Caribbean. Scott suggests that the first is a romantic history of black resistance under colonial rule, while the latter text, published after decolonization had begun in the Caribbean and James’ dream of West Indian Federation had been crushed, appears tragic. Scott pushes us to think about the sedimentation of a particular notion of postcoloniality. Further, and perhaps this may seem an obvious point, by reminding us of the differing geographic emphases of each edition he also reminds us that some of the terms by which literatures of Africans and peoples of African descent have been categorized were not always already in existence.

of Conrad becomes a rite of passage for certain modes of African literary criticism. As a reversal of Conrad’s mapping of the center and the periphery, Kadalie’s autobiography is a definitively African literary endeavor that can help us rethink the limits of the African literary canon before or without the nation-state, which Achebe deems pivotal to what African literature is. What do we do with such a criticism that eschews nationalism or emerges in the absence of nationalism?

Kadalie tethers Conrad to his text in order to make a case for a literary practice that can represent both the metropole and the colony as sites of modern existence for white and black subjects. It is meant to “date imperialism, show its contingency, record its illusions and tremendous violence and waste,” in every nook into which the empire extended (Said 22). That Kadalie chose *Heart of Darkness* as one of his intertexts says something about the project of which he understood his autobiography to be a part. It is part of his deconstruction for the reader of what he understands literary education to mean, then claiming a literary education for himself. Literary education is in fact what makes a black hero within *My Life and the ICU*.

In *Heart of Darkness* the expansive, blank Africa that Marlow dreamed of going to as a boy “had become a place of darkness” (Conrad 8). This has been read as Conrad’s recognition of the shift from “the business of empire” to the “empire of business” (Said 25). Kadalie suggests that if darkness is the turn to commodification and finance the center of such a darkness must lie in Europe and inside of the Europeans who travel to Africa (Conrad 11). This does not mean that whites behaved in the same way at home in England as they did at home in the colonies.

Kadalie explains that “[d]uring the voyage to England, the majority of white passengers from South Africa behaved inhumanly towards [him].” Once in England and Europe, where “[w]hite men...generally speaking, have little or no prejudice against the black man merely on
account of his colour,” their attitudes toward him change (My Life and the ICU 105). Even Lady Aisler, who “always greeted [him] when [they] met on deck,” becomes friendlier upon arrival. She “express[es] her admiration of the way [Kadalie] had behaved during the voyage, despite the bad manners of the white passengers from South Africa” (106). On the train from Southampton to London, he sits next to a white South African from Johannesburg; they eat and drink together “from the same table.” At Waterloo train station they are all simply “human beings” crowded into the station. Whites who were on board the steamer with him “were [now] just ordinary people, rather worried about their luggage and not at all concerned about their inherent superiority as white men” (107).

In the only book-length study of African autobiography, Tell Me Africa: An Approach to Africa Literature (1973), James Olney argues that one of the reasons autobiography is an important African literary genre for non-African readers is because it “offers a way of getting inside a world that is inevitably very different from [their] own in its assumptions and values, and in its attitudes and beliefs, in its own practices ...” (Olney 8). It enables one to move from one raced, gendered, regional, and national subject position, to another. But Kadalie’s autobiography frustrates any readerly desire to enter difference. Whereas autobiographies of other African ‘great men,’ such as Kwame Nkrumah or Jomo Kenyatta, offer an alchemy of tradition and modernity that “translate” tribe, tradition, and custom to make claims to independence (from colony to nation), Kadalie’s maintains a fairly myopic focus on urban, colonial, African life (Gikandi, “Pan-Africanism” 18). My Life and the ICU frustrated several reviewers when finally published in 1970. Sylvia Neame, a political activist and member of the South African Communist Party, felt the autobiography did not offer enough detail on the life Kadalie left behind in Malawi (Neame 314). Kadalie focuses too
heavily on the “higher civilized life” for which he claims to have left his homeland, only returning to Malawi to recount the imprisonment of an ICU supporter and reader of *The Workers Herald* in Malawi. With the except of the first chapter, he does not offer much by way of ethnographic detail. He does not use his autobiography to recount a ‘tribal’ or communal history in order to make national independence possible. Neither does he cast himself as stand-in for the postcolonial nation-state.

According to George Shepperson, *My Life and the ICU* was no shining example of Kadalie’s “poetic fervor.” By the time Kadalie wrote it, Shepperson contends that:

much of the fire had left him...there are only a few flashes of this poetic fervor in his book: a defiant quotation from W. E. Henley's 'Invictus'...a striking image of the Ngoni trying to beat back the waves of Lake Malawi...some Old Testament metaphors...and some echoes of the revolutionary socialist Jack London's *Iron Heel* and *People of the Abyss* in Kadalie’s comments on Western imperialism and civilization...For the poetry in Kadalie one must go back to the first twenty years of this century when...'he lived his life with epic grandeur'...to a long article by Kadalie on ‘The Romance of African Labour.’...when he was himself the personification of the romance of African Labour. (Shepperson, “Review” 161)

Shepperson may be right that Kadalie’s “poetic fervor” is gone, but what replaces it? In a project such as this, concerned with the disaffection of a global black elite with some version of Victorian liberal empire, Kadalie’s autobiography seems to re-activate the world without borders that was the empire. The few moments of “poetic fervor” in *My Life and the ICU* to which Shepperson refers are moments of critical reading. Kadalie shows himself to be a reader. Why?

Kadalie uses the genre to debunk truth claims about African existence—that it is traditional and outside of modernity, that it operates within particular linguistic frames, that it cannot be brought ‘home’ to the metropole and thus must be purveyed by white men, while white women stay at ‘home.’ He rejects the “community of existence” of the tribal in favor of his own
singularity. Even as he conflates his own story with that of the ICU the autobiography is not so much about what the ICU did or did not do, though he records that, but about what he understood it to have done and its signification.

Kadalie signposts his narrative with the following events: the founding of the ICU, its first strike in 1919, its presentation before the Economic and Wage Commission of 1925 (its attempts to enter and alter the political discourse around the urban African and his family), the state’s attempt to deport Kadalie, the ICU’s last stand in the General Strike at East London in 1930, and the introduction of the Hertzog Bills. The Native Land and Trust Act of 1936 consolidated the expulsion of African life from urban areas to rural, ‘tribal’ lands. The Native Representation Act of 1936 carved up the imagined black community. Black voters in the Cape were finally separated—natives were placed on one voter roll, coloureds on another. Native representation was to take the form of four senators appointed by the state. These bills obliterated the horizon of many urban black intellectuals. For some like Kadalie, foreign-born with no South African mother tongue save English and no ancestral homeland in the Union, South Africa becomes a kind of un-home. His description of Europe in the center of the narrative suggests that Europe represents an un-home too. As a modern imperial subject, he cannot be reduced to a single location—whether the center of the empire or the colony/nation in which he resides.

In this way My Life and the ICU charts an interesting map. Kadalie moves from a mission station in rural Nyasaland across southern Africa to Cape Town. His meteoric rise preceding the ICU’s presentation before the Economic and Wage Commission occurs alongside his move to Johannesburg (South Africa’s mega-city, Lewis’ Goldburg and “the Slimes”) and sojourn to Europe. His return and the arrival of a European advisor, William Ballinger, precipitate his fall and his
eventual return to the Cape, this time East London. From the Cape he fights to hold on to his “right to reside” in a South African city. This itinerary reverses that of imperial adventure narratives. While Lewis also does this in *Wild Deer*, it is at the expense of local or continental blacks. In her hands travel becomes a tool for “exterminating the brutes” and remaking them as she deems authentic. For Kadalie crossing the equatorial dateline collapses the metropole and the colony in such a way that the liberalism and modernity of the imperial adventurer (white or black) cannot be excised from “the brutes.” The metropole creates both equally.

But the move from the colonial city to the metropole induces a behavioral change because their legal codes and the ways in which they organize labor differ. The ‘inherent superiority’ of white men cannot manifest itself as a concern in the metropole because there is no color bar in the legal code of the metropole. That there were riots in Britain on the docks, precisely around the question of race, complicates this. I do not want to oversimplify race relations in the metropole. Rather I want to illustrate how Kadalie explains the difference between the two places. That he understands it in terms of the Law, not a difference in “custom,” sets *My Life and the ICU* apart from the imperial fictions with which it is in dialogue and other postcolonial writing that write back to such fictions of empire. These changes in his fellow passengers begin at Madeira where there is no color bar. The absence of the color bar and his enjoyment of easy communication with whites in Europe does not erase for him the fact of Europe as the birthplace of legal and financial structures that necessitate it. “I spent most of my first Sunday in London in Hyde Park,” he reveals: and found it, with the exception of the Zoo, quite the most amusing spectacle in the city. It is in fact a sort of human Zoo...There were atheists, vegetarians, Salvation Army folk, Communists, people demanding the ‘clearing-out of the Reds[,]’ anti-vivisectionists and

25 Captain Harry Dean tries to do this but is forced to leave South Africa and remains unable to do so.
Nonconformists, all concentrated into the space of a few hundred yards. The size of the audience of each seemed to depend on the capacity of the speaker for shouting, for if the Salvation Army speaker managed to drown the voice of the fiery old Tory holding forth on the adjoining platform, all the latter’s audience who were being encouraged to sing ‘God save the King’ would go over to join the Salvation Army speaker’s crowd, and sing ‘Washed in the Blood of the Lamb’ with every appearance of enthusiasm. And if one watched long enough, some other speaker with a still louder voice was sure to turn up and capture their enthusiasm for the cause of Jewish nationalism; and the same process would be repeated all over again, the Salvation Army spokesman being deserted! If it had not been so funny it would have been pathetic. (emphasis added, My Life and the ICU 115)

Hyde Park becomes “a human Zoo.” It is a site of “spectacle” equaled only by the London Zoo, where most of the animals come from the outer reaches of the British Empire. The epicenter of English civilization is also a site of colonial theater. The English resemble the exotic, wild, and savage animals that have been expropriated from the colonies. Hyde Park is a mirage, a joke if it were not pathetic.

But Hyde Park is not an aberration in London. The English capital becomes another kind of ‘blankness’ filled by the process of colonization. Kadalie explains that after Hyde Park he “dined with some friends in a queer little restaurant in the Italian quarter of London.” He follows with a parenthetical explanation: “every nationality had its own colony in London, and certain districts and groups of streets which it had selected its headquarters” (emphasis added, My Life and the ICU 115). Every nation can establish a colony in the city, such that London becomes as colonizable as Africa in 1884. In the “heart of London,” Kadalie frequently meets English people and other Europeans who speak Zulu, Swahili and a host of other African languages (114). Marlow’s “large shining map, marked with all the colors of a rainbow” that illustrate the Europe’s imperial holdings, particularly in Africa, is turned on its head. The colors of the rainbow in Marlow’s map do not color the globe

After lunch they journeyed to the East End of the town, a huge poverty-stricken area surrounding the London docks. Their journey only confirms the commonality between impoverished areas in London and those in the colonies. Only a few miles from Hyde Park laid “the Slimes,” instead it was not called Goldburg or Johannesburg, but the East End. Kadalie laments that:

No bigger contrast could be imagined than the contrast between the squalid streets of the East End and the scene in Hyde Park, no more than a couple of miles away. Here one realized Hyde Park as nothing more than a bad joke, a sort of *by-product of civilization*, and knew that these poverty-stricken streets, stunted and pathetic human beings, the great factory chimneys which rose to the sky, and the queer, uncouth foreign sailors who slouched by one, were the bedrock and reality on which Western civilization was built. Western civilization has accomplished things of infinite magnitude. It has built great bridges and machines and spanned the world with steamships and railroads. It has awakened in mankind the thirst for knowledge and power, and it has planned and foretold the course of the stars. But still it has not learned that while great masses of its children go hungry and barefoot, and while the very thirst for knowledge which it has itself awakened is stunted and denied to a large proportion of its men and women, it carries its own failure inherent within itself. *All these things are to be learned as well in the East End of London, as in the slums of Johannesburg and in the poverty and squalor in which the African workers are forced to live.* (emphasis added, 115)

Hyde Park is a mere “by-product of civilization”; the real cornerstones of civilization are the East End and the slums of Johannesburg, where poor whites and Africans dwell. Manners, high moral stands, and (“literary”) education do not make Western civilization markedly different from its colonial extremities. Instead literary education might free all from the prison of being unable to connect the spectacle of wealth and the grim poverty at its core to the exploitation in the empire. The real England, the real sign of its civilization lies in the East End of London, which is
synonymous with the slums of Johannesburg. If Africa, modern colonial Africa is darkness, then it is only because it is a cipher of modern colonizing Europe/England. Kadalie flattens the empire.

Unlike African postcolonial revisions/reversals of such narratives, this metonymy (England/Europe as Africa) is not meant to dismantle the empire, as much as it works to disrupt and restructure it. Like Marlow, Kadalie travels as an imperial subject who must move from empire to empire. As the first black representative to the International Labor Office from Africa, he tells us that white South African delegates at the ILO try to discredit the other delegates with “an underhand current of propaganda against [him] personally and the ICU generally.” He does not list the bulk of the false charges made against him, but the most memorable for him is the claim that he “was not a British subject,” but from the Belgian Congo (109). Such a charge cut at the very core of Kadalie’s sense of himself as a British subject in his autobiography. At the same time, it is interesting that the (white) South African delegates did not try to sully his character on class grounds. As the leader of a labor union, he had never been a worker for any considerable period of time. As such he would have been vulnerable to such criticism. Yet they attack him on the basis of his imperial affiliation. Not only is he not British, but he is from the Belgian Congo, the “heart of Darkness,” outside the pale of the British Empire.

But if they mean to cast him as “the horror, the horror,” Kadalie crafts an autobiography that actively refutes the label. It unfolds as a kind of palimpsest of an ICU/black victorian practice of reading. There are explicit and implied inter-texts. Some of the named sources are Donald Fraser’s *The New Africa* (1969) from which Kadalie borrows “literary education,” his deportation order, a letter from General J. B. M. Hertzog while in opposition, the ICU’s submission to the

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26 Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* (1959) and Ama Ata Aidoo’s *Our Sister Killjoy* (1977) are perhaps the most canonical revisions/reversals.
Economic and Wage Commission of 1925, and Booker T. Washington’s *The Story of the Negro: The Rise of the Race from Slavery* (1909). Kadalie does not simply drop passing references to these. He cites letters and administrative documents in full and quotes at length from Fraser and Washington. Kadalie uses the genre of autobiography to inscribe “[his] own memory” onto how we remember the ICU. *My Life and the ICU* “brin[gs]...a worthy story of the ICU organization in which [he] played a very important part” (223). But it is also a record of his reading practice. In this way, it allows him to claim a subjectivity that Lewis and others deem pitiable or non-existent. By the end of the text, the autobiography as a site of reading allows him to reclaim his story and that of the ICU as a “‘drama’” rather than a tragedy (223).

By the time the reader gets to the two chapters on Kadalie’s sojourn in Europe as a representative of the ICU at the annual International Labor Office (ILO) assembly in Geneva —“My Trip to Europe” and “On the International Stage”—we have already witnessed his betrayal by Afrikaners. Ethelreda Lewis’ romantic notion of the Afrikaner man as the ideal friend of the black man (personified by Brand Colenbrander) does not hold up. In chapter four, “I Meet Hertzog,” Kadalie tells us of his meeting with J. B. M. Hertzog, leader of the Afrikaner-dominated Nationalist Party before the 1924 election. In exchange for ICU support for the Nationalists at the Cape Native Voters’ Convention and in *The Workers Herald*’s election issue, Hertzog offered to print the issue (ten thousand copies) at the Nationalist Press at Keroom Street, Bloemfontein, and pay Kadalie’s and Sam Masabalala’s train fares to the Convention. Hertzog might seem a strange ally for Kadalie and Masabalala, but Kadahlie reveals that they had been in correspondence at least
Once. It was not trivial. On July 21, 1921, Hertzog wrote to Kadalie to make a contribution to
Kadalie’s Bulhoek Tragedy Fund.\textsuperscript{27} Hertzog was responding to Kadalie. The letter reads as follows:

Dear Sir,

I have received yours of 19th instant, for which please receive my sincere thanks. My
only regret is that I could not contribute more liberally. The feelings expressed by you on
my endeav[ors] in Parliament, and I sincerely hope that these may contribute to a proper
and true realization of the intimate connection in which those stand who are represented
by your Union and myself in relation to the common good of South Africa.

It is for us by our common endeav[ors] to make this country that we love so much,
great and good. In order to do that we must not only ourselves be good and great, but we
must also see that there is established between the white and black Africander that faith in and
sympathy with one another which is so essential for the prosperity of a nation.

It is my sincere desire that that faith and sympathy shall exist, and to that end I hope to
exert all my influence.

With best wishes,
Yours faithfully,
(Sgd.) J. B. M. Hertzog (59)

Bulhoek was one of several tragedies that befell the black community in South Africa which white
precipitated or to which they failed to respond.\textsuperscript{28} Smuts, then prime minister, and the liberals
were seen as having betrayed black South Africans. It makes sense that in 1924 Kadalie and other
black leaders found themselves looking for alternative allies. Hertzog’s letter and his offer of the
Nationalist printing press were understood as an earnest offer of friendship. As we know,
friendship did not materialize. The Nationalists gained power and amplified the stripping of black
rights that had already begun.

\textsuperscript{27} Nearly 3 000 followers of Enoch Mgijima, known as the Israelites, squatted at Ntabelanga in the Eastern Cape after
Mgijima explained at the end of 1919 that the Lord had told him the world would end in 1920. The built a tabernacle
and some huts. In May of 1921 the police descended upon the community and killed one-hundred and fifty (150) and
wounded one-hundred. Smuts, then prime minister, had given call for police involvement.

\textsuperscript{28} I am referring to the sinking of the S. S. Mendi in 1917 and the massacre of twenty-one people at the first ICU strike
at Port Elizabeth in 1921.
In reproducing this letter in the autobiography Kadalie orchestrates his readers’ recognition of his own reading practice. He did not take Hertzog on a promise made by word of mouth. It was made in written correspondence. With the letter we see Kadalie as a careful leader making a calculated decision to work with the Afrikaners (historically predominantly poor whites). Unlike his friend with whom he met Hertzog, Sam Masabalala, Kadalie has the “qualities that make up good leadership” (53) These qualities include: a literary education, fluency in the English language, and a commitment to lifelong learning or “private study” (52). Masabalala may have been fluent in Xhosa, High Dutch, and Sotho and a good orator in these languages, “but he was a poor speaker in the English language.” Thus he was unsuited for trade unionism (52). But while Masabalala may not be an “African Xavier” like Kadalie, the ICU leaders were not the reason that the trade union movement failed. It is the soil in which they tried to grow. Kadalie yearns for an earnest and widespread attempt at the “literary education” available under the older empire that, much to Rhodes’ chagrin, produced so many ‘parsons and editors.’ He wants to harness English and the mobility that Britishness once promised all British subjects regardless of race.

Kadalie repurposes the words of his African American hero, Booker T. Washington, to make the ICU’s collapse a promise to the black worker still to come. He closes the book with the claim that “mother ICU” is the ancestor of African trade unions and he, its father. Drawing from Washington’s *The Story of the Negro: The Rise of the Race from Slavery*, he ventures that:

To me the history of African Trade Unionism seems like the story of a great adventure, in which for my own part I am glad to have had a share. So far from being a misfortune, it seems to me that it is a rare privilege to have taken part in the early struggles, the plans and the ambitions of over eight million people who are making their way from industrial serfdom into a place in the social and political system of our South African nationhood.

(224)
Kadalie becomes a hero-ancestor of “South African nationhood,” and his autobiography a palimpsest through which the nation can be (re)produced. Notice, however, that the chief form of this community is the trade union. The “eight million people” he refers to in the passage above are the number of “natives” (black Africans) resident in South Africa. Thus the members of the community of which Kadalie writes, who are “making their way from industrial serfdom,” are not only economically downtrodden, but also black. Kadalie yokes together economic exploitation and racism as equally important obstacles to realizing full freedom for all. Here an African literary is not so much about location, but a commitment to a reading practice or aesthetics that maintains the conjoined nature of exploitation and racism.

By ventriloquizing Washington Kadalie uses the diaspora as the bedrock for an alternative genealogy for the black man that is not rooted in indigeneity. Unlike Lewis, he does not use the figure of the African American to retribalize black modernity. He rejects Lewis’ contention that black South Africans need to be isolated from civilization in order to realize full freedom. Instead Kadalie taps into the narrative of Africa and transatlantic slavery that Washington authors to pull black people squarely into modernity.

The original quote ends the second volume of Washington’s *The Story of the Negro*.

Washington writes:

To me the history of the Negro people in America seems like the story of a great adventure, in which, for my own part, I am glad to have had a share. So far from being a misfortune it seems to me that it is a rare privilege to have part in the struggles, the plans, and the ambitions of over ten millions of people who are making their way from slavery to freedom. (Washington 400)
Notice that Washington understands the Race in America to be moving “from slavery to freedom.” Kadalie’s revision bespeaks his own desire to push the Race to demand the complete rights of citizenship, not only freedom from enslavement or “industrial serfdom.”

Kadalie used the end of The Story of the Negro, Volume II over two decades before in A. Philip Randolph’s The Messenger. From 1923 to 1924 he served as the South African correspondent for the journal. In his first article for the September 1923 issue of The Messenger, “The Call from Macedonia,” he refers to the journal as an “indispensable New-Negro Thought Magazine” (“Call from Macedonia” 822). Certainly his new vision for an ICU periodical had something to do with his exposure to The Messenger and African American political and cultural discourse at the time.29

The first in a series of three articles that Kadalie wrote for the journal, the article is a call to African Americans to answer “the call from Macedonia” for help.30 In the original, Kadalie concludes with the following clarion call, in which he deploys Washington:

Will the enlightened American Negro now realize how his brother and comrade is forced to labor in this “the land of his fathers[?]” “To me,” to quote that great educator, Booker T. Washington, “the history of the African natives in the Dark Continent seems like the story of a great adventure in which for my own part, I am glad I have had some share.” “Come to the rescue, “come over into Macedonia and help” the toiling masses of your African brethren and comrades who are now suffering from the iron heel of capitalism. (“Call from Macedonia” 822)

He revises Washington, imbuing the African American educator and leader with a sense of his place within the history of Africa, not only the particular history of the African American. If

29 I am referring to the use of cartoons and “The Black Man’s Burden” feature found in The Workers Herald. Neither was part of the first periodical, The Black Man.

30 The other two articles followed in July 1924, “The Aristocracy of White Labor,” Volume VI, Number 7, and November 1924, “Black Trade Unionism In Africa,” Volume XI, Number 11. The “call from Macedonia” comes from the bible, Acts 16 : 9 in which Paul had a vision that a man from Macedonia said that his people needed Paul to heed his call and come out to help him.
Washington understood himself to be so integral to the plight of Africans on “the Dark Continent,” surely the readers of *The Messenger* could feel so too and answer his call to serve. But by the time he writes *My Life and the ICU* he revises Washington not to enlist African Americans to return, but to signal the change necessary to make trade unionism a force for full civil rights for all members of the race. This is perhaps counter-intuitive to Washington’s legacy. It is a contingent interpretation of the meaning of a text that does not map precisely onto the words it contains. It is born of a “literary education” made to work within the context of war and exploitation. It epitomizes Kadalie’s definition of a “literary education.”

In “The Call from Macedonia” he speaks of the Race in Africa being “industrially organized and intelligent” for the first time at the Cape Town dock strike. It was through this organization that a “new race consciousness” was born that united “the native and colored people” because it made them “realiz[e]...that no victory could be accomplished by either in the struggle for existence unless they had accepted...that as workers and exploited they share in common...their sufferings, and as such a united front had to be presented” (“Call from Macedonia” 814) Literary education is being “industrially organized and intelligent” and working from within this “new race consciousness.”

Kadalie’s last chapter answers its titular question, “What of the ICU?”: he and the ICU are not remainders of a failed revolution, but the progenitors of a revolutionary future. It is in this chapter that he speaks most explicitly to the many ethnicities and geographies that came together in the ICU. J. G. Gumbs features. Kadalie writes of the West Indians, coloureds and natives who all banded together in the ICU with this “new race consciousness.” Circling back to the union’s beginning in Cape Town Kadalie connects the promise of the old Cape Liberal tradition to black
men to the circuits of empire. The dream is left unfulfilled because the nature of the British Empire shifts after the South African war. Kadalie’s trip to Europe serves as a way to tie the colony to the metropole and remind his reader that the exploitation and oppression rampant in the colonies is connected to the same markets and events that shape wealth and poverty in the metropole. But the return to Cape Town also keeps the ICU and the community it engendered connected to a broader narrative of race consciousness that includes coloureds and natives, Africans and diasporans. My Life and the ICU offers another genealogy for black liberation struggles, particularly in Africa. Freedom need not be cast as freedom from colonialism to return to the pre-colonial. Rather freedom, full and true freedom, is about using the literary to construct freedom from moment to moment—to be a full citizen.

‘A Great Adventure’

Wild Deer and My Life and the ICU both take on the question of what the role of the black man should be in South Africa in the aftermath of British high imperialism and the rise of an exclusive white-settler nationalism. Each offers a protagonist who experiences ‘a great adventure’ through travel between the metropole and the colony. Wild Deer shows a black diasporan mimicking the traditional itinerary of a young (white) man of the empire. The Harlem adventurer, de la Harpe, becomes a man by going to the colony(ies). In turn he revitalizes the continent, injecting New Africa (Harlem) into Old Africa. My Life and the ICU offers us an African adventurer off to the metropole as ‘a missionary in reverse,’ taking the word of New Africa to the capital of the empire. Both attempt to construct a world safe for (black) heroes as the British Empire winds down and Europe has revealed its capacity for violence. Whereas Wild Deer ends with the death knoll of
‘progress’ and ‘civilization’ through the retribalization of its Harlem adventurer, *My Life and the ICU* uses the by-products of civilization to call for an approach to reading and writing that is about revision. Lewis pushes for the removal of‘raw natives’ from sources of contamination in her novel—with even the most iconic signifier of black modernity, the figure of the African American, being retribalized. In his autobiography, Kadalie fashions an autobiographical self that speaks for the Race as a modern construction born of racism and capitalism. Thus Lewis’ desire that races remain separate, Kadalie deems unworkable. The solution is not isolation, but coming together around shared experience, not sameness. As Kadalie explains in “The Call from Macedonia,” natives and coloureds are not intrinsically the same, but share “sufferings.” The “sufferings” create the contours of the Race. De la Harpe may speak to “the changing map of race” in *Wild Deer*, but race is essentialized in the novel (Lewis 163).

Strikingly in Lewis’ novel and Kadalie’s autobiography black women become peripheral in the negotiation of a world safe for (black) heroes. In *Wild Deer* black women become instruments of (re)production. Given the novel’s anti-machinery message, they are marked, almost from the outset, as inherently bad. Even in the process of (re)production they are not to be (re)produced. De la Harpe’s Maca wife is there only to enable his (re)production of himself. Sex becomes an act of cloning men. In *My Life and the ICU* Kadalie mentions his wife and child once, despite the import he places on the African family in his recording of the ICU’s submission before the Economic and Wage Commission. Instead, Ethelreda Lewis, Winifred Holtby, and even the Women’s International League feature.

Neither text offers black women genuine narrative space to participate in the free future for the Race of which their protagonists dream. While both are concerned with articulating what black
radical heroics of liberation might look like, they exclude black women from the discourse. *Wild Deer* explicitly sets the stage for a freedom in which Ruth Grainger and Robert de la Harpe might finally be together. In fact, the sexual consummation of their partnership is foreshadowed as a sign of that freedom. Only when the society is free and the two races are on equal footing can these two be more than intellectual partners. A tentative space is made for Colenbrander as another partner, but de la Harpe’s two wives represent black female identities not part of the liberated future. His first wife seems destined to stay outside of South Africa. In all her finery she is still “savage” and impervious to cultivation. His Maca wife is merely a womb in which to incubate his future selves.

I argue that the relative preponderance of new women like Lewis and Holtby in Kadalie’s autobiography results from “the shifting map of Race,” as de la Harpe terms it. Kadalie’s early articles in the ICU’s periodicals and in *The Messenger* reflect a more explicit commitment to building all members of the race, regardless of sex or gender, the periodicals too. But *My Life and the ICU* reflects the shift away from male-centric notion of empire to a racially exclusive one, at least in terms of the desired empire. Kadalie writes against the retribalization attempts of the state and white (liberal and Afrikaner) cultural institutions clearly represented in Ethelreda Lewis’ *Wild Deer* (1933). Arguably apartheid (“living apart”) began under the British in Cape Town during the Bubonic Plague of 1902, but as I have shown, the British and the Cape Liberal Tradition were also part of an alternative narrative. (Thaele, “Icabod” 1). *My Life and the ICU* hinges on the reclamation of liberalism. In his foreword to the original manuscript, Will Stuart, an M.P. in the House of Assembly, writes that “[t]he problem may be thus: how far will this book put off incipient liberal opinion?...the basis of liberalism is understanding. The illiberal will always cavil, for he believes in uneducated non-thinking egotistical servants” (Stuart 27). Stuart uses his foreword to
vouchsafe for Kadalie to prospective publishers and readers. The autobiography’s assumed market
is liberal. Stuart understands Kadalie to be in conversation with white liberalism in My Life and the
ICU. As the great nephew of the novelist Olive Schreiner and the Cape Premier W. P. Schreiner,
Stuart’s foreword adds yet another layer to the text’s engagement with the long Cape Liberal
tradition (Mouton 52).

Wild Deer depends upon colonial travel and the process of “going native” made popular by
male imperial adventure narratives of fin de siècle England such as Conrad’s Heart of Darkness. If
Kadalie wants to lay claim to the colonial city, he does so in opposition to Lewis’ desire to
consolidate the cartography of the empire in which the metropole and the colonies are disparate
spaces travelled between by a select few able to maintain the cognitive distance between the two. In
Lewis the rural, authentic native remains untouched by the “slimes” of the colonial city and the
metropole stays pristine, contaminated neither by the ‘raw native,’ crude colonial finance
(Johannesburg), nor racial ‘degradation’ and miscegenation (Cape Town). In My Life and the ICU
London and Johannesburg and Cape Town are inextricably linked. Kadalie does not place black
women squarely in the discourse around freedom and the city. Yet in his use of the genre of
autobiography he does not allegorize nation. Rather he offers a contingent reading practice. In this
way, while black women may appear to be silenced in Kadalie’s narrative he uses autobiography to
avoid representing all members of the community. His “literary education” opens, rather than
closes, the possibilities of ingenuity and contingency. This openness enables his re-reading of the
ICU as the start of a revolution rather than a failed one, as well as his collapsing of the empire to
claim the city for black families. It may not yield a full citizenship for black women at the time that
Kadalie writes the book (or even when it is published twenty years later), but it offers the promise of it.
District Six 1

At the southern edge of the Cape Town city center Zonnebloem sits atop what used to be District Six. Weeds intersperse rubble. A few buildings stand in isolated defiance. They invite our question: what fills this absence? A grassy wasteland peppered with a handful of buildings, it remained one of the few urban spaces once occupied by black people in South Africa. It is a “black spots” that the apartheid government could not fill. With much of it razed to the ground in 1982, it mocks the received narrative of Cape Town as the Mother city: Jan Van Riebeeck, Company Gardens, Lord Milner, Cecil Rhodes, Dutch, English, white.

In 1994, descendants of those removed in 1982 established the District Six Museum, forcing the nation to remember that once, they had lived there and were still a community with a history older than the founding of the 'white' South African nation in 1910. As you enter the museum you are struck by the layered history of dispossession. The 1982 removal was only the last in a series of state-sanctioned expulsions. In 1902, the Bubonic Plague served as a ruse for the state to remove “natives” and some coloureds from the district. On the first floor of the museum a clear map stretches from nearly one end of the room to the other. Those who lived in the District return and write their names at their former addresses. On the walls are pictures of some of the important men there. In some of these photographs, their wives and families appear alongside them, but not always.

In this museum dedicated to the District’s remembrance, there is a reproduction of a tenant’s room before the bulldozers. In it, is Jane Austen’s *Northanger Abbey*. I have conjured the
image of a bone-weary soul shoving Austen’s early novel into a sack as he hastily packed up the room in preparation for the bulldozers. A canonical piece of nineteenth-century literature, it reminds us that the bulldozers sought to construct a national narrative that denied the existence of a global and multi-ethnic black literary tradition in South Africa and its entangled relationship with English literature. If the ‘black hordes’ were (and had always been) illiterate, then apartheid, meant to save whites from them, was legitimate, but there sits Northanger Abbey, in rebuttal.

As one of the earliest black urban areas in South Africa and the last to be removed, District Six challenges the conflation of the land question with balkanized, rural areas and the cult of indigeneity in contemporary South Africa. Even with the expulsion of indigenous South Africans (or natives) from the District in 1902,¹ it remained a hub for a cosmopolitan black community of businessmen, lawyers, doctors, dockworkers, tailors, other tradesmen and sailors well into the 1920s. Henry Sylvester Williams, an Afro-Caribbean and the convener of the first Pan-African Conference (1900) settled there in 1903 and became the first black man to be accepted to the Cape bar. The African American sailor and owner of a commercial shipping company, Henry Foster Dean, lived there too. Francis Z. Peregrino, the founder and editor of The South African Spectator, originally from the Gold Coast (Ghana), moved to Cape Town from upstate New York by way of the Conference. When they removed a black spot from the white city, the bulldozers also removed a site of global black cosmopolitanism. Perched in the District Six Museum, Northanger Abbey alludes to these black reading and writing publics and begs us to grapple with the radical and Victorian selves they constructed in pre-apartheid South Africa.

¹ See Swanson.
They were Queen Victoria's subjects. They were holders of the qualified non-racial franchise of 1853. They felt themselves to be brothers in the British empire. The connection to Northanger Abbey is important here. It is not only a sign that this community valued the novel and print, but they valued the literary culture that rose around it.

District Six 2

E.1 ‘Mr. Wooding and His Pupils.’ 1903. APO. Courtesy the National Library of South Africa, Cape Town Campus.
In April 1904, the Trinidadian newspaper the *Port of Spain Mirror* reported to its readers that it had received a copy of the syllabus for Wooding’s Private Preparatory School in Cape Town. Walter Rawson Wooding, of Guyana, had started the school. Henry Sylvester Williams, the intellectual and organizational force behind the 1900 Pan-African Conference in London, was on the school’s managing board. Williams, a Trinidadian and the first barrister of colour in the city, moved to Cape Town in 1903 and left at the end of the next year. It was just three years after he had hosted the 1900 Pan-African Conference in London. Wooding’s Preparatory was part of the same global network that participated in the Conference. The school was staffed by West Indians; including its Guyanese founder, Rawson Walter Wooding. Cissie Gool, daughter of the well-known physician and politician Dr. Abdullah Abdurahman and an anti-apartheid activist in her own right, was one of Wooding’s students along with her sister Rose. Fertile soil for at least one of this city’s anti-apartheid activists, the school symbolizes Cape Town’s black cosmopolitanism in which peoples of African descent from the Caribbean, West Africans, African Americans, and “non-European” South Africans (both coloured and black African) rubbed shoulders.²

Whereas the Pan-Africanists (or Afro-Victorians) of the 1940s take West (and with Kenyatta, East) Africa as the key place to wage anti-colonial resistance, at the end of the Victorian era into the inter-war years, South Africa, and the Cape in particular, is understood to be the place from which to do so. In an interview with W. T. Stead, editor of the *Review of Reviews*, Henry Sylvester Williams dreamed of a federation of “Natives, Kaffirs, West Indians, Malays and Chinamen” that

² While a problematic negation, I use the term “non-European” to refer to the various black communities that exist in South Africa—black African, coloured, Indian, or African diaspora. Non-European was the official term used by the state to describe the various racial and ethnic groups that were not white. Rhetorically the term works in reference to this particular group of intellectuals and writers on whom I focus in “Anxious Records.” In many ways they are struggling to gain access to a quasi-European body politic and thus their identities are consistently articulated as negation or from a place of negation.
was only possible from Cape Town. Cape Town was, he said, “the natural home of the coloured man...[t]he rights of British people were theirs, because they were British subjects” (Hooker 70). In the majority in the District and with the right to vote, “the coloured man,” and by ‘coloured’ Williams meant non-European, was an important constituency.³

This picture of Mr. Wooding and his pupils unveils the space of possibility some tried to construct in the Cape. It is a space of racial solidarity, civility, and improvement. A school built on South African soil, it is the infrastructure of that union “at a future date” that Williams speaks of in *The British Negro*. It validates Dean’s autobiography as more than a “curiosity.” It speaks to the global resonance of the race paper at the fin de siècle. It puts in sharp focus the dreams that people like Ncwana, a student of Zonnebloem College, and Kadalie lost as the city shifted under the soles of their feet. To grapple with each of their black Victorian texts I have read them together, crossing the boundaries that divide the objects of study and the labor of African Studies, African Diaspora Studies, and Postcolonial Studies.⁴

* * *

I begin my closing section with two interconnected descriptions of Cape Town’s District Six above because this a dissertation is about the shifting registers a place can have and troubling our cartography(ies) of black modernity(ies). Though within the Cape region and the city of Cape Town, the District cannot be reduced to one of their constitutive parts. It is a metonym for what

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³ In Cape Town Williams helped Dr. Abdullah Abdurahman, from a Cape Malay family, win the District in 1904.

⁴ This is a necessary exercise for reading this ‘period’ of black modernity. It also provides a timely point of comparison today as ‘new diasporas’ of Africa in the “New World” reveal the crisis of our definition of “African Diaspora.” (What is Barack Obama? And what does he signify in terms of race in America and internationally? Where do we locate the Ethiopian-born, American-raised and resident, Dinaw Mengestu and his novel, *Children Of the Revolution*? How and who reads a film like, *Restless City*, about African immigrants in Harlem and other historically “African American” vectors of New York city? )
the region, the city, and the British Empire could have mean for black people. The District haunts
the maps of the city that Williams, Dean, Peregrino, Ncwana, and Kadalie offer and inhabit. They
worked in it. Tried to reconfigure the city from it. Hoped to be black and modern through it.

I speak of the District in the present tense because the museum is a community
organization committed to never letting the city forget. There is a map of the neighborhood that
covers the main floor of the museum. Former residents’ names are written at their old District
addresses. Families submitted land claims and plan to resettle there. In this way the District lives
and breathes in the present. Though renamed Zonnebloem and rezoned white, the physical,
geographic cavity left after removal was never filled.

In his 1986 novel, ‘Buckingham Palace,’ District Six, Richard Rive’s first person narrator
returns to the District from his rental in Grassy Park. It is not an easy trip make from the Cape
Flats. Apartheid infrastructure widen the breach between these two points in the city. He reaches
after the bulldozers. Everything from the corner of Tennant and Caledon Streets right up to St.
Marks’s Church, he explains, had been flattened. “They had taken our past away and left the
rubble,” he explains, .” . . demolished our spirits and left broken bricks. They had destroyed our
community and left dust and memories. And they had done all this for their own selfish and
arrogant reasons . . . to regulate our present in order to control our future” (Rive 128). Yet the
rubble left in the bulldozers’ wake never yielded to the apartheid city’s attempt to make it
Zonnebloem. If “regulate[d],” it eluded to yield “to [the state’s] control [of possible] future[s].” The
cavity left is a pregnant absence that reverberates through our present and future. Fitful and
incomplete, yet fixed and indelible.
I begin with my own humble and imperfect descriptions of the District because in some ways *Anxious Records* is about the possibilities of exchange and transfer that were realized and thwarted in this Cape Town neighborhood and in the spaces it represents. Like the archive this dissertation unearths, the District represents a possible future to which we cannot return. Its removal not only cast the “black spot” out, it parsed out District Six-ers, rupturing and re-constituting their daily politics of identities. Darker people went to one neighborhood, lighter people to another. Muslims went to one neighborhood, Christians to another. Friendships were severed, and presumably families too. In ‘*Buckingham Palace,*’ District Six, Mr. Knight, nicknamed Last Knight because of his dark complexion, must take his family to the Cape Flats, while the Council approves the Muslim family the Leliks’ move to the Malay Quarter (or the Bo Kaap) (Rive 166). Though, the promised marriage of Moena Lelik and Pretty-Boy is a kind of resistance to the invasion of intimacy, domesticity, and neighborliness that this portends (166).

I do not mean to romanticize the District, but to suspend before us the possibilities for friendship (both global and local) and intimacy that the multiple removals from it and of it stunted. I am thinking of not only the 1982 leveling but also the 1902 removals of “natives” (black Africans today) to Ndabeni. This then is as much a story of the parochializing of South Africa from the rest of the black world, or at least concerted attempts to do so, as of the balkanization of black South Africans (including coloureds and Indians), indeed all South Africans, and the continued difficulty of intimacy in South Africa cities.

Scholars of the Caribbean, the diaspora, and Cape Town have revealed the small, but critical presence of descendants of black West Indians and Americans who moved to South Africa between emancipation in the British Empire in 1834 (and the introduction of the qualified non-
racial franchise in 1853) and the enforcement of the immigration regulation act of 1913 in the late 1920s and the 1930s, which allowed the state to deem some prohibited immigrants. Rive has patrilineal links to these. Born on the first of March, 1930, Richard Moore Rive was the son of the widowed Nancy Rive and a black American sailor, Richardson Moore. Shaun Viljoen has written an extensive Ph.D. Dissertation on Rive. In it, he illustrates the importance of Rive’s black American ancestry seemed to play in Rive’s construction of himself as a writer. In his autobiography, Writing Black, Viljoen says, Rive hints at his father’s African American identity. Almost passive, in conveying this information, Rive uses an African American lady friend of his mother to illuminate this mystery around his ancestry. “[T]hey can’t beat an American boy, can they?” she is remembered to have said. According to Viljoen, Rive wrote of his father as a black American in his correspondence with Langston Hughes (Viljoen, “Richard Rive”). Hughes was one of Rive’s literary forefathers, and I think, the truth of his own black American father, may have provided for Rive an even stronger link to Hughes.

But the almost passive voicing of a diasporic heritage is much more pronounced in ‘Buckingham Palace.’ One hundred and ninety-eight pages, ‘Buckingham Palace’: District Six is a relatively thin book. It is divided into three sections: Part one, “Morning 1955;” Part two, “Afternoon 1960” and; Part three, “Night 1970.” The last two sections each span a decade. The first offers a view of the District before the threat of widespread removal emerged. In the second, though we begin to hear murmurs and rumblings of the state’s encroachment, it continues in the same vein as the first, with section on the various characters of the Palace. By the third section, in the figure of Inspector Engelbrecht, we begin to see the community crack and unite against the state’s tireless efforts to force them out. We are given what could be read as the narrator’s
autobiography in the first pages of each section and in italics. “I remember,” reads the first line of the novel, before the narrator describes all those he remembers “who used to live in District Six”: his family, Mary and the Girls, Zoot and The Boys, The Jungles, “Last-Knight the barber, his wife and three daughters” (Rive 1 – 2). They were all the residents of ‘Buckingham Palace,’ as their row of cottages were named.

Although the narrator seems much closer to Rive than the poet-gangster, Zoot. Yet Zoot, the last District Six resident to speak in the novel, becomes its central protagonist. The hope for restoring the District as well as changing the system that laid waste to their community is uttered by him. He says to Pretty-Boy, “I promise you that our children and the children of those who are doing this to us, will join together and they will see that this will never happen again” (198). One of Zoot’s boys, who had taken up residence with him at the Winsor Park cottage in Buckingham Palace, Pretty-Boy leaves immediately thereafter for the Bo Kaap. The other boys head off to the station. The Xhosa watchman, greets Zoot in Xhosa, and leaves Zoot in the rubble, the lone figure. It is Zoot who unites them and will bring together their children to see that this never happens again. But who and what is Zoot?

When we first meet him in the novel, we are told that “Zoot September “started life as Milton September.” Milton was the name his aunt, a teacher, gave him. His brothers were Keats and Byron. In him is combined “longing for certain forms of education but loathing for educational institutions” (16). Milton spends his youth in between formal school and reform school. At the reformatory he realizes his “literary ability” and we are told, “prove[s] the power of the pen,” writing scathing attacks of the guards and superintendent in verse (15, 16). It is only after
a stint in the Roeland Street jail, however, that he becomes Zoot. Not only a bouncer for Mary and the Girls at the Casbah and a poet, Zoot is also a tap dancer.

He enters a talent contest at the Star Bioscope, wearing a Zoot suit, “the latest fashion” of the time. “He looked smart,” the narrator says, “in a check suit with padded shoulders, narrow waist, knee-length coat and trousers tapering at the ankles. He wore huge black-and-white Jarmans with dancing-studs knocked into the toes and heels. Mary and The Girls took the evening off to root for him as he jived his way to victory. The compère referred to him glowingly as Zoot, the Jive King of District Six, and the name stuck. The Miltonic era was over” (emphasis added; 17). Jive and the Zoot suit hint at the black American jazz tradition and the other side of the Harlem Renaissance, the youthful, dandy, gangster, rhymer, jester, the Zoot suit wearer. The transition here is from Milton and an English literary styling, or tradition, toward the loud, jazz, jive, trickster, poet of the Harlem Renaissance. The end of his Miltonic era seems to yield the flowering of Zoot as the District’s poet, who uses poetry and his guardian angel to defeat his foes and give voice to what he perceives to be unjust.

According to Stuart Cosgrove, “[t]he zoot-suit was a refusal: a subcultural gesture that refused to concede to the manners of subservience. By the late 1930s, the term ‘zoot’ was in common circulation within urban jazz culture. Zoot meant something worn or performed in an extravagant style, and since many young blacks wore suits with outrageously padded shoulders and trousers that were fiercely tapered at the ankles, the term zoot-suit passed into every day usage. . . the zoot-suit occupies an almost mythical place within the history of jazz music” (Cosgrove 78). By becoming Zoot, Milton September, lays claim to an African American style of self-fashioning that
grants him a more permanent existence in the Palace. Only after becoming Zoot does he go to the
landlord of the Palace, Katzen, and state his intention to move into number 203, the cottage next
to Mary and the Girls.

Toward the end of the novel Zoot cries that “[w]e must join up with others who are already
fighting, with those who are losing their houses and are afraid of also losing their manhood. We
must join with the other so-called untermenschen. Only that way can we win. We lost because we
tried to fight this thing alone. It's not a Buckingham Palace thing. Not only our houses are being
demolished, it is not District Six that is being thrown down, but the whole country. I know what I
will do. I know with whom I will work” (Rive 187 - 8). Seemingly without mother or father, Zoot
seems at the end of the novel to be unplaceable. He goes to neither the Bo Kaap nor the Cape
Flats. Instead he walks off down Caledon Street. Having taken over the novel, his destination is the
only one that we do not know at its end.

I want to suggest that this is because Zoot is meant to be a diasporan figure. He is
authentically local and African, yet unplaceable. He does not fit neatly into the categories of the
race and ethnicity conscious state. Ostensibly, he can be in Cape Town, without being tied to one
point on the map (be it Bo Kaap, the Cape Flats, or District Six). Zoot becomes a diasporan
ancestor, calling for their children to remember them, what happened to the District, and their
community. He represents their “minor diaspora” as it is called in the last section. But he also
represents the New World presence in apartheid South Africa as a challenge the repressive state
and strict racial and ethnic categorization. Not only is Zoot denied biographical and biological
specificity in the novel, unlike the other characters, he is also granted an ambiguity around his
‘mother tongue.’ Presumably when the nightwatchman salutes Zoot in Xhosa, he can respond.
Yet Zoot, like much of the novel’s District Six, is an amalgam of English literary traditions too. Most of the names assigned in the novel—Milton, Byron, Keats, Buckingham Palace, and Winsor Park—all conjure up Englishness. Characters who people the novel are named after English bards. The official residences of the British Crown take root at their corner of the District. Their section of the neighborhood is named Buckingham Palace. Zoot means for number 203 to be named Windsor Castle. It becomes Winsor Park when Oubaas paints it. They make themselves and their homes simulcras of the British Empire. Zoot leaves King George and his queen “patriotically” on the wall when he robs Katzen’s shop (90).

The portrait appears throughout the novel. It serves as a sign of an alternative government. Confronted by the persistent Inspector Engelbrecht, Amaai Lelik asks “whose government?” (142), Engelbrecht represents. The inspector has been given the job of registering all the people in Buckingham Palace and having them appear before the municipal office for their racial identity to be noted. Those who are not white will be evicted. Amaai’s question is not about Engelbrecht’s allegiance as much as it denies the states dominion over the residents of Buckingham Palace. The next scene of the novel begins with a description of the portrait of King George and his queen.

If Zoot is of the diaspora, he and the other residents of Buckingham Palace put themselves under the aegis of the British Empire. Often believed to have been blinded to the complexities of the local by his ardent commitment to nonracialism, I want to claim Rive and ‘Buckingham Palace,’ District Six as inheritors of the black Victorian tradition. Rive was captured in a photograph backstage at the performance of the musical version of ‘Buckingham Palace,’ District Six. In it, he wears a suit, shirt, tie, and “the coon straw hat with the red band.” The hat had been used for Zoot. The coon hat, Shaun Viljoen explains “is . . . also Rive’s Oxford boater. The latter emblem
he sanctified and celebrated, the former he decried” (Viljoen, “Non-racialism” 49). In Viljoen’s lexicon of racial identity, the coon hat is an “emblem” of an essentialized black South African, even coloured, identity; the Oxford boater a nonracial one. If Rive reveled in the latter and “decried” the former, nevertheless he equates them. Further, unmooring the two items from the local South African context, if only a little, they come to emblematize not a fixed blackness and its nonracial other. Rather the coon hat represents a transgressive, elusive, chameleonic black subjectivity that is formed, re-formed, and constitutive of a modern universalism that harkens back to what imperial liberalism could have been. Rather than opposites they are inversions of each other that form a double-bind that Rive does not wish to escape or release Milton/Zoot September. Like his autobiography is creates a black subject only to eschew it, fragment it, and evade blackness altogether (Lewis qtd. in Viljoen 49).

But evasion is not erasure. Milton/Zoot September is an archive that performs blackness, modernity, the in-between time that is both of the diaspora and the continent, yet of neither. It voices a racial identity that emerges not out of an essence but the experience of oppression. Thus Zoot’s final rallying cry in the novel is for the untermenschen, the word Katzen used when he told the residents of Buckingham Palace that he would not comply with the law and give their names. He had escaped the Holocaust, he knew what lists meant. Although his inability to make his noncompliance continue even in his death could be read as a betrayal. I want to suggest that it demonstrates Rive’s sense of race as constructed and changeable. Black, untermenschen, Zoot, Katzen, each diasporic, and meaning the same at a particular time and in a particular place. Race is transformed in his plaintive cry for collaboration at the novel’s end. Rather than only a call for
solidarity and non-racialism in South Africa, I want to read that call to see oneself as “untermenschen” as a reworking of the black Victorian legacy.

Black Victorianism was meant to harness racial difference to articulate individual rights to political equality. In *Anxious Records*, I examine how the South African question animated black Victorianism at the end of the nineteenth-century and the first half of the twentieth-century. South Africa was its theatre. At the Cape it lost its innocence, mourned itself, and recovered itself as the apartheid South Africa came to be. Black Victorianism is not only a discourse from which black modernity could be imagined and colonial administrative manipulation of “the tribal” countered. As it becomes an impossible course, it also becomes an affective disposition that enables resistance. It is nostalgia for what has become impossible. It is a mourning that critiques the necessary way forward. Born out of a belief in the promise of British imperial liberalism, like Buckingham Palace and Milton/Zoot it becomes a simulacrum that utters the myth of that which it resembles and imitates, open to forming something new, but remaining unfinished and tentative.

I have argued that we examine black Victorianism for four reasons. First, it pushes us to attend to empire as not always that which colonized peoples loathed or out of which they always wanted out. As such I have read the turn toward nation-state as the option as a loss of a possible future. Postcolonial nationalisms are also imperial longings. Second, black Victorianism, because of its imperial association forces us think globally and turn southward. It makes us ask: what was happening in colonial cities? Did they look markedly different from the metropoles and how did modernities emerge among these various sites? Third, I believe it can help those of us in the fields that constitute African Diaspora Studies and African Studies look at each other and our objects of study differently. It pushes us to new ways of decolonizing our knowledges. As the African diaspora
changes, it may help us redefine what we do, who we study, what we teach, and what we learn. As a literary comparativist, the implications I enumerate have to do with the languages we may need to incorporate. Finally, and perhaps inadequately, I have tried to understand the “exception” of South Africa not only in terms of the British Empire, its regional context, and the rest of the continent, but also critically in terms of the diaspora.

I do so not to deny the importance of the local, but to give way at times to the global, and at other times to the “translocal” (Boyce Davies 4; 167). While the history of South Africa is often narrativized in terms of migration and “treks.” Those over water are largely assumed to have been made exclusively by white settlers, Indian Ocean labor conscripts and slaves, and Indian merchants. Exchange with the African diaspora is often reduced to the circulation of music (mostly jazz), one or two preachers, a few black South African students who studied abroad, and some black South African exiles of the second half of the twentieth-century who found home in the diaspora. Without minimizing the importance of these, I have tried to show a deliberate set of migrations and dialogues at which South Africa, particularly Cape Town, was at the center. Too often Cape Town is white-washed. Certainly, it is important to the constitution of white settler ideologies and British imperialism. But refusing its significance to black attempts to inhabit the continent and to free it, repeats the violence inherent in those histories that claim the land was empty. If there were indigenous people on the land when Europeans arrived, there were also multiple kinds of people who continued to arrive and try to make a life in it. That some of them looked like those who had been there first, or before them, did not always make settling easy.

As I show in Chapters 1 and 2, along with state and white settler suspicion some black settlers were not always able to integrate. While this was sometimes a function of different notions
of who was in fact “Negro,” “black,” “coloured,” or native, language was often a breach that was difficult to cover. Certainly, Williams, Dean, and Peregrino show this. At the same time, the multitude of languages could give way to the kind of constituency-building evident in Peregrino’s trilingual series, “Black, Mulatto, Quadroon, Octoroon.” Words could become unnecessary and futile in the face of movement, the body, and music as Dean shows in The Pedro Gorino/Umbala.

If the state-enforced ban on black “prohibited immigrants” shut down the routes of circulation enabled by empire, chapters 3 and 4 show the ways in which Cape Town continued to be a link between the diaspora and the continent, if only in spirit. Attentive to the ICU these two chapters show how the ICU begins at Cape Town with a motley crew of local southern Africans and black people from elsewhere. In some ways it seems to falter as it leaves this black cosmopolitanism for race-blindness. If Kadalie’s autobiography offers a conservative repurposing of their failure into a new hope for the future, it uses the older networks of the empire and returns to the race consciousness of black Victorianism. While he does not do so from Cape Town, he does write from the Cape.

Perhaps too late I have tried to attend to the other aspect of this trajectory of black Victorianism: the gender question. Evident from the first page to the last, black women, were vital to the discourse. In the case of Pauline Hopkins, they also enabled the dissemination of these texts. I would have liked to give more attention not only to Hopkins’ role, but also the impact on her own writing, namely her last novel, Of One Blood, or the Hidden Self. Hazel V. Carby notes that the novel appeared alongside A. Kirkland Soga’s essays on “Ethiopians in the Twentieth-Century,” but more attention needs to be paid to the relationship between the two writers and the South African question may have influenced arguably Hopkins most important novel.
Fanny Jackson-Coppin also deserves more consideration than I have granted her here. It is not only that hers is one of a small number of black women’s travel writing, though that is significant; nor because the archive of these kinds of travel to South Africa and from South Africa to the diaspora are is scant, though it is certainly important for this reason too. One of the most gripping scenes in her memoirs speaks to the different nature of the kinds of dialogues that helped in the private sphere the home, the kitchen, and routine domesticity that was almost exclusively the domain of women at that time. Having fated while giving a speech in modern day Eastern Cape, Jackson-Coppin is taken out by “the loving hands of the native women.” They are not docile, machines for reproducing the race here; they are possible partners, fellow race women. Yet in this female-only space language becomes a mark of the uncanny. “The small child of one of the native women was much disturbed when the mother left it in the care of others while she waited on me,” Jackson-Coppin writes. She continues, “[t]he little one was not yet old enough to take in the situation, and so, openly revolted against such neglect, caused by a stranger who had been speaking an unknown tongue” (emphasis added; 127). In the mostly male narratives that I read in Anxious Records language is not an impediment of filiality or intimacy. It may hinder political action or collaboration, but we never see how it plays out in “the homeplace” (hooks 41 – 49.

Other women like Annie V. Kinloch, to whom Henry Sylvester Williams attributes his birth as a Pan-Africanist evaporate outside of Williams’ texts. If these race men’s texts are anxious to record their version of events and their discursive practice(s), and anxious about erasure, race women are absent from such concerns. Further, any careful study of black Victorianism in the future must attend to the importance of the family as a modern institution. This should include nuclear and extended families, as well as those formed through monogamous and polygamous
relationships as the ideal family formation was hotly contested by race men and women across the globe. In chapters 2 and 4 we see the special significance the black/African family takes on in both Francis Z. S. Peregrino’s race paper and Clements Kadalie’s autobiography. Often it came to mediate between the individual and his race. They were essential to any race building project.


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