From One Colonial Situation to Another: Politics, Universalism and the Crisis of the African Intellectual

by

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Abstract

This essay explores circum-Atlantic emigrationism and its relationship to West Africa during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The intellectual politics of this Atlantic traffic serve as a source for engaging Atlantic colonial situations that were created by powers in Europe, North America, the Caribbean, and West Africa, particularly the nuances associated with African Atlantic emigration to Africa and Black intellectuals' negotiations of overlapping Atlantic colonial situations. This project contributes to African and African American studies, and it is particularly concerned with deepening understanding of the African Atlantic struggle against racism and, in regards to Liberia, enhancing appreciation of what the historian J.F.A. Ajayi referred to as "the internal development of African communities and of inter-group relations in African history."

Colonialism tried to control the memory of the colonized ... Put another way, the colonizing presence sought to induce historical amnesia on the colonized by mutilating the memory of the colonized; and where that failed, it dismembered it, and then tried to re-member it to the colonizer's memory—to his way of defining the world, including his take on the nature of the relations between colonizer and colonized .... This relation was primarily economic. The colonized as worker, as peasant, produces for another. His land and his labor benefit another. This arrangement was, of course, effected through power, political power, but it was also accomplished through cultural subjugation—for instance, through control of the education system. The ultimate goal was to establish psychic dominance on the part of the colonizer and psychic subservience on the part of the colonized …. But cultural subjugation is more dangerous, because it is more subtle and its effects longer lasting.

– Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o[1]

As the oldest independent Republic in Africa with long historical ties to the United States of America, which was instrumental in the founding of Liberia, it is the sincere desire of the Government of Liberia to engage and work closely with the United States Government and US Congress in addressing issues of common concern.

– William V.S. Bull, Liberian Ambassador to the Unites States of America[2]

If settlers enslaved Nigerians, Ghanaians, Dahomeans, and Congolese in the 18th Century; if those black imperialists felt and still think they are more American than African, then the indigenous majority – like other African countries – should declare political and economic liberty from the clutches of Americo-Liberianism at once … The political idiom of the 21st Century is centered on technological proactivity, not dogged political subjugation and exploitation of one group by the other. No man in Liberia should ever be reduced to an indentured servant in the next millennium.

– Bodioh Siapoe, Chair and Cofounder of the Coalition of Progressive Liberians in the Americas[3]

Introduction: The Other Colonialism

In the opening years of the twenty-first century and upon perusal of the official websites[4] of the Embassy of the Republic of Liberia (Washington, District of Columbia) and the Coalition of Progressive Liberians in the Americas (COPLA), one quickly noticed differing discourses on America. COPLA Chair and Cofounder Bodioh Siapoe's vehement denunciation of then President Charles Taylor's (President, August 2, 1997 – August 11, 2003) Americo-centric, strong-arm rule of Liberia was in stark contrast to Ambassador William V.S. Bull's "open letter" in opposition to pressure from the United States House Subcommittee on Africa regarding charges of Liberian state trafficking of "blood diamonds." Siapoe's contention was that there was a despicable continuity between President Taylor's rule and Liberia's historical domination by "alien African[s]." However, according to Siapoe,

> [T]he fateful coup of April 12, 1980 … gave Liberia her first African Liberian president: Samuel Kanyon Doe. After 133 years of True Whig Party (TWP) subjugation, Doe nearly delivered freedom to his people.[5]

It should be noted that Siapoe's suggestion that the 1980 military coup and President Samuel Doe's subsequent rule that "nearly delivered freedom to his people" was also a rule in which "he slaughtered 13 former TWP government functionaries in South Beach, Monrovia" – an occurrence that, to Siapoe, fueled future Americo-Liberian "revenge" tactics led by President Charles Taylor.[6] Siapoe's opinion somewhat captures the observations of Professor Amos Sawyer, former head of the provisional government (1990–1994) following Doe's assassination in 1990. Sawyer maintains that not only did Doe's ascension signal "a close to more than a century and a half of settler hegemonic control in the region known as Liberia," but it "proved … to be essentially a reconstitution of autocracy with a heavier reliance on the threat and use of military force."[7] Nevertheless, this is a phenomenon that COPLA hailed. But this aberration in Liberia's history proved short-lived – a significant aberration indeed, to Siapoe, it would seem, for he argued that "[c]oastal natives would have thrown the Americos into the sea, but American, British and other alien forces prevented that" from happening. According to him, President Taylor – with the assistance of "Americos" and "their former … [American] Slave masters," as well as "ethnic dunces, clearly unaware of black imperialism in their backyard" – played a critical role in the reestablishment of an "Americo-Liberian aristocracy."[8]

Ambassador Bull's appeal to the Subcommittee to "help … identify and establish goals which the international community could pursue under the United States leadership [in the] building of democratic institutions and in the promotion of peace, stability and economic development in West Africa and elsewhere on the continent" was precisely what COPLA was purportedly engaged in struggle against – the cohort of Liberians who acted in their own American colonial interests, to the peril of colonized African-Liberians. Indeed, some Liberians contended that it was not until the 1980 military coup that resulted in an African-Liberian's victory that Liberia's indigenous African population experienced any semblance of decolonization. Of course, according to Ambassador Bull, Liberia is Africa's "oldest independent Republic." But to Siapoe and COPLA, an important question remained:

> Are they Africans or Americans? If they accept their Africanness, then "Americos" should act like Africans; but if they cherish their dark history as slaves in North America, then they should be encouraged to pack up and return home. Meanwhile, African-Liberians should learn how to be themselves. Being what they are not would further exacerbate and prolong the conflict.[9]

The ideological conflicts between descendants of both Americo-Liberians and indigenous groups were fueled by the specter of violence in Liberia during the decades preceding and following the turn of the twenty-first century.[10] Liberia's recent history is often described as a melancholy one that was marred by civil war and its chaotic effects. With large numbers of migrants in search of economic opportunity and political exiles leaving Liberia – especially with significant numbers traveling to the United States – these circum-Atlantic dynamics remain important phenomena.

Due to the Taylor government's restriction of freedom of speech, organizations such as the one led by Siapoe, as well as academic scholars, created alternative information sites to disseminate knowledge – practices and information that escaped the censorship of the Liberian state.[11] Contemporary relationships between Americo-Liberians, African-Liberians, African Americans, and other African people in the United States and in the Atlantic world are interlaced in a conundrum whose origins can be traced back to the nineteenth-century formation of the Liberian colony (est. 1822) and the Liberia state (est. 1847).[12]

Even after this recent political crisis and ensuing human carnage in Liberia, discourses on coloniality continue to emerge from conflicts between factions vying for power in a country reeling from the effects of global capitalism and underdevelopment.[13] These discourses are prefaced on contemporary assumptions about nineteenth-century Liberia, which was as one of the two countries that remained relatively independent of Western European partition[14] and formal colonization of the continent following the Berlin Conference (1884–1885). Liberia was a source of pride for many African Americans and other Atlantic and indigenous figures in West Africa. But the "repatriation" of African Atlantic figures to West Africa also caused heated debates in North America, and it was at the root of African American Christian settler versus indigenous African conflicts since the establishment of the Liberian colony by the American Society for Colonizing the Free People of Color (American Colonization Society) and thereafter. Liberia's history remains highly contested within contemporary imaginaries on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, as many Liberians, in efforts to escape the immediate dangers of the recent civil conflict and violence, relocated to the United States. From Americo-Liberians' insistence that they, too, are Liberians to the descendants of indigenous groups' condemnation of Americo-Liberian modes of colonization, popular concerns about Liberia continue to be very much informed by imaginings of the past.

The historical certainties, inaccuracies, and erasures entailed in the rhetorical strategies of descendants of both Americo-Liberians and the indigenous populations clearly attest to the necessity of re-envisioning nineteenth-century Liberian politics, universalism, and the crisis of the African intellectual. According to Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, "There is no region, no culture, no nation today that has not been affected by colonialism and its aftermath. Indeed, modernity can be considered a product of colonialism"[15] Of course, a significant number of historians have already chronicled varying aspects of this period in Atlantic history, usually focusing on the North American episode and then on the subsequent adjustments to West Africa by formerly enslaved African Americans in Liberia; moreover, analyses of emigrationism, African nationalism, and Pan Africanism have also figured largely within the most authoritative studies. The historians Yekutiel Gershoni and Monday B. Akpan argued that Americo-Liberians were essentially colonizers or imperialists, respectively.[16] Yet, a void within the widely acknowledged ambivalence of transplanted African Americans and their negotiations of African realities, remains — namely over the subject of American baggage. Assessments of specific aspects of American acculturation, such as religion (Protestantism) and language (English), considered Americanization as a key issue that shaped African American emigrants' assumptions and expectations.

This methodological approach was not wholly inaccurate (e.g., analyses of religion and language), especially in regards to Southern, formerly enslaved emigrants.[17] Considerations of Black nationalistic intellectuals who supported Liberia – usually, but not always, characterized as quasi-free-born Northerners – reflect this trend.[18] Yet, explanations of American acculturation that ultimately focus on religion and language do not fully explain the cultural complexities associated with Black intellectuals in nineteenth-century Liberia whose circum-Atlantic shifts across colonial situations were reflected in their nationalistic discourses.

This essay explores circum-Atlantic emigrationism and its relationship to West Africa during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The intellectual politics of this Atlantic traffic serve as a source for engaging Atlantic colonial situations that were created by powers in Europe, North America, the Caribbean, and West Africa, particularly the nuances associated with African Atlantic emigration to Africa and Black intellectuals' negotiations of overlapping Atlantic colonial situations. This project contributes to African and African American studies, and it is particularly concerned with deepening understanding of the African Atlantic struggle against racism and, in regards to Liberia, enhancing appreciation of what the historian J.F.A. Ajayi referred to as "the internal development of African communities and of inter-group relations in African history."[19]

Transnational approaches to the study of persons of African descent throughout the African diaspora have a long history, especially within African American historiography. Robin D. G. Kelley, in his discussion of historians and international approaches to Black history, persuasively argued that "black historians, many of whom operated relatively independent of the mainstream historical profession, had already developed an international or transnational approach to history by the early part of the twentieth century."[20] As part of a larger, popular trend of "globalization," other scholars have taken heed to the interpretative benefits of looking past national boundaries within intellectual analyses. Studies of the "Black Atlantic" have been the recent vogue within varying scholarly inquiries since Paul Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, in which he makes exceptional contributions to combating provincial, nationalistic approaches to the study of Black people in the Western and Northern Atlantic region of the African diaspora, as well as disrupting narrow definitions of modernity and history. According to Gilroy, "The history of the black Atlantic yields a course of lessons as to the instability and mutability of identities which are always unfinished, always being remade."[21] Of course, it is generally acknowledged that Gilroy's focus did not concentrate on Africa within this "Black Atlantic grid."[22]

The historian Philip S. Zachernuk augments this void within the Black Atlantic model that is oft ignored by those working within the Atlantic framework, where, occasionally implicit, Africa is simply the background for an external diasporic show. In the midst of an increasingly imposing new imperial order, colonial domination, and nationalistic politics, Zachernuk argued, "African thinkers responded not only with their own resources but also with the resources of the modern Atlantic world."[23]

This essay specifically addresses two fundamental problems: colonialism and its relationship to African Atlantic emigrationism. What were the implications of shifting from a terrain of overwhelming domination to one of contextually unprecedented possibility? Two of the most prominent nineteenth-century Black nationalistic theorists and African Atlantic figures, Alexander Crummell (1819–1898) and Edward Wilmot Blyden (1832–1912)[24], for example, navigated an ideological world in which republican and Victorian universalistic claims were in contradistinction to Anglo-hegemony and oppression. Upon emigrating to the Republic of Liberia during the early 1850s – a setting in which they were more than ever self-avowedly, self-determining men – Crummell and Blyden viewed their tasks as twofold: to facilitate the "return" of all of Africa's progeny and to civilize the "nation." This altered spatial terrain entailed a shift of the roles of these intellectuals to ones of potential power. With Liberia's existing indigenous communities already being affected by Americo-Liberian state power, Crummell and Blyden viewed the State as the only earthly sovereignty. This was also a time when initially British and later Western European theoretical contributions to the colonial archive about the missionizing and civilizing benefits of colonization and colonialism were prevalent. Crummell and Blyden viewed colonization as a civilizing process that entailed a higher purpose than imperial exploitation of colonized natural and human resources for profit. Crummell, for example, in an address delivered at an 1870 event in observance of Liberia's Independence Day (July 26),[25] proclaimed:

> As a people we were "ferried over," in a month, or little more, from a state of degradation to a position of independence and superiority. In a little more than a monthly change of moon, we were metamorphosed from the position of underlings to one of mastery; with a vast population of degraded subjects around us.[26]

Earlier in 1862, Blyden combated anti-emigrationist sentiment in the United States and charges of Americo-Liberian xenophobia by pointing out that "the case of the Americo-Liberians and the aborigines is quite different."

> We are all descendants of Africa. In Liberia there may be found persons of almost every tribe in West-Africa, from Senegal to Congo. And not only do we and the natives belong to the same race, but we are also of the same family … The policy of Liberia is to diffuse among them as rapidly as possible the principles of Christianity and civilization, to prepare them to take an active part in the duties of the nationality which we are endeavoring to erect. Whence, then, comes the slander which represents Liberians as "maintaining a distance from the aborigines—a constant and uniform separation"?[27]

Assessments of these African Atlantic figures usually point out the unmistakable religious, hierarchical conceptions of time, space, and race, but Crummell's and Blyden's discourses on settler and indigenous relations were both discourses on coloniality. They addressed the reality and the myth of nineteenth-century Liberia. Liberia was and remained an interesting case of an Atlantic colonial situation – only with Black agents operating as colonizers in Africa. This position, then, undoubtedly addresses postcolonial Liberia. In this analysis of Black nationalistic intellectuals and their relationships to Liberia, it is not my intention to conflate "imperialist expansion with colonial dependence," project a "moral construct," or merely attract "interest," as J. Jorge Klor de Alva warned against.[28] Rather, the aim of this essay centers on the centrality of location in history, its relationship to "self-fashioning"[29] among circum-Atlantic figures, and the politics of intellectual productivity.

Establishing a Theoretical Framework: Deconstructing American Baggage

Nineteenth-century Black nationalism and Pan Africanism, two intertwined projects, are important templates for assessing circum-Atlantic intellectual discourses. The varying manifestations of these discourses were largely in response to colonial situations across the Atlantic world, from South Carolina to Jamaica to Nigeria – from David Walker to maroons to the colonial educated elite. These colonial situations, of course, were contextually specific, but they were also interconnected systems of governance within the Atlantic world, a region that has been a site of constant transformations of political economies and identities within both the metropolitan centers of the Western world and the colonial peripheries of the Americas and Africa since the commencement of the Western European "age of exploration" at the end of the fifteenth-century. Most considerations of these interwoven specific locations point out the systems of domination devised by Britain, France, Spain and other Western powers.[30]

Within the Atlantic world, the nineteenth-century development of varying colonialisms took place not only within, most notably, the British and French spheres, but also within the United States and Liberia.[31] The United States, technically a postcolonial[32] state that rapidly developed into an empire, was also a sphere in which a majority of persons of African descent remained legally enslaved after the American Revolution – they remained internally colonized subjects. The failures of national Reconstruction after the Civil War and the ensuing developments in industrial capitalism during the second-half of the nineteenth century were specific indicators of the subjugated positions of African Americans during this period, an era that the historian Rayford Logan deemed "the nadir" (or the lowest point) in African American history.[33] Other scholars argued that Black people were the victims of internal colonialism, and a powerful argument was forwarded in Harold Cruse's reference to "The American Negro: A Subject of Domestic Colonialism," in an essay titled "Revolutionary Nationalism and the Afro-American" that was first published in *Studies on the Left* (Volume 2, Number 3, 1962) and was republished in his collection of essays, *Rebellion or Revolution*? (1968):

> From the very beginning, the American Negro has existed as a colonial being. His enslavement coincided with the colonial expansion of European powers and was nothing more or less than a condition of domestic colonialism. Instead of the United States establishing a colonial empire in Africa, it brought the colonial system home and installed it in the Southern states. When the Civil War broke up the slave system and the Negro was emancipated, he gained only partial freedom. Emancipation elevated him only to the position of a semi-dependent man, not to that of an equal or independent being.[34]

Scholars such as Jürgen Osterhammel (*Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview*, 1997 English translation; 1995 German edition) would, perhaps, insist that suggestions of American domestic colonialism were plagued by the "value judgments" of "cultural critics and political polemicists." Yet, his assertion that "colonialism is not just any relationship between masters and servants, but one in which an entire society is robbed of its historical line of development, externally manipulated and transformed according to the needs and interests of colonial rulers," invites us to reconsider the functionalism of the classical premises that analyses of colonial situations have been prefaced upon. In the case of Osterhammel, Cuba, a Spanish colony until 1898, was noted as a "semi-sovereign region of exploitation of the United States, a classic case of 'informal empire'." It is particularly interesting that he did not view African Americans as colonized "little brothers" of an imperial order.[35] E. Franklin Frazier's observation that African Americans were "shut out from all serious participation in American [civic] life," as well as Cruse's insistence that "[t]he only factor which differentiates the Negro's status from that of a pure colonial status is that his position is maintained in a 'home' country," illustrated the past voices that have not been constrained within the metropole-periphery binary or focus on "actual colonialism."[36] The Tunisian Jewish writer and essayist Albert Memmi's dedication of the American edition of his classic text titled *The Colonized and the Colonizer* (1967 English translation; 1957 French edition) to the "American Negro, also colonized," captured the fundamental essence of arguments that focus on domestic colonialism in the United States: "The fact is that the colonized does not govern" – they are absolutely administered.[37]

These respective arguments about domestic colonialism in the United States contended that the varying (i.e., structural, ideological, etc.) constraints on African Americans' participation in the American political arena – and the impact of "racial capitalism"[38] – accounted for the colonial situation of African Americans. The philosopher Valentin Y. Mudimbe's two works on the "invention" and the "idea" of "Africa"[39] prompted discussions of colonial situations in the African Atlantic world, and in an insightful engagement with Mudimbe's findings, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o argues that

> V.Y. Mudimbe describes the idea of Africa as a product of the West's system of self-representation, which included creation of an otherness conceived and conveyed through conflicting systems of knowledge. But I prefer to think of the idea of Africa—or, more appropriately, the "African idea," as African self-representation. *To distinguish it from the Mudimbeist formula according to which Europe is finding itself through its invention of Africa, I see the African idea as that which was forged in the diaspora and traveled back to the continent* .... In the diaspora, Africans could see the whole continent as the home they were forced to leave no matter how they viewed their exile—as mercy in the case of Phyllis Wheatley, or as tragic loss in the case of Equiano and those who sang of feeling like motherless children a long way from home. The African idea in the diaspora finds its most dramatic self-realization in the independence of Haiti in the eighteenth century.[40]

The dominant ideology of the United States certainly did not declare nineteenth-century African Americans to be colonial subjects. To be sure, as Mudimbe and the historian Michel Foucault have both argued, analyses of what is actually said can never result in the (complete) history of what is not said (i.e., "the history of silence"). However, it is possible, "at least theoretically," to conceive of a map of its (silence) locations.[41] Hence, if one considers the governmental attitude to the "Negro problem" during this era – and in many instances one need only consider what the federal government (and by extension state and local governments) actually said – it is possible to perceive *the position of African Americans as one of other overlapping Atlantic colonial situations*, especially when we consider the contextual Western epistemological order in which "Africa" and "the Negro" represented the absolute other.

Negotiating Colonial Situations: Imagining an African Nation

The Liberian colony was founded in 1822 under the auspices of the American Colonization Society and attained independence in 1847. The idea of African American colonization in Africa was a controversial issue among American abolitionists and free African Americans from its inception. The main debates centered on whether such schemes would lead to the removal of the small number of free Black people in the United States, in effect diminishing all African American claims to citizenship and civil rights. With only an enslaved African American mass remaining in the United States, it was quite reasonable that anti-emigrationists, such as Frederick Douglass, viewed colonization abroad as a major concession to the American slavocracy. Slavery, then, would become a permanent institution according to this logic. Its "peculiar" characteristics would even dissolve, for the African Americans' (especially those of the strongly nationalistic ilk) menacing presence, according to slavery's defenders, would no longer potentially expose the contradictions of White supremacy and the Southern paternalistic order.

Enslaved African Americans were characterized in the dominant American ideology as "happy" and, at times, dangerous without proper surveillance; they would no longer become distracted by their atypical, quasi-free brothers and sisters. Indeed, the antebellum Southern order of things could not exist without African bodies in bondage.[42]

With emancipation, it was generally conceded that African American nationalism, which thrived during the 1850s, experienced a low point. African Americans were eagerly seeking to take advantage of the new opportunities that the reconstructing nation was beginning to offer.[43] This seeming national restructuring was not to endure, at least for African Americans, as the nation turned its attention to industrialization and economic imperial interests.[44] By 1877 Reconstruction was dead, and African Americans were beginning to experience an existence that was certainly, to many Black people, reminiscent of the era of legal enslavement. Thus, efforts to escape post-Reconstruction nightmares entailed a resurgence of migratory sentiment. According to the historian August Meier,

> [M]igration activity was especially strong between 1878 and 1881 and between 1888 and about 1890 … The migrants and would-be migrants uniformly cited oppressive conditions in the South — economic exploitation, political intimidation, injustice in the courts, and mob violence — as reasons for their desire to move.[45]

The southwest migration patterns of African American Southerners also coincided with the reemergence of heightened efforts to emigrate to Liberia, Haiti, and Canada, and impoverished African Americans from the South, most of them illiterate (79.9% in 1870; 70.0% in 1880; 56.8% in 1890; 44.5% in 1900),[46] constituted the largest cross-section of individuals desiring to migrate. Their decisions to acquire the means to migrate ranged from racial sentiments about Africa to economic motivations. Among the central findings of the literature focused on emigration to Liberia during the nineteenth century are the following: "Liberia fever" was highest during periods in which the prospects of African American social mobility in the United States appeared grimmest; emigration was never a popular option for African Americans; and the realities of settling in Liberia reflected arduous social, economic, and environmental adjustments for African Americans emigrants.[47] Black nationalistic intellectuals, particularly those who were emigrationists, were acutely aware of the dire situation of African Americans before and after the American Civil War.

African American emigrationism and its relationship to Africa was the subject of many scholarly debates, and the ambivalence of the most articulate nineteenth-century proponents of emigration out of the United States was both praised and "ruthlessly assailed."[48] The content of these debates and other factors also resulted in the problematic – occasionally outright distorted – perceptions and treatments of Black nationalistic intellectuals.

Over four decades have passed since the burgeoning of scholarly interest in the intellectual development of what was frequently and, at times, erroneously referred to as Black nationalism. Much of the recent attention devoted to this ideological tradition of dissent is indebted to the emergence of radical segments of the Civil Rights and Black Power political movements in the 1960s and 1970s.[49] From the mass movement fomented by Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League (UNIA-ACL) to Elijah Muhammad and the Nation of Islam's militant efforts to ameliorate the psychological and material oppression of African Americans in the "wilderness of America" to the well-known advocacy of "Black Power!" by Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Ture) and Willie Ricks (Mukasa Dada), twentieth-century constructions of Black nationalism dominate the ways that scholars approach Black nationalistic discourse. In other words, "modern" Black nationalistic rhetoric holds an enormous sway over the popular and scholarly imaginations, as opposed to the literary, conservative, bourgeois ideological roots of Black nationalism.[50]

An understanding of the early stages of Black nationalistic social and political thought enables one to appreciate the complexities of Black nationalism, a political tradition that can be identified, ironically, within the ideologies of several distinct Black thinkers with opposing worldviews. This understanding can potentially move us beyond both the simplistic perceptions of Black nationalism as unsophisticated appeals to group identity – such as the positions held by liberal cultural critics about the frequently xenophobic rhetoric of the late Khalid Muhammad – and the contemporary pundits who would have us believe that their proclamations are definitive characteristics of the Black nationalistic tradition – rhetoric that is commonly marred with biological determinism, varying forms and articulations of xenophobia, and clearly undemocratic attitudes that are totally unrelated to solving social problems and addressing material conditions. The main point, here, is that efforts to explain the antecedents of twentieth-century Black nationalism must necessarily engage the contemporary attitudes of advocates of cultural nationalism, on the one hand, and anti-essentialism on the other. The contours of the conflicting imaginaries regarding nineteenth-century Liberia are more clearly explained through analysis of some of the circum-Atlantic negotiations of colonial situations by Edward Blyden, an intellectual and emigrant to Liberia who, unlike Crummell,[51] remained in West Africa until the end of his life.

Blyden's Dialectics

A little over a decade had passed since Edward Blyden, denied admission to Rutgers Theological Seminary in 1850, delivered "The Call of Providence" in the United States as an ambassador of Liberia and on behalf of the young nation's efforts to encourage further emigration to West Africa. Born in St. Thomas and a short-time resident of Venezuela, Blyden resided in the United States for only seven months before emigrating to Liberia at the age of eighteen, largely in response to the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850.

Noted by his most authoritative biographers as having devoted the rest of his life to African development, Blyden sought to garner African American support for Liberia in this speech during a series of summer of 1862 addresses that were delivered in Washington, District of Columbia, Portland, Maine, and other New England cities as part of a Liberian diplomatic envoy. He chastised African Americans who were either unconcerned or unaware of their "special duty to their forefathers."

> Among the descendants of Africa in this country the persuasion seems to prevail … that they owe no special duty to the land of their forefathers … [M]any of the descendants of Africa … speak disparagingly of their country … and would turn indignantly upon any who bid them go up and take possession of the land of their fathers … It is theirs to betake themselves to injured Africa, and bless those outraged shores, and quiet those distracted families with the blessings of Christianity and civilization.[52]

Blyden envisioned Africa as a "country," indicating a nineteenth-century nationalistic construction or imagination of continental Africa and its people. The Jamaican-born Marcus Garvey later articulated a similar vision of the African continent. The historian Claire Corbould notes that

> Garvey looked to unite the black world through black-run and supported enterprises, such as the Black Star Line, and a migration scheme that would eventually pave the way for the formation of a single nation on the African continent under his leadership. In 1920-1921 and again in 1924, Garvey made concerted overtures to convince officials in Liberia to accept the first of a convoy of black migrants from the United States. A small republic in West Africa, Liberia was ruled by a handful of Americo-Liberian elite, descended from free black settlers who began moving there in 1820. None of these efforts of Garvey's resulted in the mass migration for which he hoped, but these failures were not for a lack of enthusiasm among his supporters.[53]

Critical to Blyden's thoughts about African Americans' "repatriation" to the "land of their forefathers" was his conceptualization of race. Blyden's racial chauvinism cannot be divorced from either the utter oppression experienced by Africans or from contextual conceptualizations of humanity.[54]

In a private correspondence during the same summer to British Chancellor of the Exchequer William Ewart Gladstone, Blyden wrote from New York City:

> I am very glad of the position which England maintains with reference to this [American Civil] war. It has not yet assumed a moral aspect; it is purely political – the leading men excepting such noble spirits as Mr. [Charles] Sumner – having no idea of freeing the slaves. They are desirous of restoring the Union on its former basis. The oppression seems to be intensifying.

After allegedly, and certainly quite possibly, witnessing African Americans being captured in Washington, District of Columbia, in compliance with the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act during a visit to the United States capital, as well as being denied entrance to a session of the Congressional House of Representatives and having to have a White American man confirm that he was a free person, Blyden ("a citizen of Liberia") went on to note that

> Both sections of the country are [N]egro-hating and [N]egro-crushing – intending and doing justice to five millions oppressed people among them only as they are driven to it by European sentiment. And I think that your speech though denounced has had some driving influence.[55]

Blyden's letter is highly informative. It is a primary source of evidence on Pan African intellectuals' cognizance of colonial situations in the Atlantic world, particularly in the United States. His colleague in Liberia, Alexander Crummell, also lamented, "Alas! [F]or us, all along through this reign of terror, our afflicted people have been at sea! We have no coherence of race, we have had no unity of policy! We have shewn [sic] no resistance to outrage! We have no organized maintenance of our rights!"[56]

Blyden utilized several resources of the modern Atlantic world. In November 1875 he contributed a scholarly paper titled "Mohammedanism and the Negro Race" to the London-based *Fraser's Magazine* and in May of the following year, he contributed a complementary scholarly paper titled "Christianity and the Negro Race" to the same prominent journal.[57] These two essays are powerful examples of Blyden's maneuvers in an ideological world that was dominated by a Western epistemological framework. Blyden relied not only on the White colonial archive, but also upon Muslim contributions (composed in English) to this library, such as Syed Ahmed Khan Bahador's collection of writings titled "A Series of Essays on the Life of Mohammed" (1870), which was reviewed in the *British Quarterly Review*, January, 1872, and Syed Ameer Ali Moulvi's book titled *A Critical Examination of the Life and Teachings of Mohammed* published in 1873.[58] One of the prominent themes of these texts is the dialectic between Christianity and Islam – two universalistic creeds – and their relationship to the "Negro Race." It has been widely observed that for most of his life Blyden considered Christianity as ultimately ranked higher than Islam as a religious creed, which was in accordance to dominant hierarchical conceptions of civilization.

Blyden considered most persons of African descent as lacking civilization, as divinely created beings in desperate need of transformative missionary conversion. However, as he came to consider neither one of these creeds as originally African in origin, Blyden contended that the most effective civilizing mission would have to be one in which racial difference – and not racial hierarchy – was taken into account.[59]

Effective conversion entailed negotiations with what Blyden perceived as differing racial characteristics or "instincts." For most of his life, Blyden shared the then widely held disdain for "folk" culture – be it the religious expression and culture of the enslaved or the religious and cultural traditions of indigenous Africans – a worldview that was articulated by most early Black nationalists.[60] Indeed, for most of his life Blyden believed that successful cultural and religious negotiations could not to be accomplished through "a degrading compromise with the Pagan superstitions, but by shaping many of its traditional customs to suit the milder and more conciliatory disposition of the Negro." Christian missionaries could learn a lot from the history of the dissemination of Islam in West and Central Africa according to Blyden:

> Their local institutions were not destroyed by the Arab influence introduced. They only assumed new forms, and adapted themselves to the new teachings. In all thriving Mohammedan communities, in West and Central Africa, it may be noticed that the Arab superstructure has been superimposed on a permanent indigenous substructure; so that what really took place, when the Arab met the Negro in his own home, was a healthy amalgamation, and not an absorption or undue repression.[61]

Blyden exhibited a profound, if occasionally imperfect, understanding of Islam in West Africa and its empirical characteristics in an African setting south of the Sahara. Although Hollis Lynch provided a necessary complication of Blyden's, at times, romantic depiction of the spread of Islam in West Africa,[62] Blyden's effort to exploit the universalistic and "civilizing" aspects of Islam – a religion that a "pan-Negro patriot" could not ignore, as Lynch pointed out – was instrumental to his "racial nationalist imagination."[63]

Just as the Christian Bible was central to establishing an earthly spiritual kingdom for believers, Blyden viewed the Muslim Qur'an, with its egalitarian, transnational principles, as paving the way for African unity.

> The Koran is, in its measure, an important educator. It exerts among a primitive people a wonderful influence. It has furnished to the adherents of its teachings in Africa a ground of union which has contributed vastly to their progress. Hausas, Foulahs, Mandingoes, Soosoos, Akus, can all read the same books and mingle in worship together, and there is to all one common authority and one ultimate umpirage.[64]

This peaceful dimension of Blyden's approach to Islam as a peaceful factor in West Africa offers a significant window into understanding his central literary and political contributions and negotiations of colonial situations.

Blyden held detractors to this sentiment in Liberia to be a major impediment to the spread of Christianity. Indeed, he noted that "before the Gospel can take root in 'all the world', and become the spiritual life of 'every creature'," the hegemonic cultural influences of "one race – the Indo-European" – must come to an end before the universality of Christianity will become manifest.[65] While providing an account of various aspects of the Atlantic Slave Trade and particularly slavery in the United States – with references to Bartolomé de las Casas's endorsement of African enslavement in lieu of indigenous inhabitants in the Americas (as well as his "tardy, though commendable, repentance"); the Assiento contract between Britain and Spain (1713-1743) regarding shipment of enslaved Africans to Spanish possessions; John Wesley's *Thoughts Upon Slavery* (1774); and George Bancroft's *History of the United States, From the Discovery of the American Continent* (1834 followed by additional volumes)[66] – Blyden engaged in a continued critique of Christianity's dissemination in the Atlantic world and its impact on Africans. In "Mohammedanism and the Negro Race," Blyden had already noted that "Christianity … came to the Negro as a slave, or at least as a subject race in a foreign land … In their condition as outcasts and pariahs, it directed their aspirations to a heavenly and external citizenship."[67] Blyden's polemic against American slavery, particularly his one-sided analysis of the dissemination and characteristics of Christianity among enslaved African Americans, should be read as a conceptual attack against systemic and religious rationalizations of slavery.[68] He argued that Africans in "Christians lands" were inferior to African Muslims and could learn from Muslims in Africa how to coexist with indigenous communities in order to develop African nationalism and Pan Africanism. He contended that African American Christians were the progeny of "Africans who were carried to the Western world [who] were, as a general rule, of the lowest of the people in their own country" with "traditions" that were "carried away in the most distorted form," and, he argued,

> It will be a long time before the intelligent Negro will be able to forget the injustice done to the moral instincts of his race, while he has access to the thrilling "narratives" of such heroic and eloquent fugitives from slavery as Frederick Douglass, William Wells Brown, Henry Bibb, [Moses] Roper &c.[69]

For an African Atlantic figure like Blyden, Liberia offered an alternative to the Western world, and he was among the early intellectuals in a modern African nation who must be understood as central to the legacies that produced contemporary crises like the recent civil conflict and violence in Liberia.[70]

Notes

[1] Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *Something Torn and New: An African Renaissance* (New York, New York: Basic*Civitas* Books, A Member of the Perseus Books Group, 2009), 108-109.

[2] William V.S. Bull, "Open Letter to the House International Affairs Committee Africa Subcommittee" (March 14, 2001), Embassy of the Republic of Liberia, Washington, District of Columbia, accessed April 17, 2002, http://www.liberiaemb.org/open.html. A reference to Bull's letter can be found under "Annex, Part 1: Defence Exhibits" in *Prosecutor v. Charles Ghankay Taylor*, Special Court for Sierra Leone, www.rscsl.org/Documents/Decisions/Taylor/929/SCSL-03-01-T-929.doc.

[3] Bodioh Siapoe, "Gunboat Democracy: Settler Style," Coalition of Progressive Liberians in the Americas, accessed April 17, 2002, http://www.copla.org/editorials.htm. Siapoe's reference to the eighteenth century, as opposed to the nineteenth century, is inaccurate.

[4] Usage of information from these two online sources engages the discourses that are pertinent to this essay; it is also recognition of the malleable nature that public performances and popular discourses entail (i.e., the Liberian Embassy's and COPLA's defunct URLs), which have varying implications for contemporary intellectual historians. I agree with the historian Wilson J. Moses's invocation of "a tradition that insists that historical consciousness is neither the independent creation nor the exclusive property of professional scholars." Wilson Jeremiah Moses, *Afrotopia: The Roots of African American Popular History*, Cambridge Studies in American Literature and Culture Series (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 17.

[5] Siapoe, "Gunboat Democracy."

[6] Siapoe, Ibid; Jonathan Stack and James Brabazon, *Liberia: An Uncivil War* (San Francisco: Kanopy Streaming, 2015; San Francisco, California: California Newsreel, 2005); Steven Ross, *Liberia: A Fragile Peace* (San Francisco, California: Kanopy Streaming, 2015; San Francisco: California: California Newsreel, 2006); Peter Tetteroo, André van der Stouwe, and Steve Bradshaw, *How to Become a President*, Life Series 8 (Chicago, Illinois: Docuseek2, 2014; Oley, Pennsylvania: Bullfrog Films, 2011; originally produced by tv/e, Life on Edge Series, 2010).

[7] Amos Sawyer, *The Emergence of Autocracy in Liberia: Tragedy and Challenge* (San Francisco: Institute for Contemporary Studies Press, 1992), 293.

[8] Siapoe, "Gunboat Democracy."

[9] Ibid.

[10] Stack et al, *Liberia*; Ross, *Liberia*; Tetteroo, *How to Become a President*.

[11] It is obvious that Liberian government representatives in Washington, District of Columbia, consistently performed their allegiance to the Republic of Liberia.

[12] Ethnic conflict is certainly not in any respect normative for only persons of African descent, wherever they are located. Rather, due to the fact that all of these groups imagine Africa in varying ways and because these groups are conflated and interact in the United States – where it is common for certain geopolitical spaces to be systemically relegated to Black bodies – an analysis of these inter-group relations contributes to our understanding of African Atlantic subjectivities.

[13] "President Sirleaf Extols Dr. Sawyer at 70th Birth Anniversary Celebrations; Dr. Sawyer Dreams of Establishing an Edward Wilmot Blyden Chair of Public Affairs at the University of Liberia," The Executive Mansion, July 2, 2015, accessed July 25, 2015, http://www.emansion.gov.lr/2press.php?news_id=3341&related=7&pg=sp; "Liberia's Sirleaf assures Amos Sawyer of 'Blyden Chair'," *Awareness Times: Sierra Leone News & Information*, July 7, 2015, accessed July 25, 2015, http://news.sl/drwebsite/publish/article_200527884.shtml; Edward Carter, "Dissecting The Politics Of Edward Wilmot Blyden," *The Liberian Dialogue*, July 13, 2015, accessed July 25, 2015, http://theliberiandialogue.org/2015/07/13/dissecting-the-politics-of-edward-wilmot-blyden/. According to Carter, "Blyden was of the most prolific black-world intellectuals of his time. However, judging from his politics, it is cleared [sic] that he (Blyden) was a man full of contradictions, ambiguities, complexities and paradoxes …. In the context of the Liberian experience, it is these inconsistencies and anomalies in Mr. Blyden's politics that brought him in collision with the Americo-Liberian class…thus precipitating his self-imposed exile to colonial Sierra Leone."

[14] The partition of Africa that resulted from the decisions at the Berlin Conference of 1884–1885 and the ensuing formal colonization of the continent certainly affected both Liberian and Ethiopian national interests. For studies of conflicts between these, and other, African nations and imperial interests, see I.K. Sundiata, *Black Scandal: America and the Liberian Labor Crisis* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1980); Haile M. Larebo, *The Building of an Empire: Italian Land Policy and Practice in Ethiopia, 1935-1941* (Trenton, New Jersey: Red Sea Press, 2005; Oxford, United Kingdom: Clarendon Press, 1994); Kevin Shillington, *History of Africa*, Third Edition (Basingstoke, United Kingdom and New York, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 314-316.

[15] wa Thiong'o, *Something Torn and New*, xi. Indeed, he notes, "Applying the metaphor of war to systems of domination, we see that colonialism attacks and completely distorts a peoples' relationship to their natural, bodily, economic, political, and cultural base. And with this base destroyed, the wholeness of the African subject, the subject in active engagement with his environment, is fragmented." Further,

> Re-membering the continent and the diaspora, the core themes of Pan-Africanism in general, was central to [Marcus] Garvey's [and others'] vision of black people as active players in the world …. The problem of language and memory presents itself differently for the writers of the diaspora and the continent. In the diaspora, the question is this: How do you raise buried memory from the grave when the means of raising it are themselves buried in the grave or suffocated to the level of whispering ghosts? And on the continent: Did the death intended for one's means of memory actually materialize? It is my view that while the diasporic writer may in some way have responded to the former question, those on the continent, at least the visible majority, did not even argue about the question confronting them: that of the availability or effectiveness of their native means of memory. Acting as if their native means of memory were dead, or at least unavailable, the continental African chose to use the languages that buried theirs so as to connect with their own memory—a choice that has hobbled their re-membering literary visions and practices.

wa Thiong'o, *Something Torn and New*, 29, 36, 41.

[16] Yekutiel Gershoni, *Black Colonialism: The Americo-Liberian Scramble for the Hinterland* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1985); Monday B. Akpan, "Black Imperialism: Americo-Liberian Rule Over the Peoples of Liberia, 1822-1864," *Canadian Journal of African Studies/Revue Canadienne des Études Africaines*, Volume 7, Number 2 (1973): 217-236; James Ciment, *Another America: The Story of Liberia and the Former Slaves Who Ruled It* (New York, New York: Hill and Wang, A division of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013); Yekutiel Gershoni, "Christians and Muslims in Nineteenth Century Liberia: From Ideological Antagonism to Practical Toleration," in E. Ann McDougall, Editor, *Engaging with a Legacy: Nehemia Levtzion (1935-2003)* (London, United Kingdom and New York, New York: Routledge, 2013), 197-210. The Routledge volume is a reproduction of a "Special Issue: Engaging with a Legacy: Nehemia Levtzion (1935-2003)" from the *Canadian Journal of African Studies/Revue Canadienne des Études Africaines*, Volume 42, Issues 2-3, 2008. See also Percival Everett, *Erasure* (Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England, 2001; Minneapolis, Minnesota: Graywolf Press, 2011).

[17] The majority of the formerly enslaved emigrants were never granted the time or resources to cultivate more intellectually grounded (i.e., literary) constructions of nationalism.

[18] Notable exceptions include Wilson Jeremiah Moses's *Alexander Crummell: A Study of Civilization and Discontent* (New York, New York and Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press 1989) and Hollis R. Lynch's *Edward Wilmot Blyden: Pan Negro Patriot*, West African History Series (London, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 1967). Both authors' works indicate that Black intellectual production in the Atlantic World during the long nineteenth century reflected colonial and postcolonial discourses.

[19] J.F.A. Ajayi, "Colonialism: An Episode in African History," in Toyin Falola, Editor, *Tradition and Change in Africa: The Essays of J.F. Ade. Ajayi* (Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, 2000), 173-174. Ajayi's essay also appears in L.H. Gann and Peter Duignan, Editors, *Colonialism in Africa, 1870-1960, Volume I, The History and Politics of Colonialism* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 497-509.

[20] Robin D. G. Kelley, "'But a Local Phase of a World Problem': Black History's Global Vision, 1883-1950," *Journal of American History*, Volume 86, Number 3 (December 1999): 1048n5. See also Pero Gaglo Dagbovie, *What is African American History?* (Cambridge, United Kingdom and Malden, Massachusetts: Polity Press, 2015), especially Chapter 1, "From the Margins to the Mainstream," 6-26.

[21] Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1993), xi.

[22] Laurel Recker, "'Happen Is Never Once': The Temporality of Modernism's Black Atlantic," *Arizona Quarterly: A Journal of American Literature, Culture, and Theory*, Volume 70, Number 4 (Winter 2014): 25.

[23] Philip S. Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects: An African Intelligentsia and Atlantic Ideas* (Charlottesville, Virginia and London, United Kingdom: University of Virginia Press, 2000), 1.

[24] Moses, *Alexander Crummell*; Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden*; Teshale Tibebu, *Edward Wilmot Blyden and the Racial Nationalist Imagination*, Rochester Studies in African History and the Diaspra (Rochester, New York: University of Rochester Press, 2012).

[25] July 26th is an event that COPLA deems as an insult to the indigenous populations of Liberia. On July 26, 1847, Liberia was declared an independent republic. Siapoe contends that "To celebrate July 26 – as we know it – is a slap in the face of the African-Liberian, who has been unduly oppressed, suppressed, debased, depraved, misused, abused and manipulated for well over 150 years … July 26 is similar to [Matilda] Newport's savagery against the natives." Siapoe, "Why July 26 Should Not Be Celebrated," Coalition of Progressive Liberians in the Americas, accessed April 21, 2002, http://www.copla.org/index2.htm. Siapoe's reference to Matilda Newport, whose namesake was long associated with Independence Day (i.e., "Matilda Newport Day"), was due to her militaristic deeds during the "legendary Battle of Fort Hill on December 1, 1822." As Tom W. Shick notes,

> Tradition maintains that the first settlers in Monrovia were outnumbered and on the verge of being overwhelmed by the attacking Africans. At that crucial moment a settler woman, Matilda Newport, fired a canon with her pipe. The blast is said to have killed and wounded many of the attackers, causing the rest to retreat in disarray. This early victory against great odds has become an important element in the settler ethos.

Tom W. Shick, *Behold the Promised Land: A History of Afro-American Settler Society in Nineteenth-Century Liberia*, John Hopkins Studies in Atlantic History and Culture Series (Baltimore, Maryland: The John Hopkins University Press, 1980; 1977), 91.

[26] Alexander Crummell, "Our National Mistakes and the Remedy for Them," from Crummell, *Africa and America: Addresses and Discourses* (Springfield, Massachusetts: Wiley and Co., 1891), Reprinted in Alexander Crummell, *Destiny and Race: Selected Writings, 1840-1898*, Edited by Wilson Jeremiah Moses (Amherst, Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992), 177. According to Moses, the sermon "Our National Mistakes" first appeared in 1869. The version in the collection edited by Moses is based on an 1871 version, which appeared in *Africa and America* (1891). Moses notes that this sermon "offers an authoritarian approach to African regeneration." Moses, "Introduction," *Destiny and Race*, 15-16.

[27] Edward Wilmot Blyden, "The Call of Providence to the Descendants of Africa in America," in Wilson Jeremiah Moses, Editor, *Classical Black Nationalism: From the American Revolution to Marcus Garvey* (New York, New York: New York University Press, 1996), 206.

[28] J. Jorge Klor de Alva, "The Postcolonization of the (Latin) American Experience: A Reconsideration of 'Colonialism,' 'Postcolonialism,' and 'Mestizaje'," in Gyan Praksh, Editor, *After Colonialism: Imperial Histories and Postcolonial Displacements*, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995), 242.

[29] My reference to "self-fashioning" among cirum-Atlantic figures is not to provide a reductionist account of the workings of colonial domination. As Guarav Desai emphasizes, "The ability to call the shots of 'sameness' ('they are like us') or 'difference' ('they are not like us') in differently motivated circumstances, and to call these shots forcefully, was the crux of the rhetorical game." Guarav Desai, *Subject to Colonialism: African Self-Fashioning and the Colonial Library* (Durham, North Carolina and London, United Kingdom: Duke University Press, 2001), 20.

[30] Sidney Mintz and Richard Price, *Birth of African-American Culture: An Anthropological Perspective* (Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press, 1992; originally published as *An Anthropological Approach to the Afro-American Past*, ISHI Occasional Papers in Social Change: Number 2, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1976); Ira Berlin, "Time, Space, and the Evolution of Afro-American Society on British Mainland North America," *American Historical Review*, Volume 85, Number 1 (February 1980): 44-78; Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," in Jonathan Rutherford, Editor, *Identity, Community, Culture, Difference* (London, United Kingdom: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990), 222-237; John Thornton, *Africans and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World*, Second Edition (Cambridge, United Kingdom and New York, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998; 1992); Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*; Carole Boyce Davies, *Black Women, Writing and Identity: Migrations of the Subject* (Abingdon, United Kingdom and New York, New York: Routledge, 1994); Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance*, The Social Foundations of Aesthetic Forms Series (New York, New York: Columbia University Press, 1996); Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998); Michael A. Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Jane Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida*, Foreword by Peter H. Wood (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1999); Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, Editors, *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1997); Douglas R. Egerton, Alison Games, Jane G. Landers, Kris Lane and Donald R. Wright, *The Atlantic World: A History, 1400-1888* (Wheeling, Illinois: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 2007); Nell Irvin Painter, *Creating Black Americans: African-American History and Its Meanings, 1619 to the Present* (New York, New York and Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2007; 2006), especially Chapters 1-5; Molefi Kete Asante, *The African American People: A Global History* (New York, New York and Abington, United Kingdom: Routledge, 2012), especially Chapters 1-4.

[31] Of course, "formal" colonization, as noted above, occurred in Africa during the late-nineteenth century. However, Walter Rodney's insistence that "underdevelopment" in Africa be considered along with encroachments on African "political sovereignty" by European Atlantic interests should be seriously taken into account, as the lineage of colonial domination in Africa (and elsewhere) predates the decisions at Berlin. Rodney's thesis remains one of the most important early critical analyses of domination and its effects. Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (London, United Kingdom: Bogule-L'Ouverture Publications, 1972; Nairobi, Kenya: East African Educational Publishers Ltd, 140). The historian Kevin Shillington notes that

> Walter Rodney's highly influential *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (1972) argued that the roots of Africa's current problems of underdevelopment could be traced back to the slave trade, upon which Europe's industrial development was ultimately based. Although many historians of Africa did not subscribe to Rodney's radical view, his work and that of others in this period turned the focus away from that of great empires of the past and on to the history of the peasantry, migrant workers, [and] domestic servants.

Shillington also observes that

> [T]he Guyanese historian Walter Rodney argued that Africa's chronic poverty and underdevelopment at the time of political independence in the mid-twentieth century was a direct result of European action. He argued that the European slave trade out of Africa so weakened the continent that it left it open to Europe's mega-exploitation through colonisation in the nineteenth century and neo-colonialism in the twentieth …

Shillington, *History of Africa*, 2 and 182.

[32] J. Gorge Klor de Alva suggests, "The Revolutionary War was not an 'anticolonial' struggle for independence but rather a separatist struggle waged between two parts the same imperium." de Alva, "The Postcolonization of the (Latin) American Experience," 257. The historian Carroll Smith-Rosenberg analyzes the "new republic as simultaneously the first modern postcolonial nation and as a an 'infant Empire,' heir to Britain's vast North American holdings." Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, *This Violent Empire: The Birth of an American National Identity* (Williamsburg, Virginia: Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture; Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010), xiii.

[33] Rayford W. Logan, *The Negro in American Life and Thought: The Nadir, 1877-1901* (New York, New York: Dial Press, 1954).

[34] Harold Cruse, *Rebellion or Revolution?* (New York, New York: William and Morrow and Company, Inc., 1968), 76. Cruse's essay engages the alleged lack of understanding of the colonial situation of African Americans – or "the implications of the Negro's position in the social structure of the United States" – by "American Marxists." According to Cruse, "[American Marxists] have no more been able to see the Negro as having revolutionary potentialities in his own right, than European Marxists could see the revolutionary aspirations of their colonials as being independent of, and not subordinate to, their own. As Western Marxism had no adequate revolutionary theory for the colonies, American Marxists have no adequate theory for the Negro." Cruse, 76-77. Cruse also noted in another book that "[o]ne of the attributes of colonialism is racial discrimination." Harold Cruse, *Plural But Equal* (New York, New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1987), 312. The historian Walter Johnson persuasively argued that Black bodies and their forced labor were integral to the making of the antebellum South, the industrial North, and, ultimately, the United States. See Walter Johnson, *Soul by Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1999). Johnson, to note, does not refer to Africans Americans as colonial subjects. See also E. Franklin Frazier, "The Garvey Movement," *Opportunity*, Volume 4, Number 47 (November 1926): 346-348; Harold Cruse, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual* (New York, New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc.; 1967); John H. Bracey, August Meier, and Elliot Rudwick, Editors, *Black Nationalism in America* (Indianapolis, Indiana: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1970); Manning Marable, *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America* (Boston, Massachusetts: South End Press, 1983); Saidiya V. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York, New York and Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 1997); Peter Bohmer, "African-Americans as an Internal Colony: The Theory of Internal Colonialism," in John Whitehead and Cobi Kwasi Harris, Editors, *Readings in Black Political Economy*, Foreword by Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, Sr. (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 1999); Peter Bohmer, "African-Americans as an Internal Colony: The Theory of Internal Colonialism," accessed July 30, 2015, http://academic.evergreen.edu/b/bohmerp/internalcolony.htm; William Jelani Cobb, Editor, *The Essential Harold Cruse: A Reader*, Foreword by Stanley Crouch (New York, New York and Basingstoke, United Kingdom: Palgrave, 2002); Douglas A. Blackmon, *Slavery by Another Name: The Re-Enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II* (New York, New York: Anchor Books, A division of Random House, Inc., 2008); Samuel D. Pollard, *Slavery by Another Name* (San Francisco, California: Kanopy Streaming, 2015; Boston, Massachusetts: PBS, 2012); Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, *"Bodies,"* in Catharine R. Stimpson and Gilbert Herdt, Editors, *Critical Terms for the Study of Gender*, Critical Terms Series (Chicago, Illinois and London, United Kingdom: The University of Chicago Press, 2014), 21-40.

[35] Jürgen Osterhammel, *Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview*, Second Edition, Foreword by Robert L. Tignor, Translated from German by Shelley L. Frisch (Princeton, New Jersey: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2010; 2005; 1997; translation of *Kolonialismus*, Munich, Germany: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1995), 3, 19.

[36] E. Franklin Frazier, "The Garvey Movement," in August Meier and Elliot Rudwick, Editors, *The Making of Black America: Volume II: The Black Community in Modern America* (New York, New York: Atheneum), 205; Cruse, *Rebellion or Revolution?*, 77. According to Fernando Coronil, postcoloniality can result from conditions that are not "actual" colonial conditions. Fernando Coronil, "Can Postcoloniality be Decolonized?: Imperial Banality and Postcolonial Power," *Public Culture*, Volume 5, Number 1 (Fall, 1992), 89-108.

[37] Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, Translated by Howard Greenfield from *Portrait du Colonise precede du Portrait du Colonizer* (Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press, 1965; Editions Buchet/ Chastel, Corrêa, 1957), 95. John Iliffe references the significance of Africans' "colonisation of land" in Africa from the historical perspective of Africans before and after European colonialism in Africa. John Iliffe, *Africans: The History of a Continent*, Second Edition (New York, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007; 1995), 349 and especially Chapters 4-5 and 9-10.

[38] "Racial capitalism" is borrowed from Cedric Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*, Foreword by Robin D.G. Kelly, New Preface by the Author (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000; London, United Kingdom, Zed Press, 1983).

[39] V.Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge*, African Systems of Thought Series (Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana: Indiana University Press; London, United Kingdom: James Currey, 1988); V.Y. Mudimbe, *The Idea of Africa*, African Systems of Thought Series (Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana and London, United Kingdom: James Currey, 1994).

[40] wa Thiong'o, *Something Torn and New*, 72-73 (emphasis added).

[41] Mudimbe, *The Idea of Africa*, 71.

[42] Ciment, *Another America*; Johnson, *Soul by Soul*; Smith-Rosenberg, "Bodies."

[43] Thomas Holt, "African-American History," in *The New American History: Revised and Expanded Edition*, Edited for the American Historical Association by Eric Foner (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Temple University Press, 1997), 313-18; George M. Fredrickson, "The Skeleton in the Closet," *The New York Review of Books*, Volume 47, Number 17 (November 2, 2000): 61-66; and August Meier and Elliot Rudwick, *Black History and the Historical Profession, 1915-1980* (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1986), especially Chapter 4; Painter, *Creating Black Americans*, 141-151.

[44] Michael Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven, Connecticut and London, United Kingdom: Yale University Press, 1987); Nell Irvin Painter, *Standing at Armageddon: A Grassroots History of the Progressive Era* (New York, New York and London, United Kingdom: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2008; 1987).

[45] August Meier, *Negro Thought in America, 1880-1915: Racial Ideologies in the Age of Booker T. Washington*, With a New Introduction (Ann Arbor, Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1963; Introduction, 1988), 59. See also Nell Irvin Painter, *Exodusters: Black Migration to Kansas after Reconstruction* (New York, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1986; 1976).

[46] "Percentage of persons 14 years old and over who were illiterate (unable to read or write in any language), by race and nativity: 1870 to 1979," National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL) – 120 Years of Literacy, Excerpt from "Chapter 1 of *120 Years of American Education: A Statistical Portrait* (Edited by Tom Snyder, National Center for Education Statistics, 1993)," accessed June 10, 2015, http://nces.ed.gov/naal/lit_history.asp.

[47] Michele Mitchell, *Righteous Propagation: African Americans and the Politics of Racial Destiny after Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill, North Caroline: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004); Amos J. Beyan, The *American Colonization Society and the Creation of the Liberian State: A Historical Perspective, 1822-1900* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1991); Wilson Jeremiah Moses, *The Golden Age of Black Nationalism, 1850-1925* (Oxford, United Kingdom and New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 1988; 1978); Shick, *Behold the Promised Land*; Painter, *Exodusters*; Floyd J. Miller, *The Search for a Black Nationality: Black Emigration and Colonization, 1787-1863* (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1975).

[48] Moses, *Afrotopia*, 95.

[49] Eddie S. Glaude, Jr., Editor, *Is It Nation Time?: Contemporary Essays on Black Power and Black Nationalism* (Chicago, Illinois and London, United Kingdom: The University of Chicago Press, 2002).

[50] [Maulana] Ron. N. Everett-Karenga, "Afro-American Nationalism: Social Strategy and Struggle for Community" (Ph.D. diss., United States International University, 1976), 127; William L. Van Deburg, Editor, *Modern Black Nationalism: From Marcus Garvey to Louis Farrakhan* (New York, New York and London, United Kingdom: New York University Press, 1997); Moses, *Afrotopia*; Clare Corbould, *Becoming African Americans: Black Public Life in Harlem, 1919-1939* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University Press, 2009).

[51] See note 13. Carla L. Peterson notes that "[a]fter graduating from Cambridge, Crummell moved to Liberia, where he labored as a missionary for the next 20 years … In Liberia, however, Crummell came into repeated conflict with indigenous Africans as well as white missionaries and educators …. Crummell returned to a changed United States in the early 1870s." Carla L. Peterson, "Untangling Genealogy's Tangled Skeins; Alexander Crummell, James McCune Smith, and Nineteenth-Century Black Literary Traditions," in Caroline F. Levander and Robert S. Levine, Editors, *A Companion to American Literary Studies* (Malden, Massachusetts: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 504-505.

[52] Edward Wilmot Blyden, "The Call of Providence to the Descendants of Africa in America," 188-190.

[53] Corbould, *Becoming African Americans*, 24.

[54] Lynch, *Edward Wilmot* Blyden; Thomas, W. Livingston, *Education and Race: A Biography of Edward Wilmot Blyden* (San Francisco: Glendessary Press, 1975); Chike Jeffers, "The Pitfalls of Placing the African Personality on the World Stage: Edward Blyden's Cultural Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism," *APA Newsletter on Philosophy and the Black Experience*, Volume 9, Number 2 (Spring 2010): 1-5, accessed March 8, 2014, https://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.apaonline.org/resource/collection/950518C1-3421-484C-8153-CDA6ED737182/v09n2Black.pdf; Charles Ambler, "'A School in the Interior' African Studies: Engagement and Interdisciplinarity," *African Studies Review*, Volume 54, Number 1 (April 2011): 1-17; Tibebu, *Edward Wilmot Blyden and the Racial Nationalist Imagination*; Philip S. Zachernuk, review of *Edward Wilmot Blyden and the Racial Nationalist Imagination* by Teshale Tibebu, *Africa: The Journal of the International African Institute*, Volume 84, Number 3 (August 2014): 494-495; Gloria Chuku, "African Intellectuals As Cultural Nationalists: A Comparative Analysis Of Edward Wilmot Blyden And Mbonu Ojike," *Journal of African American History*, Volume 99, Number 4 (Fall 2014): 350-378; Barbara Celarent, review of

Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race by Edward W. Blyden, *American Journal of Sociology*, Volume 120, Number 4 (January 2015): 1295-1293; Cheryl Sterling, "Race Matters: Cosmopolitanism, Afropolitanism, and Pan-Africanism via Edward Wilmot Blyden," *Journal of Pan African Studies*, Volume 8, Number 1 (June 2015): 119-145, accessed May 30, 2015, http://www.jpanafrican.com/docs/vol8no1/8.1-12-Sterling-RaceM.pdf.

[55] Edward Wilmot Blyden, Letter to William Edwin Gladstone, June 16, 1862, *Gladstone Papers*, The British Library, Manuscripts Collections and Archives, London, United Kingdom.

[56] Alexander Crummell, "The Discipline of Freedom," in *Destiny and Race*, 246; Philip S. Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects*, 1.

[57] Both articles appear in Edward Wilmot Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, With an Introduction by the Hon. Samuel Lewis (Baltimore, Maryland: Black Classic Press, 1994; London, United Kingdom: W.B. Whittingham & Company, 1888; 1887). This miscellaneous collection of essays originally appeared in 1887 (second edition in 1888) in the wake of the Berlin Conference (1884–1885) and formal partition of the African continent.

[58] Guarav Desai's "five caveats—the constitution of the colonial library as essentially open; the reading of discourses as actions rather than reflections; a revised notion of subjectivity and agency; the central rather than marginal character of African texts in the colonial library; and the importance of gender as the often unspoken category of analysis" are critical to my readings of Blyden's essays. Desai, *Subject to Colonialism*, 8.

[59] Blyden rejected the notion of a hierarchy of races, or "absolute or essential superiority … [or] inferiority" among "*distinct* but equal" races. See Blyden, "Africa and Africans," from *Fraser's Magazine*, in Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, 317. Blyden continued to peacefully engage Muslims, and he rejected Judaism, Christianity, and Islam as foreign religions in Africa at the turn of the twentieth century, opting to support indigenous African religions as solutions to African spiritual development. Edward W. Blyden, *African Life and Customs* (Baltimore, Maryland: Black Classic Press, 1994; reprinted from *Sierra Leone Weekly News*; 1908).

[60] Sterling Stuckey, Editor, *The Ideological Origins of Black Nationalism* (Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press, 1972); Moses, *The Golden Age of Black Nationalism*; Sterling Stuckey, *Slave Culture: Nationalist Theory and the Foundation of Black America* (Oxford, United Kingdom and New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Moses, *Classical Black Nationalism*; Moses, *Afrotopia*.

[61] Blyden, "Mohammedanism and the Negro Race," from *Fraser's Magazine*, in Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, 14. Islam is very old in Africa, at least 1000 years old, for example, dating to the ninth century in Senegal, only a short time after the Prophet Muhammad's death in 632 AD. Earnest Jenkins, Jr., *The Muslim Diaspora: A Comprehensive Reference on the Spread of Islam in Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas, Volume 1, 570-1500* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 1999); Allen F. Roberts and Mary Nooter Roberts with Gassia Armenian and Ousmane Gueye, *A Saint in the City: Sufi Arts of Urban Senegal* (Los Angeles, California: UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History, Regents of the University of California, 2003); Rudolph T. Ware, *The Walking Qur'an: Islamic Education, Embodied Knowledge, and History in West Africa*, Islamic Civilization and Muslim Networks Series (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014). According to Mabrouk Mansouri,

> After Islam gained ground in North Africa, indigenous societies witnessed social transformations and cultural metamorphosis due to the requirements of the new religion. The correlation between Arab-Islamic standards and the local Amazigh culture produced two opposing aspects of relations. The first was based on conflicts, containment, assimilation and total or partial adaptation. The second was determined by continuity. Despite the fact that they contradict the ethics of the new religion, some structures and values were preserved to express indigenous local meaning-systems and world view …. The phenomenon echoes the controversy of official religious theory and the local social and cultural forms, a controversy between two different visions of the world: each of them stems from a specific meaning system …. It is clear that … [continuities of local] habits are not confined to sub-Saharan tribes. North-Saharan tribes have also maintained a lot of moral and sexual habits with only a partial assimilation to the necessities of the new religion …. It is important, in this context, to emphasise the distinction between religious creeds and social practices. An ethnic group may convert to a religion by uttering the verbal testimony and practicing some rituals, but this does not lead to an automatic adjustment of the running social and cultural systems according to the necessities of the new religion. Those systems remain alive despite the fact that they may totally contradict the religious dogmas …. The transgression of religious prohibitions or the creation of new irreligious prohibitions may express a cultural, social or existential need, a need that the new religious system could not have fulfilled without enriching its system with local indigenous components.

Mabrouk Mansouri, "Cynophagy, Homosexuality and Anthropophagy in Medieval Islamic North Africa as Signs of Hospitality," *Journal of North African Studies*, Volume 20, Number 20 (2015): 128, 133, 137-138, 140.

[62] Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden*, 67-69.

[63] Lynch, Ibid.; Tibebu, *Edward Wilmot Blyden and the Racial Nationalist Imagination*.

[64] Blyden, "Mohammedanism and the Negro Race," from *Fraser's Magazine*, in Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, 8.

[65] Blyden, "Christianity and the Negro Race," from *Fraser's Magazine*, in Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, 31.

[66] Blyden, Ibid., 32-34.

[67] Blyden, "Mohammedanism and the Negro Race," from *Fraser's Magazine*, in Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, 14-15.

[68] James Conyers, "An Afrocentric Study of the Philosophy of Edward Wilmot Blyden" (Temple University, Ph.D. diss., 1998), 153. See also Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (Oxford, United Kingdom and New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 1978); Sterling Stuckey, *Slave Culture*.

[69] Blyden, "Christianity and the Negro Race," from *Fraser's Magazine*, in Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, 39, 41, 43.

[70] Mamadou Diouf, "Intelligentsia," in *New Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, 1st Edition, Edited by Maryanne Cline Horowitz (New York, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2005), 1117-1121; Mamadou Diouf, "Modernity, Africa," in *New Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, 1st Edition, Edited by Maryanne Cline Horowitz (New York, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2005), 1475-1479.