

ABSTRACT

Title of dissertation: THE GEOGRAPHIES AND ENTANGLEMENTS OF
EDUCATION AND MOBILITY: A FOCUS ON BLACK
NATIONS AND BLACK IM/MIGRANTS, PAST TO PRESENT

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Using Black geographies – a deliberate, decolonial examination of racialization, spatialization, and Black life, situated at the nexus of Black intellectual traditions and modes of inquiry – this study centers and interweaves the narratives of Black im/migrants, along with their artistic, cultural, and intellectual knowledge and artifacts, to interrogate and revise historic and contemporary understandings of Black im/migrant students' mobility, migration, and agency.

The study answers the following questions: 1) How have Black im/migrants, and Black im/migrant students specifically, understood their multiple, intersecting identities, and how do these understandings shape how they navigate societies? 2) How do they understand and engage with/disengage from advocacy, activism, and politics, 3) What do they envision for themselves as students, as migrants, and as citizens (a status that continues to hold loosely for Black people across borders)?, and 4) What bonds and/or communities sustain them transnationally and how do they envision the roles of those bonds and communities in their futures?

Also drawing on and in conversation with scholarly literature, archival materials and documents, reports and white papers, government surveillance records, journal entries, letters, laws, policies and treaties, news periodicals, interviews, organizational records, photographs, and speeches, the study elucidates the politics and interrelationships of education, migration, and

empire for Black im/migrants across time and space. Implications for theory and research are presented with an emphasis on students' Diasporic worldmaking praxes and networks as central to reviving and revising the historical and contemporary record of educational and migration research and scholarship.

**THE GEOGRAPHIES AND ENTANGLEMENTS OF EDUCATION AND MOBILITY: A FOCUS
ON BLACK NATIONS AND BLACK IMMIGRANTS, PAST TO PRESENT**

By

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Introduction

Education is crucial in any type of society for the preservation of the lives of its members and the maintenance of the social structure. Under certain circumstances, education also promotes social change.¹

Walter Rodney, How Europe Underdeveloped Africa

Nonwhite education, whether within the colonial administrations of preindependent Africa, or in the United States, has expressed a consistent duality of purpose. Capital accumulation within the Black community required the training of a select number of Blacks to fill positions in the economy. But to guarantee that their essential authority over Blacks could not be challenged, white educators deliberately and systematically fostered a pedagogy for Black subservience to capitalism. This process of educational underdevelopment was never entirely successful.²

Manning Marable, How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America

The rich and complex geographies of my life guide this text, from my earliest curiosities about schooling and education to recent publications with colleagues³ and my own student.⁴

Growing up in a working poor, African American and growing immigrant community in Prince George's County, educational space was where borders and identities overlapped and new worlds were created between and among students, staff, and faculty: imperfect, complex worlds that formed connections between educational institutions, fraternities and sororities, advocacy organizations, nations, diasporas, and geographic regions.

The most persistent of my curiosities were fixated on early contradictions presented to me by my parents, both of whom were educated in Methodist missionary schools during the colonial era in West Africa. "Education is key!" clashed starkly with "The teacher is always

¹ Rodney, Walter, A. M. Babu, and Vincent Harding. *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. Rev. pbk.ed. Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1981. 239.

² Marable, Manning. *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America : Problems in Race, Political Economy, and Society*. Updateded. South End Press Classics, V. 4. Cambridge, Mass.: South End Press, 2000. 203.

³ Baldwin, Andrea N., Nana Afua Brantuo, and Jazmin P. Pichardo. "Black Feminisms and Pedagogical Space-Making: Public Knowledge and Praxis in the Contemporary Moment." *Handbook of Social Justice Interventions in Education* (2020): 1-24.

⁴ Kulesa J, and Brantuo NA. "Barriers to Decolonising Educational Partnerships in Global Health." *Bmj Global Health* 6, no. 11 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjgh-2021-006964>.

right!” and “You have to be number one [in your classes]!” In hindsight, I recognize these clashes not as theirs alone, but that of generations of children who were subjected to the horrors of colonial schooling. Children across the colonized world have always navigated colonial educational policy, curriculum, and instruction in attempts to achieve well-being. Colonial schools, however, were where, as poet Olive Senior describes,

Borrowed images
willed our skins pale
muffled our laughter
lowered our voices
let out our hems
dekinked our hair
denied our sex in gym tunics and bloomers
harnessed our voices to madrigals
and genteel airs
denied our sex in gym tunics and bloomers
harnessed our voices to madrigals
and genteel airs
yoked our minds to declensions in Latin
and the language of Shakespeare

Told us nothing about ourselves
There was nothing about us at all⁵

Schools and schooling could, as Walter Rodney believed, promote social change and *should not* be about authoritarianism and competition. That is what I always insisted on, advocated for, and co-created throughout my formal education with the support of like-minded, lifelong learners...something that my parents and many other parents were denied.

Yet, all throughout my schooling, I was acutely aware of the politics of education and how that impacted Black people across borders from the onset of European colonization and the enslavement and trafficking of Africans to the Americas. Black liberation has always been

⁵ Senior, Olive. “Colonial Girls’ School.” *Poetry Archive*. 1985, <https://poetryarchive.org/poem/colonial-girls-school/>. Accessed 28 January 2022.

closely tied to the fight for education, as Rodney and Manning and several other prominent Black theorists, scholars, and educationalists have emphasized. The earliest education policies (anti-Black and exclusionary in nature) across the Americas forbade enslaved Africans from learning or being taught how to read and write with consequences ranging from lashes to death.⁶ Those were the lessons I learned from reading the narrative of Frederick Douglass⁷ as a youth. The Black periodicals to which my parents subscribed and had delivered to our apartment, such as *Ebony*, *Jet*, and *Enterprise*, reaffirmed the past, present, and future necessity of educational agendas, tools and resources, institutions, and advocacy. Black sitcoms and films of my childhood and teenage years, including *a Different World* and *The Great Debaters*, captured a world of our own. Historically and contemporarily, Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) operate as educational spaces that bring about and bring together influencers of social change while mirroring the complexities of our kinship networks and larger societies.

These institutions, their alumni, and their archives - to which I owe both my early scholarly development and intellectual orientations - house records and artifacts that have been necessary to this revisioning and Blackifying⁸ of student migration and student movement histories. My entangled educational and professional journeys, as a public policy specialist and social movement researcher, have shaped my interlocking research and advocacy agendas that locate and re-examine Black immigrant life and communities in U.S. history. The papers to follow, and the research I have proposed and conceptualized for the future, are a collection of

⁶ Williams, Heather Andrea. *Self-Taught : African American Education in Slavery and Freedom*. The John Hope Franklin Series in African American History and Culture. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2007. 13-14.

⁷ Douglass, Frederick. *Autobiographies : Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave ; My Bondage and My Freedom ; Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*. Edited by Henry Louis Gates. The Library of America, 68. New York: Literary Classics of the United States, 1994.

⁸ Benjamin, T. (2021). "Black immigrant invisibility within immigration advocacy and policy." *The Journal of the Center for Policy Analysis and Research*, (2021): 51-65.

interrelated articles - a culmination of years of extensive learning and unlearning, reading and research. The purpose of *The Geographies and Entanglements of Education and Mobility: A Focus on Black Nations and Black Immigrants, Past to Present* is to engage the narratives and perspectives of Black immigrants at-large, and Black immigrant students more specifically, on the interrelationships between immigration and education policies, as guided by Black geographic onto-epistemologies and methodologies.

Questions that guide this project are:

- 1) How have Black immigrants, and Black immigrant students specifically, understood their multiple, intersecting identities and how do these understandings shape how they navigate societies?
- 2) How do they understand and engage with/disengage from advocacy, activism, and politics,
- 3) What do they envision for themselves as students, as migrants, and as citizens (a status that continues to hold loosely for Black people across borders)?, and
- 4) What bonds and/or communities sustain them transnationally and how do they envision the roles of those bonds and communities in their futures?

The first chapter describes my onto-epistemological and methodological approach to uncovering and recovering the advocacy and activist histories and knowledges of Black immigrants in the United States. This chapter will be published in a peer-reviewed edited book in 2022. The second chapter delves into the impact of colonial rule on Black students' migrations to and experiences in France and the United Kingdom during the first half of the twentieth century. Focusing on African and Caribbean students' and student organizations' artifacts, the varied implications of these migrations and organizations on these students' lives are re-evaluated and

interwoven to tell the story of Black student migrants' political and social lives. This article closely reflects Black geographic thought and methods and provides rich historical and contextual information for understanding Black immigrant students' histories. Both papers prepare readers for the concluding, binding chapter of the project, which will provide historical, contextual, and methodological considerations for studying Black immigrant students in the United States.

This transtemporal, socio-spatial dissertation project will draw from a wide range of texts including peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters, academic and non-fiction books, archival materials and documents, conference and convening proceedings, demographic data, reports and white papers, government surveillance records, journal entries, letters, laws, policies and treaties, news periodicals, interviews, organizational records, reports and memos, photographs, and speeches. The literature reviewed has been compiled over a ten-year period - beginning with my undergraduate studies at Howard University and spanning the duration of my graduate studies at the University of Maryland, College Park. This is inclusive of time spent as a summer fellow at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture as well as a participant of Black Europe Summer School, in addition to research conducted for several Black immigrant organizations. Texts selected for review include works from the fields of applied science (specifically education, public administration, and policy), fine arts, humanities, law and legal studies, liberal arts, and social sciences. This proposed dissertation will model a careful, intentional exploration of the interdisciplinarity of Black (immigrant) lives and proposes, for future research, Black geographic studies of Black immigrant students' lives, experiences, and networks in the United States.

Black Geographies

Human geography concerns itself with the study of human relationships and interactions with, as well as organizations of, space and place. Its emergence and evolution as a formal discipline within the field of geography coincides with “the emergence of western nation-states and the processes of imperialism and colonialism that they have developed...[which] has been complicit in the erasure of other ways of thinking geographically⁹”. Black geographies, in uncovering the socio-spatial identities, agency, trajectories, and formations of Black people and Black spaces across the Diaspora, centers “singular thinkers, cases, or movements, and unpack their individual characteristics, presenting us with an understanding of specific territorial and place-making praxes.”¹⁰ Black geographies, as onto-epistemology and situated within the human geographic tradition, are concerned with:

1. “the ways in which essentialism situates black subjects and their geopolitical concerns as being elsewhere (on the margin, the underside, outside the normal)”
2. “How the lives of these subjects demonstrate that ‘common-sense’ workings of modernity and citizenship are worked out, and normalized, through geographies of exclusion”
3. “The situated knowledge of these communities and their contributions to both real and imagined human geographies [as] significant political acts and expressions¹¹”.

⁹ Cresswell, Tim. *Geographic Thought : A Critical Introduction*. Critical Introductions to Geography. Chichester, West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013. 261.

¹⁰ Bledsoe, Adam, and Willie Jamaal Wright. “The Pluralities of Black Geographies.” *Antipode* 51, no. 2 (2019): 419–37. <https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12467>. 420.

¹¹ McKittrick, Katherine, and Clyde Adrian Woods. *Black Geographies and the Politics of Place*. Toronto: Between the Lines, 2007. p. 4.

In the introductory chapter of their co-edited collection of essays on “race, blackness, and spatial politics in the diaspora,”¹² McKittrick and Woods also explain that Black geographies are necessarily interdisciplinary, allowing for geographic investigation of the material, bodily, and metaphoric spatialities of Blackness across temporalities. Black geographies, thus, move beyond the formal, colonial conventions of disciplinarity to uncover and recover spatial formations, trajectories, and identities within and across terrains of domination. McKittrick further explains Black geographies as “mnemonics that repeat and restore not dehumanization but unfurled and hidden ideas about collaboration and liberation¹³”. Black rebellion, liberation work, she argues, “is livingness; black livingness is unmeasurable; our despair and heartbreak and friendships and ways of loving and moving, are tethered to a dehumanizing system of knowledge, a monumental story, that is measured (unfaltering) and precise (quantifiable).”¹⁴

Bringing together historical, material, philosophical, and literary analyses to uncover multiple knowledges and experiences of Black women, McKittrick affirms that “Black matters are spatial matters. And while we all produce, know, and negotiate space—albeit on different terms—geographies in the diaspora are accentuated by racist paradigms of the past and their ongoing hierarchical patterns.”¹⁵ Citing and interweaving the works and narratives of Black geographical theorists across time and discipline, including Sylvia Wynter, Dionne Brand, Toni Morrison, Harriet Jacobs, Paul Gilroy, Stuart Hall, Frantz Fanon, Édouard Glissant, CLR James, and WEB DuBois, McKittrick analyzes the geographic sites and space-making praxes of Black women. She situates socio-spatial analysis within the context of racial dominance, hierarchies,

¹² McKittrick and Woods, 2007, viii.

¹³ McKittrick, Katherine. *Dear Science and Other Stories*. Errantries.. Durham: Duke University Press, 2021. 190

¹⁴ McKittrick, Katherine, 2021, 190

¹⁵ McKittrick, Katherine. *Demonic Grounds : Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006. xiii.

and taxonomies, allowing for deep exploration of material, imaginary, representational, and philosophical space and placemaking praxes across temporalities.

Figuroa-Vásquez's offering to and extension of black geographic tradition and methodology emphasizes the necessity of spatial analysis "for the ever-shifting attitudes and behaviors associated with racial projects in homelands, diasporic locales, and points in between."¹⁶ In what she theorized as the critical cartographies of racialization, Figuroa-Vásquez explains that

Critical cartographies of racialization help us to unpack and understand how Afro-descendant peoples are racialized in divergent ways, depending on their ethnic or national citizenship, location and ability to move or travel, class status, phenotype, and other factors. In tracking what Chandra Talpade Mohanty and Katherine McKittrick each call "cartographies of struggle," the concept of critical cartographies of racialization simultaneously attends to shifting subjective experiences and the seeming permanence of racism and anti-Blackness endemic to the modern world¹⁷.

Figuroa-Vásquez, while centering and focusing on Afro-Atlantic Hispanophone diasporas, presents, with critical cartographies of racialization, a "project of relationality"¹⁸ (p. 34) in the face of "shifting rules of race and racialization"¹⁹ (p. 44) grounded in the radical, decolonial, Black, and Women of Color (WOC) feminist intellectual traditions. Both uncovering and deconstructing African descendants' experiences with race, racism, and racialization across time, place, and space, through relational literary analysis of diasporic and exilic Puerto Rican, Cuban,

¹⁶ Figuroa-Vásquez Yomaira C, and Project Muse. *Decolonizing Diasporas : Radical Mappings of Afro-Atlantic Literature*. Book Collections on Project Muse. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2020. 268.

¹⁷ Figuroa-Vásquez, 2020, p. 44.

¹⁸ Figuroa-Vásquez, 2020, p. 34.

¹⁹ Figuroa-Vásquez, 2020, p. 44..

Dominican, and Equatoguinean texts, and critical cartographies, Figueroa-Vásquez engages with the personal, political, and poetic richness of Black experience, identity, agency, and life, overall.

McKittrick and Figueroa-Vásquez's theorizations, conceptualizations, and operationalizations of Black geographies underpin and facilitate research methodology that is "relational, intertextual, interdisciplinary, interhuman, and multidisciplinary."²⁰ In the chapters presented, analyses both center and honor the geographies, mobilities, and networks of Black immigrants and immigrant students by engaging their personal and cultural artifacts and intellectual production. They are cited, often in long quotations and beyond academic sources, to capture their vast livingness. Departing from widely cited texts, meant to capture the history of international student migration and presence in the United States as well as France and United Kingdom, the narratives and scholarly and intellectual production of Black immigrants and immigrant students underscore their acute awareness, navigation, and negotiation of the multitude of the systems, structures, and policies meant to administer, regulate, and commodify their mobilities and labor in the interest of both home and host countries and locales.

Chapter 1, an autoethnographic essay, brings the voices of Black immigrants to the United States together across generations, to tell our collective, connected stories. Similarly, Chapter 2 brings together the voices and artifacts of Black immigrant students to France and the United Kingdom to better understand their experiences throughout and beyond university matriculation. The proposed, concluding chapter seeks to revive and interpret the stories of Black immigrant students to the United States - a lesser known yet insightful, significant history that continues to shape nations and movements transnationally.

²⁰ McKittrick, Katherine. *Dear Science and Other Stories*. Errantries.. Durham: Duke University Press, 2021. 44.

Paper One:

Subversive Knowledges and Praxes of Black Immigrants in the United States:

Reflections from a Scholar-Advocate

won't you celebrate with me
what i have shaped into
a kind of life? i had no model.
born in babylon
both nonwhite and woman
what did i see to be except myself?
i made it up
here on this bridge between
starshine and clay,
my one hand holding tight
my other hand; come celebrate
with me that everyday
something has tried to kill me
and has failed.

- Won't You Celebrate With Me, Lucille Clifton

Clifton's poetics in *Won't You Celebrate With Me*²¹ function as an epistemological and methodological intervention for me as a researcher, scholar, and advocate. Born the last girl child of working-class West African immigrants in the heart of U.S. political decision making, I navigated barriers of systemic oppression with little guidance, as did my peers and the larger familial and community networks they belonged to. While surviving and navigating, the necessity of uncovering, recovering, and recording our past and present lives became deeply personal and political. Our societal positionalities, across nation-states, exist at the intersection of

²¹ Clifton, Lucille. "Won't you celebrate with me." *The Book of Light* (1993): 25.

anti-Blackness, misogynoir²², and cisheteropatriarchy²³ across the time/space that is Babylon - the “present Liberal-democratic nation state and Western world system.”²⁴ Despite a world committed to our systematic marginalization, exclusion, erasure, and oppression²⁵, we, as Black people, have been able to shape our lives and the lives of others, and “looking forward, [and] invested in futures we can’t quite grasp yet...wishing, hoping, aiming at everything that has been deemed impossible.”²⁶ The lives of Black immigrants in the United States, specifically those of advocates and organizers committed to community care and liberation, tell transnational narratives of resistance and decoloniality in practice, unsettling and reimagining the “dismantling of several layers of complex and entrenched colonial [and settler-colonial] structures, ideologies, narratives, identities and practices that pervade every aspect of our lives.”²⁷ Through their mobilities, spacemaking, and networks, Black immigrants navigate and subvert anti-Black state-sanctioned surveillance, policing, and violence while celebrating each day that the state failed in its efforts to remove us, both physically and materially, from the historical and contemporary record.

Interweaving personal stories and reflections with cultural and historic artifacts and scholarly works, in this paper, I will immerse myself within and commit myself to the subversive knowledges and praxes of Black immigrants by honoring and centering the cultural, intellectual, and political traditions and productions of Black immigrant advocates, past and present.

²² Bailey, Moya, and Trudy. "On misogynoir: Citation, erasure, and plagiarism." *Feminist Media Studies* 18, no. 4 (2018): 762-768.

²³ McLean, Shay-Akil. "Patriarchy & Gender." Decolonize ALL The Things, March 12, 2021. <https://decolonizeallthethings.com/learning-tools/patriarchy-gender-lesson-plan/>.

²⁴ Wynter, Sylvia. "Human being as noun? Or being human as praxis? Towards the autopoetic turn/overturn: A manifesto." *Unpublished essay* (2007). 25.

²⁵ Sharpe, Christina. *In the wake: On blackness and being*. Duke University Press, 2016.

²⁶ Olufemi, Lola. *Feminism, Interrupted : Disrupting Power*. Outspoken. London: Pluto Press, 2020. 1.

²⁷ Sylvia Tamale, *Decolonization and Afro-Feminism* (Ottawa, ON: Daraja Press, 2020), 20.

I will begin with an overview of my personal geographies, as a second-generation West African immigrant in the United States, followed by a detailed history of Black mobilities and migrations to the United States, focusing on the impact of US imperialistic policy interventions, across centuries, on the precarious nature of Black mobility and citizenship. I will pay careful attention to Black immigrant activists' and advocates' responses to and navigation of the U.S. global dominance apparatus, making way forward towards Black immigrants' futures.

Personal Geographies

Tiffany Lethabo King's, *The Black Shoals*²⁸, offers a necessary and thoughtful theorization of Black Studies' engagement with Native Studies and thought. The shoal is a metaphor for meeting space between two peoples, fields, and intellectual traditions as well as necessary space for reflection on the ways in which Black people "share the hemisphere with Indigenous people also experiencing the day-to-day terror of conquest."²⁹ Black immigrant histories and geographies exist across terrains of indigenous land dispossession and colonization, throughout the Western Hemisphere and the African continent. Forts, towns, and parishes across our lands bear the names of English kings and queens whose charters and treaties transformed and entangled our fates.

I was born and raised on Piscataway land, the child of Ghanaian and Sierra Leonean immigrants, in a small unincorporated area named Chillum. 'Chillum' was Chillum Castle Manor³⁰, established by a land patent in 1763 and owned by the Digges family. The Digges were descendants of a founder of the Virginia Company – "human rubbish from Europe, who used

²⁸ King, Tiffany Lethabo. *The Black shoals*. Duke University Press, 2019.

²⁹ King, Tiffany Lethabo. *The Black shoals: Offshore formations of Black and Native studies*. Duke University Press, 2019. x.

³⁰ Riggs, John Beverley. "Certain Early Maryland Landowners in the Vicinity of Washington." *Records of the Columbia Historical Society, Washington, DC* 48 (1946): p. 249-263.

enslaved but noble and exalted human beings from Africa...to satisfy their desire for wealth and power.”³¹ This occurred after near decimation of the Piscataway, once a powerful and complex polity³², similar to the Susquehannock and the Patawomeck. They established diplomatic relations and treaties with the infamous founding fathers of the United States - who neither honored nor respected the lands, histories, and cultures of Indigenous peoples across the Americas and Africa. The low-income apartment complex that I, and our African American and Black immigrant neighbor call home, was erected on land that holds the complex history of the United States’ inception and myth of *freedom and justice for all*. At least one dozen Black folk across generations were enslaved³³ on the manor, mirroring the feudality and brutality of British, and later American, society and governance.

The names of streets, buildings, and bodies of water in my community made clear simultaneous projects of indigenous removal and dispossession, in a manner that paralleled the preservation of surrounding manors and mansions that were the homes of colonists and early statesmen, which erased enslaved African lives and labor. I can recall learning more in school about the arrival of John Smith in Maryland in 1608 and the subsequent colonization of Piscataway land by charter in 1632 than learning from histories and artifacts of the Piscataway and other Indigenous tribes. I can recall a field trip to Riverside Plantation in middle school where staff strategically avoided questions on African enslavement and white violence, in favor of engaging with and learning from the diary of Adam Francis Plummer and the family

³¹ Kincaid, Jamaica. *A Small Place*. 1st ed. New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1988. 80.

³² Strickland, Scott M., Virginia R. Busby, and Julia A. King. "Indigenous Cultural Landscapes Study for the Nanjemoy and Mattawoman Creek Watersheds." *Report to National Park Service Chesapeake Bay Office, Annapolis, MD, from St. Mary's College of Maryland, St. Mary's City* (2015).

³³ "William Dudley Digges." William Dudley Digges b. 27 Oct 1790 Prince George's County, Maryland d. 17 Jun 1830 Prince George's County, Maryland: *Early Colonial Settlers of Southern Maryland and Virginia's Northern Neck Counties*. Accessed May 10, 2021. <https://www.colonial-settlers-md-va.us/getperson.php?personID=I021188&tree=Tree1>.

biography written by his daughter Nellie Arnold, in which she captures the “suffering and sorrow...[and] darkness and torment that the sin of slavery had caused”³⁴ her and her family while enslaved at Riverside.

These lands and the Black and Indigenous lives lived on them are all entangled with my own and the lives of Black immigrants to the United States, past, present, and future. Laws, policies, practices, and institutions of the United States’ settler-colonial government apparatus have always demonstrated how “the racialization of space is the organizing principle through which unequal and uneven development takes place, rather than the results of this development.”³⁵ Countries of origins for Black immigrants to the United States and our geographic dispersion have always been dependent (in part) upon the level of United States’ (and European) involvement in Western hemispheric and global affairs. From British colonization and slavery across West Africa and the Americas, to present day U.S. imperialism, conditions necessary for the systematicization and institutionalization of cisheteropatriarchal³⁶, white supremacist, imperialist governance (locally and globally) have been developed and implemented within and across the borders of the Washington D.C. metropolitan area and our collective migration stories are necessary for reading, untangling, and revision of history.

The remainder of this essay is an attempt to bring these stories together in a retelling of U.S. history by centering the presence and significance of Black immigrants. From scholars to

³⁴ Plummer, Nellie Arnold. *Out of the Depths, or, the Triumph of the Cross*. African-American Women Writers, 1910-1940. New York: G.K. Hall, 1997. 3.

³⁵ Summers, Brandi Thompson. *Black in place: The spatial aesthetics of race in a post-chocolate city*. UNC Press Books, 2019. p. 13.

³⁶ Decolonize All The Things (D.A.T.T.) defines cisheteropatriarchy as “a system of power based on the supremacy & dominance of cisheterosexual men through the exploitation & oppression of women and LGBTQIA* people. Also referred to as sexism. This includes oppressive constructs such as homophobia, transphobia, biphobia, etc.” “Patriarchy & Gender.” Decolonize ALL The Things, March 12, 2021. <https://decolonizeallthethings.com/learning-tools/patriarchy-gender-lesson-plan/>.

activists cited and poems to song lyrics referenced, the essay is heavily staturated with Black immigrant cultural artifacts and intellectual and artistic production - from the earliest of us to arrive to those of us living and navigating through the Covid19 pandemic.

Uncovering Early Black Immigrant Histories and Geographies

Refugees and Laborers– The First Among Us

Black immigrants' histories and geographies surround us. Black migrations to the United States, however, have been handled without care by immigration researchers and historians who often silence, reduce, and remove Black lives in acts of methodological and historiographic violence. Prominent African American sociologist Ira De Augustine Reid wrote extensively on these erasures while capturing the complexities of the growing, Black immigrant community during the early twentieth century, sharing that

Between 1899 and 1936 approximately 145,000 "Africans, Black" were legally admitted to the United States. A small number, one says. Yes, quantitatively perhaps, a very small number. But, it represents a group regarded as "utterly unassimilable" in the majority population as the native Negro population it joins. But, "Africans, Black" do come to our shores; furthermore, "Africans, Black" do assimilate. They come from the West Indies, Central America, South America, Africa, and the Azorean Island...these small aggregates of Negroes with their diverse customs, traditions, institutions and ideas of homeland, are not only modifying their own culture to conform to the status accorded Negroes in the United States, but are in turn modifying the culture of the American Negro in these communities and in the country as a whole.³⁷

Engaging with demographic information, research literature, government publications, primary documents, and material artifacts from as early as the eighteenth century further unveils both an

³⁷ Reid, Ira de A. "Negro immigration to the United States." *Social Forces* (1938): 411-417. 411.

emergent, diverse community absorbed within and present throughout Black America as well as mobilities and migrations influenced by the United States' hemispheric and global political agenda.

Black people from the Caribbean are the earliest of Black immigrants to migrate to and establish communities in the United States. Dodson and Diouf note that “distinguished Caribbean migrants populate the annals”³⁸ of early Black America. Refugees fleeing Saint Domingue during the Haitian Revolution arrived in the United States in the thousands during late 1700s and early 1800s³⁹, though their entry was met with skepticism and fear of Black uprising by U.S. politicians. Thomas Jefferson, in his correspondence to several prominent statesmen of the time, described Black migrants from Haiti as “the cannibals of the terrible republic”⁴⁰ and was certain that

all the West India islands will remain in the hands of the people of colour, and a total expulsion of the whites sooner or later take place. It is high time we should foresee the bloody scenes which our children certainly, and possibly ourselves (South of Patowmac) have to wade through, and try to avert them.⁴¹

Black Haitian migrants, whether free or enslaved, entered into and were the first to navigate the racialization of the US immigration apparatus - a year following the enactment of the 1790 Nationality Act which restricted citizenship to free, white persons. In the wake of the Haitian Revolution and emancipation across the Americas and Cape Verde Islands, Black folx and Black

³⁸ Dodson, Howard, Sylviane A Diouf, and Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. In *Motion : The African-American Migration Experience*. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic, 2004. 158.

³⁹ Lundy, Garvey F. "Early Saint Domingan Migration to America and the Attraction of Philadelphia." *Journal of Haitian Studies* 12, no. 1 (2006): 76-94. Accessed May 10, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41716763>.

⁴⁰ Thomas Jefferson to Aaron Burr, February 11, 1799, from *The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes*. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford. http://www.loc.gov/resource/mtj1.021_0875_0875

⁴¹ “From Thomas Jefferson to James Monroe, 14 July 1793,” Founders Online, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-26-02-0445>.

migrants, in particular, navigated the reconfiguration of what Cedric Robinson conceptualized as racial capitalism. He argued that

After the Civil War, in the wake of the years of fighting and the subsequent years of being victimized by terror and the manipulations of the industrial, financial, and plantocratic classes, streams of Black emigrationists sought again the safety of distance. In the late nineteenth century, like their migrating counterparts in South Africa, Brazil, and Cuba who desperately sought for distance from European settlements, American Blacks were convinced anew that their preservation as a people was at stake. The possibilities of that option, however, were already receding. New conditions, new resolves, and new stratagems were overtaking them. The formal endings of slave systems of production in the nineteenth century marked the beginnings of a profound reorganization of the capitalist world system. In Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Americas, through the deepening penetrations of monopoly capitalism and the impositions of hegemonic colonialisms, slaves were displaced as a source of cheap labor power by peasants and migrant laborers. In Africa, whereas the slave trade had dislocated the reproductive cycles of certain social formations along the coasts of West and southern Africa, the "new imperialism" of monopoly capitalism demanded a more destructive form of appropriation and exploitation. The colonial state parasitized the peasants of the continent's agrarian hinterlands, transforming traditional economic sectors from the project of reproduction into the source and support of forcibly recruited labor and the sites of cash-crop monoculture and the extraction of minerals and raw materials. To the extent that wage labor expanded in Africa, its level of support was limited to maintenance and not reproduction of labor. In the New World there were also changes. The systems of reconstitution of Black communities were, as well, assaulted by forms of forced labor: peonage, share-cropping, and less than subsistence farming. Moreover, Black workers were subject to displacement from productive land and to publicly and privately organized campaigns of terror and intimidation. Ineluctably, resistance was propelled toward new forms, new consciousness, and new ideologies.⁴²

Black Bahamian and Black Cuban economic migrants to Florida would follow, with early migrations beginning in the 1800s⁴³ and extending upwards and outwards to Tampa and Miami. In migrating out of the Caribbean, following severe, regional economic decline and depression, Bahamians and Cubans would both navigate, shape, and complexify Jim Crow Florida alongside, and often in community, with African Americans. In migrations paralleling those of the Afro-

⁴² Robinson, Cedric J. *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*. Univ of North Carolina Press, 2005. 311-312.

⁴³ Dunn, Marvin. *Black Miami in the Twentieth Century*. Florida History and Culture Series. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997.

Caribbean communities of Florida, the total abolition of slavery in Cape Verde in 1878 also commenced the earliest voluntary migrations from the African continent to the United States. Young Cape Verdean men set across the Atlantic to New England, leaving behind “poverty, drought, famine, and Portuguese colonialism”⁴⁴ on American whaling ships en route to Massachusetts as laborers for captains who “paid [them] lower wages than their American counterparts.”⁴⁵

Berlin, Brussels, and Beyond: The Origins of International Diplomacy and Early 20th Century Migrations

The transition into the twentieth century was marked by the emergence of the United States as a dominant actor in a larger, global system and terrain of political, economic, and militaristic power. The former colony earned its seat at the imperial table by way of genocide, slavery, and dispossession and would move to the head of the table over time. Focused solely on securing “unimpeded traffic of the Congo Valley and the west coast of Africa,”⁴⁶ The United States joined Western Europe in deliberations and agreed to resolutions at the 1884-1885 Berlin Conference and 1889-1890 Brussels Anti-Slavery conference that would catalyze and necessitate outward migration from Africa indefinitely. Signatory states divided the African continent among themselves and reserved the right to dispose and grant concessions for land and natural resource development, while continuing to “...watch over the preservation of the native

⁴⁴ Lima-Neves, Terza Alice Silva. "D'NOS MANERA-Gender, Collective Identity and Leadership in the Cape Verdean Community in the United States." *Journal of Cape Verdean Studies* 1, no. 1 (2015): 61.

⁴⁵ Halter, Marilyn. "Cape Verdeans in the US." *Transnational Archipelago* (2008): 35.

⁴⁶ United States. Department of State, and Berlin West Africa Conference (1884-1885 : Berlin, Germany). Message from the President of the United States, Transmitting a Report of the Secretary of State Relative to Affairs of the Independent State of the Congo. [United States] 49th Congress, 1st Session. Senate. Ex. Doc, No. 196. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1886. 318.

populations and to supervise the improvement of the conditions of their material well-being”⁴⁷ through charity/philanthropic, scientific, religious, and governmental institutions. The abolition of slavery was merely a byproduct of a larger “move into the imperialist epoch, and to colonise and further underdevelop Africa.”⁴⁸ resulting in political and economic conditions tethered to and dependent on the Global North.

In the case of US-Western Hemispheric relations, U.S. statesmen eyed and encroached on the lands and sovereignty of Caribbean and Latin American nations. The Treaty of Peace between the United States and Spain of 1898, the Hay-Pauncefote Treaty of 1901, the Hay–Herrán Treaty of 1903, the Hay–Bunau-Varilla Treaty of 1903, and the Treaty of the Danish West Indies of 1918 concretized U.S. imperialistic presence and rule throughout the circum-Caribbean region. Together, the treaties transformed coloniality in the region with various forms and articulations of U.S. imperial rule in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands and extended U.S. control over Panamanian land and waters for the purpose of constructing the Panama Canal. President Theodore Roosevelt, in his 1904 Annual Message to Congress, enshrined expanded hemispheric policy agenda setting, better known as the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine. He stated,

It is not true that the United States feels any land hunger or entertains any projects as regards the other nations of the Western Hemisphere save such as are for their welfare. All that this country desires is to see the neighboring countries stable, orderly, and prosperous...In asserting the Monroe Doctrine, in taking such steps as we have taken in regard to Cuba, Venezuela, and Panama, and in endeavoring to circumscribe the theater of war in the Far East, and to secure the open door in China, we have acted in our own interest as well as in the interest of humanity at large.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ "Convention Revising the General Act of Berlin, February 26, 1885, and the General Act and Declaration of Brussels, July 2, 1890." *The American Journal of International Law* 15, no. 4 (1921): p. 314-21.

⁴⁸ Robinson, Cedric J. *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*. Univ of North Carolina Press, 2005. 161.

⁴⁹ Theodore Roosevelt., “State of the Union Address” (speech, December 6, 1904), Theodore Roosevelt Center. <https://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org/Learn-About-TR/TR-Encyclopedia/Foreign-Affairs/Roosevelt-Corollary>

In the years to follow, between 1898 and 1934, the United States would invade and occupy Panama, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Haiti, and Honduras in the interest of banking⁵⁰, bananas⁵¹, military expansion, and control over Western hemispheric waters^{52,53}, all of which would not be possible without Black migration and labor exploitation and Indigenous land removal and dispossession.⁵⁴

The emergence of intergovernmental organizations followed shortly after. The intentions and models set in place in Berlin and Brussels guided and shaped the establishment of the League of Nations in 1919, with President Woodrow Wilson as its lead architect. Following the conclusion of the First World War in 1918, in which Black folx were mobilized and sacrificed in the interest of European ethno-nationalistic warfare, the League expressed in its Covenant that

Other peoples, especially those of Central Africa, are at such a stage that the Mandatory must be responsible for the administration of the territory under conditions which will guarantee freedom of conscience and religion, subject only to the maintenance of public order and morals, the prohibition of abuses such as the slave trade, the arms traffic and the liquor traffic, and the prevention of the establishment of fortifications or military and naval bases and of military training of the natives for other than police purposes and the defence of territory, and will also secure equal opportunities for the trade and commerce of other Members of the League.

There are territories, such as South-West Africa and certain of the South Pacific Islands, which, owing to the sparseness of their population, or their small size, or their remoteness from the centres of civilisation, or their geographical contiguity to the territory of the Mandatory, and other circumstances, can be best administered under the laws of the Mandatory as integral portions of its territory, subject to the safeguards above mentioned in the interests of the indigenous population.

⁵⁰ Hudson, Peter James. *Bankers and empire: How wall street colonized the caribbean*. University of Chicago Press, 2017.

⁵¹ Martin, James W. *Banana Cowboys : The United Fruit Company and the Culture of Corporate Colonialism*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2018.

⁵² Torreon, Barbara Salazar, and Sofia Plagakis. "Instances of Use of United States Armed Forces Abroad, 1798–2020." *Congressional Research Service* 42738 (2020).

⁵³ Vine, David. *The United States of War: A Global History of America's Endless Conflicts, from Columbus to the Islamic State*. University of California Press, 2020.

⁵⁴ Doig-Acuña, Maya. "The Most Caribbean of Stories." *Southern Cultures* 26, no. 4 (2020): 12-23.

The League would later evolve into the United Nations in 1945 following the Second World War (in a manner mirroring the League's origin), in tandem with the World Bank Group in 1944 and the International Monetary Fund in 1945, following the 1944 Bretton Woods Conference.

Barriteau argues that

The 1945 Bretton Woods meetings that created the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD or World Bank) were informed by an intellectual and ideological climate dominated by the United States. This dominance transcended military superiority to include an intellectual hegemony that has been and continues to be played out in scholarship, research, and policy-making with respect to developing countries (Barriteau Foster, "Review Essay"). The IMF and IBRD view nonindustrialized countries as premodern. Their goal is to steer these countries to full modernity through Westernization and capitalist penetration...At its core is the intent to re-create developing countries according to the demands of capitalist production and Western systems of values and institutions.⁵⁵

These reconfigurations of imperial political and economic policy and governance were based on longstanding, global capitalistic commitments to displacement, dispossession, and labor exploitation in service of the global North. For Black immigrants, settlement across nation-states - by way of treaties, agreements, and bilateral relations - necessitated "forming diasporic subjectivities through movement across multiple Souths, and through reliance on each other in navigating these spaces."⁵⁶ Their worldmaking, equally global and longstanding, is an amalgamation of people, enclaves and communities, nations, and movements (physical and social) that have shaped history for centuries.

Origins of Black Immigrant Worldmaking, Activism, and Advocacy

The worldmaking projects of Black immigrants in the United States reaches back far, with religious and educational institutions serving as key sites for historiographic recovery. In

⁵⁵ Barriteau, V. *The political economy of gender in the twentieth-century Caribbean*. Springer, 2001. p. 143.

⁵⁶ Doig-Acuña, Maya. "The Most Caribbean of Stories." *Southern Cultures* 26, no. 4 (2020): 16.

spite of the complexities of educational attainment following the emancipation period,⁵⁷ Black students from across Africa, the Caribbean, and Latin America traveled to the United States and acquired skills and built networks that existed in and had influence beyond their college and university campuses. Annual convention journals from The National Baptist Association from the late 1800s and early 1900s⁵⁸ as well as early catalogues and student newspapers from historically Black colleges and universities such as Spelman⁵⁹ and Hampton⁶⁰ captured Black international students' experiences, and contributions locally and globally. Black migrants such as Mother Mary Lange⁶¹, founder of the Oblate School for Colored Girls in 1828 in Baltimore, M.D. and Dr. Sophia B. Jones, founder of Spelman College's Department of Nursing in 1885⁶², transformed the educational trajectories of students during and beyond their lifetimes.

Organizing and advocacy in the interest of Black folx and communities, regardless of citizenship status, has also been deeply embedded within Black immigrant worldmaking projects. Between 1919 and 1927, for example, the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League (UNIA), which was founded in Jamaica by Marcus Garvey, was headquartered in Harlem. At its height, the organization's vision and mission resonated deeply with working class Black immigrants and African Americans alike.⁶³ Among some of the

⁵⁷ Span, Christopher M., and Brenda N. Sanya. "Education and the African diaspora." *The Oxford handbook of the history of education* (2019): 399-412.

⁵⁸ Journal of the Annual Session of the National Baptist Convention. United States: National Baptist Publication Board, 1899.

⁵⁹ "Spelman in Africa, Africa in Spelman" Spelman Messenger November 1915 vol. 32 no. 2
<http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12322/sc.001.messenger:1915.07>

⁶⁰ "Are the African Youths in Training Worth the Cost?" The Institute Monthly January 1912 vol. 4 no. 7
http://library.wvstateu.edu/archives/college_publications/Institute-Monthly/1912-01.pdf

⁶¹ Morrow, Diane Batts. *Persons of Color and Religious at the Same Time: The Oblate Sisters of Providence, 1828-1860*. Univ of North Carolina Press, 2002.

⁶² Reid-Maroney, Nina. "African Canadian Women and the New World Diaspora, c. 1865." *Canadian Woman Studies* 23, no. 2 (2004).

⁶³ Blain, Keisha N. *Set the world on fire: Black nationalist women and the global struggle for freedom*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018.

UNIA's top activists were immigrants such as Louise Langdon Norton Little⁶⁴, Laura Adorkor Kofi⁶⁵, and Carlos A. Cooks.⁶⁶ During the same time, Madame Stephanie St. Clair's French Legal Society was welcoming Black immigrants to New York City as she was both subjected to and subverted criminalization and policing as one of Harlem's top policy bankers.⁶⁷ Likewise, Claudia Jones' activist origins would take root in the U.S. Communist Party during the campaign to free the Scottsboro boys, and labor organizer Maida Kemp's work with the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union would just begin.

The Harlem Renaissance (and all Black cultural and literary movements beyond) also has the African, Caribbean, and Latin American imprints. Claude McKay's famous 1919 poem, *If We Must Die*, is one of the most famed sonnets of the period, arguably marking the beginning of the Harlem Renaissance and a call to increased race and class consciousness. He wrote,

If we must die, let it not be like hogs
Hunted and penned in an inglorious spot,
While round us bark the mad and hungry dogs,
Making their mock at our accursèd lot.
If we must die, O let us nobly die,
So that our precious blood may not be shed
In vain; then even the monsters we defy
Shall be constrained to honor us though dead!
O kinsmen! we must meet the common foe!
Though far outnumbered let us show us brave,
And for their thousand blows deal one death-blow!
What though before us lies the open grave?
Like men we'll face the murderous, cowardly pack,
Pressed to the wall, dying, but fighting back!⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Collins, Merle. "Louise Langdon Norton Little, Mother of Malcolm X." *Caribbean Quarterly* 66, no. 3 (2020): 346-369.

⁶⁵ Newman, Richard. *This Far By Faith: Readings in African-American Women's Religious Biography*. United States: Taylor & Francis, 2014.

⁶⁶ Cooks, Carlos A. *Carlos Cooks and Black Nationalism from Garvey to Malcolm*. The Majority Press, 1992.

⁶⁷ Harris, LaShawn. "Playing the Numbers: Madame Stephanie St. Clair and African American Policy Culture in Harlem." *Black Women, Gender & Families* 2, no. 2 (2008): 53-76.

⁶⁸ McKay, Claude. "If we must die." *The Liberator* 2, no. 6 (1919): 21.

The collected texts and artifacts of historian, writer, and archivist Arturo Schomburg were acquired by the New York Public Library in 1926 and are now housed in the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. Andy Razaf's *Ain't Misbehavin'* (1929) and *Honeysuckle Rose* (1929) are both widely recognized jazz standards, securing his place in the Songwriters Hall of Fame.⁶⁹

The political, cultural, and intellectual productions of these (and other) members of the Black immigrant community captured the complexities of diasporic subjectivities and, in their critique of imperialism and white supremacy, were met with surveillance and policing. The federal government spied extensively on Black immigrant activists, as is captured in the declassified files of Marcus Garvey⁷⁰, Claude McKay⁷¹, Andy Razaf⁷², and Claudia Jones.⁷³ Garvey's and Jones' activism both resulted in their deportation. On her deportation, Jones (who is of Trinidadian origin) shared

I was deported from the USA because, as a Black woman Communist of West Indian descent, I was a thorn in their side in my opposition to Jim Crow racist discrimination against 16 million Black Americans in the United States in my work for redress of these grievances for unity of Black and white workers, for women's rights, and my general political activity urging the American people to help by their struggles to change the present foreign and domestic policy of the United States. I was deported and refused an opportunity to complete my American citizenship because I fought for peace, against the huge arms budget which funds should be directed to improving the social needs of the people. I was deported because I urged the prosecution of lynchers rather than prosecution of Communists and other democratic Americans who oppose the lynchers

⁶⁹ Songwriters Hall of Fame. "Andy Razaf." Andy Razaf | Songwriters Hall of Fame. Accessed May 11, 2021. https://www.songhall.org/profile/Andy_Razaf.

⁷⁰ United States Government. Federal Bureau of Investigation. Marcus Garvey files. <https://vault.fbi.gov/marcus-garvey/marcus-garvey-part-01-of-12-1/view>

⁷¹ United States Government. Federal Bureau of Investigation. Claude McKay files. <http://omeka.wustl.edu/omeka/exhibits/show/fbeyes/mckay>

⁷² United States Government. Federal Bureau of Investigation. Andy Razaf files. <http://omeka.wustl.edu/omeka/exhibits/show/fbeyes/razaf>

⁷³ United States Government. Federal Bureau of Investigation. Claudia Jones files. <https://vault.fbi.gov/Claudia%20Jones%20/Claudia%20Jones%20Part%201%20of%2010/view>

and big financiers and warmongers, the real advocates of force and violence in the USA.⁷⁴

Jones' analysis of the entanglements and intersections with the U.S. imperial project so greatly shaped her activism and necessitated her removal by the state, as it had for other Black immigrants in opposition to the evolving criminalization apparatus of the United States government and the oppressive conditions it sustained and exacerbated locally and globally.

Under Pressure from Washington: Black Migration and Advocacy in Response to U.S. Global Dominance Apparatus

Global Monetary Coercion and Contemporary Black Migrations

The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, the United States' Legislative, Executive and Judicial Branches (and their respective departments and subsidiaries), and the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Central Intelligence Agency concretized the political, economic, and militaristic apparatus of U.S. global dominance. Existing neatly within Washington D.C., with no agency being no more than four miles away from the other, their buildings and conference rooms were named in memory of past statesmen who drafted and enacted policies and legislation that dictated our migratory pathways long before our entries.

Since the Second World War, capitalistic land, labor, and resource needs have fueled the apparatus of U.S. global dominance. In 1943, as the result of an intergovernmental agreement between Britain and the United States federal government, the British West Indies Temporary Labor Program would make way for Black agricultural migrants from Jamaica, the Bahamas,

⁷⁴ "I Was Deported Because I Fought the Colour Bar." Interview with George Bowrin. *Caribbean News* (June 1956). Quoted in Buzz Johnson, *'I Think of My Mother': Notes on the Life and Times of Claudia Jones* (London: Karia Press, 1985).

Barbados, and British Honduras to Southern Florida's sugar cane fields.⁷⁵ They would replace generations of African Americans laborers (pre- and post-emancipation period), from pre- to post-colonial Jamaica, laying the blueprint for the H-2 Worker program, which continues to depend on Jamaican labor on sugar, cherry, and apple fields across the United States. The recent death of Earl Edwards⁷⁶ in Washington state, a Jamaican H-2 worker who contracted and died as a result of COVID while working on Gebbers Farms, connects to decades of exploitative labor agreements, through which Black migrant lives have been exploited and ended prematurely. Mutabaruka captures workers' experiences in his 1989 song, *H2 Worka* (Dedicated to the Farm Workers of Jamaica).

I am a H2 worka
Comin' from de island of Jamaica
I am a H2 worka
Cuttin' cane inna Florida
Workin' suh hard in de burnin' sun
Wonderin' if slavery really dun
I'm workin.. workin'
Workin' on yuh cane field still
Workin', workin'
Workin' for yuh meager dolla bill
Suh don't bite de hands dat feed yuh
I have dreams like you to
Don't treat mi like I'm a slave here
Jus' gih mi a wage dat is fair

I am a H2 worka
Pickin' apple inna Florida
I am a H2 worka
Hopin' dat tings will be betta
Suh don't teck mi fi granted and pass mi
Like is only yuh cane and apple yuh si
Don't teck it fi joke an' run mi
Den sen to mi govament fi more a wi

⁷⁵ Violet, Joyce C. *The West Indies (BWI) Temporary Alien Labor Program, 1943-1977: A Study*. US Government Printing Office, 1978.

⁷⁶ Ferriss, Susan. "Hidden Hardship: Guest Farmworkers with Visas Died of COVID-19 in Obscurity While Trump Planned Wage Freezes." Center for Public Integrity, December 23, 2020. <https://publicintegrity.org/inequality-poverty-opportunity/immigration/guest-farm-workers-visas-trump-wage-freezes/>.

Dis is not slavery, jus' poverty
Talkin' to democracy

Betta yuh did sen mi to war
Den a woulda si at a fitin' for
Jus' de needy, talkin' to de greedy
Jus' de goodness, of de restless
Wantin' to make a betta life
For mi children and wife

Suh a com to yuh lan to help yuh
To help mi, to help wi
Dis is not slavery, jus' poverty
Wantin' democracy

Suh don't bite de hands dat feed yuh
I have dreams like you to
Don't teck mi situation fi weakness
Don't even tink dat I am helpless
A gettin' restless
Workin' on yuh cane field still⁷⁷

The establishment of the World Bank in 1944 and the International Monetary Fund in 1945 to rebuild the economies of Europe would ensure the indefinite economic co-dependency of African and Caribbean colonies turned independent nation-states. In need of capital for nation-building projects following centuries of colonial rule, the World Bank's and IMF's structural adjustment programs resulted in "the abolition or liberalization of foreign exchange and import controls, the devaluation of the currency, and domestic anti-inflationary policy specifically targeted at government spending⁷⁸" across African, Caribbean, and Latin American economies. The 1970s and 1980s, in particular, proved devastating, across Black nations⁷⁹ and their

⁷⁷ Hope, Allan (Mutabaruka). H2 Worka (For the Farm Works of Jamaica). Shanachie, 1989, <https://www.jah-lyrics.com/song/mutabaruka-h2-worka>.

⁷⁸ Barriteau, V. Eudine. "Structural adjustment policies in the Caribbean: A feminist perspective." *NWSA Journal* (1996): 142-156. 144.

⁷⁹ Structural Adjustment Participatory Review International Network. *Structural adjustment: the SAPRI report; the policy roots of economic crisis, poverty, and inequality; a report on a Joint Participatory Investigation by Civil Society and the World Bank of the impact of structural adjustment policies*. Zed Books, 2004.

diasporas in the United States.⁸⁰ While Shirley Chisholm (also known as Pepperpot) critiqued the Reagan administration in Congress for the inherent anti-Black racism of the immigration system overall and refugee policies specifically⁸¹, deejays across borders captured the global climate and built on Chisholm's critique of Reagan and his contemporaries. As Caribbean Diasporan deejays and hip hop architects⁸² utilized the newly emerged genre to speak to the social conditions of urban Black America, Jamaican deejay Super Cat captured the global state of affairs in his 1985 single *Under Pressure*.

True the leaders of di world ah dem a fight fi power
And one ah dem ah seh him control America
Di next one ah seh him rule inna Russia
And ah one ah dem ah seh him control China
Di next one ah seh him control Cuba
One ah rule Libya, one rule Uganda
But mi seh gunshot a buss up innah Nicaragua
And every day they get up turning like a gorilla
Kadaffi a de leader mi seh down ah Libya
Him no 'fraid a Ronald Reagan who a run America

'Cause if they start the war ah bare nuclear power
But ah every day dem get up fighting like ah gorilla
And fighting fi the world whey control by Jah Jah
But mi ask you a question, mi want an answer
Seh where is the throne, up a Addis Ababa
Mi sey down ah Africa, down in Ethiopia
And some say Jah dead and it not have no honour
But a why dem don't give to a prime minister?
Or give a President or a heir or leader
If a guy touch the throne Jah set him soul 'pon Fire
Come on take it from the Cat the bare back rider

Weh mi call it
Under pressure, the world under pressure, tell yuh mother
Under pressure, the world under pressure, tell yuh father
Under pressure, the world under pressure, tell your yuh friend dem

⁸⁰ "Falling Behind: A Report on How Blacks Have Fared Under Reagan." *Journal of Black Studies* 17, no. 2 (1986): 148-71.

⁸¹ Chisholm, Shirley. "US policy and black refugees." *Issue: A Journal of Opinion* 12, no. 1/2 (1982): 22-24.

⁸² Perry, Imani. *Prophets of the hood: Politics and poetics in hip hop*. Duke University Press, 2004.

Under pressure, the world under pressure
Tru the leaders of di world ah dem a fight fi power
And every day dem get up living like a gorilla
I say million ah spend 'pon di nuclear power

And all over the world poor people ah suffer
But a why dem don't tek the money, feed sufferer
Come tek if from the Cat the bare back rider
You no hear whey ah gwaan down inna South Africa
Poor people was killed by fly and mosquito
And ah listen mister Cat a murder mi charge for
Mi say Africa the land of the black structure
But the white man invade and rip off we silver
Yes, dem tek ah fi we gold and make a bag a dollar
Every day dem have the black man under pressure⁸³

Mass Surveillance and Criminalization of Black Immigrants and Black Immigrant Communities

Black immigrants who resettled in United States during the Cold War, did so under the pressure of macro-level fiscal and monetary policy and external lending that “contributed to the further impoverishment and marginalization of local populations, while increasing economic inequality.”⁸⁴ Moreover, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Central Intelligence Agency, along with the Departments of State and Defense worked (across time) in tandem to undermine and disrupt political infrastructures and movements across borders. Declassified intelligence gathered on African, Caribbean, and Latin American international students and movement leaders from the 1960s to the 1980s⁸⁵ capture the anxieties and fears of the United States

⁸³ Maragh, William A. (Super Cat). Under Pressure. Power House. 1985. <https://www.jah-lyrics.com/song/super-cat-under-pressure>.

⁸⁴ SAPRIN (Organization), World Bank, and Citizens' Assessment of Structural Adjustment (Organization). *The Policy Roots of Economic Crisis and Poverty : A Multi-Country Participatory Assessment of Structural Adjustment : Executive Summary*. Washington, DC: SAPRIN, 2002. p. 173.

⁸⁵ United States Government. Central Intelligence Agency. Cuban Training and Support for African Nationalists, January 31, 1964. <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/document/cia-rdp79-00927a004300100001-5> ; United States Government. Central Intelligence Agency. Aid and Trade Activities of Communist Countries inn Less Developed Areas of the Free World, February 1, 1964. <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/document/cia-rdp92b01090r000400010017-5>; United States Government. Central Intelligence Agency. Black Radicalism in the Caribbean - Another Look, June 12 1970. <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/document/cia->

government, with respect to the transnational reach and impact of Black liberation and solidarity movements. This coincides with political interventions, invasions, and occupations of Panama, Haiti, and Grenada during the 1980s and 1990s⁸⁶, and immigration reform laws during the 1980s and 1990s that continue to funnel immigrants through the prison-to-deportation pipeline.

...the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA), the Illegal Immigration and Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (IIRIRA), and the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996 (AEDPA)... form[ed] the basis of a shifting rhetoric that conflated improper entry with unauthorized presence while targeting and criminalizing immigrants of specific racial, ethnic, national, and religious backgrounds. While the IRCA offered legal status for several million unauthorized immigrants who entered the US before January 1, 1982, it also paved the way for increased resources for enhanced border security along the US/Mexico border and sanctioned employers found hiring undocumented workers. The IIRIRA and AEDPA took the criminalization of unauthorized presence further by expanding the grounds for arrest, detainment, and deportation while significantly increasing funding for border control (almost exclusively at the US/Mexico border).⁸⁷

As a result, Clinton-era law that encouraged toughness⁸⁸ and rigidity, as opposed to reparations and social welfare, was deeply rooted in anti-Black racism and exacerbated "... the vulnerabilities of Black immigrants, and, moreover, the reduced visibility of this diverse population within immigration and criminal reform advocacy impede[d] efforts to advance meaningful immigration and criminal reform."⁸⁹ Later, compounded by Bush-era immigration law, the Department of Homeland Security and its subsidiaries were established in 2001. With Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Black immigrant communities across the country

[rdp85t00875r001100090030-4](https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP91-00965R000200020027-7.pdf); United States Government. Central Intelligence Agency. Cuba: Educating Future Third World Leaders, November 3 1980. <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP91-00965R000200020027-7.pdf>

⁸⁶ Vine, David. *The United States of War: A Global History of America's Endless Conflicts, from Columbus to the Islamic State*. University of California Press, 2020.

⁸⁷ Brantuo, Nana Afua Y. "Targeted: Undocumented Black Immigrants Under Trump." AAIHS, June 26, 2017. <https://www.aaihs.org/targeted-undocumented-black-immigrants-under-trump/>.

⁸⁸ Bill Clinton., "State of the Union Address" (speech, January 23, 1996), White House (Clinton Archives). <https://clintonwhitehouse4.archives.gov/WH/New/other/sotu.html>

⁸⁹ Palmer, Breanne J. "The crossroads: Being black, immigrant, and undocumented in the era of# BlackLivesMatter." *Geo. JL & Mod. Critical Race Persp.* 9 (2017): 103.

watched as Washington D.C. created inhumane and unjust policies that have resulted in increased policing and surveillance, criminalization, deportation, and separation of families, loved ones, and communities.⁹⁰

Contemporary Advocacy for and Towards Black Immigrant Futures

The disappointments of the Obama administration, the nightmare that was the Trump Administration, and the underwhelming first year of the Biden administration have been met with fierce resistance from organizations such as the UndocuBlack Network, the Black LGBTQIA+ Migrant Project, African Communities Together, Haitian Bridge Alliance, and the Black Alliance for Just Immigration. Together, in their commitment to reparative justice and policy, they have pushed forward analysis that takes into consideration “...the legacy of racial slavery and post-slavery colonization...[and] long-lasting and multi-layered negative results such as mass exodus, displacement, debt accumulation, and increasing health disparities.”⁹¹ From public comments to the Department of Homeland Security and United States Citizenship and Immigration Services⁹², as well as in reports that capture the state of Black immigrants in the United States as a whole, Black lives at the U.S./Mexico border⁹³⁹⁴, Black immigrant

⁹⁰ Hilal, M. (2022). *Innocent Until Proven Muslim: Islamophobia, the War on Terror, and the Muslim Experience Since 9/11*. Broadleaf Books.

⁹¹ Baldwin, Andrea N., and Mortley, Natasha K. (2020). Caribbean Women and Reparatory Justice: Reclaiming, Rebuilding and Restoring Communities Through Migration. *International Journal of Africana Studies (IJAS)*, 21 (1-2), 43-64. 49-50.

⁹² UndocuBlack Network, Comment Letter on in Response to Proposed Changes to Public Charge Ground of Inadmissibility (Dec. 10. 2018) <https://www.regulations.gov/comment/USCIS-2010-0012-55780>

⁹³ S. Priya Morley et al., “There is a Target on Us” – The Impact of Mexico’s Anti-Black Racism on African Migrants at Mexico’s Southern Border (2021).

⁹⁴ Ndugga-Kabuye, B., Lipscombe, C., Adossi, N., Tometi, O., & Belay, T. (2018). *Black Lives at the Border*. Black Alliance for Just Immigration. Retrieved from <http://nyf.issuelab.org/resources/30546/30546.pdf>

experiences across gender and sexual identities⁹⁵, and the experiences of African hair braiders navigating professional licensure in New York City⁹⁶, these organizations build on legacies of and push forward necessary advocacy in service of Black immigrants, migrants, and refugees across the United States.

The histories and narratives born out of Black mobilities and migrations across time and space have reimagined and reconstructed local, national, and global socio-political terrains. Despite the origins of and modern functions of racial categorization and racialization as embedded within the larger white supremacist and hegemonic project, African and African descendant people have and continue to operationalize and utilize Blackness as a means of defying physical, social, political, economic, spatial, and temporal boundaries. Black immigrants' US experiences necessitate transnational space-making, socio-political strategizing, organizing, and mobilization embedded in rhetoric and actions of solidarity and collaboration. Kadiatou Diallo, in reflecting on her son Amadou's murder by the New York Police Department in 1999, explains that

The anger expressed by people at rallies for Amadou was built on a history that I did not have and could not know, no more than they could know the specific terror of hiding in a pit, thinking that soldiers with guns and machetes were on their way. But the distinctions in our suffering were based more on fate than anything else. Their ancestors had been taken away to suffer the horror of slavery, and mine, through nothing but a slight accident of geography, stayed free, and lived to suffer the hardships of Africa. Our pasts and our futures now intersected through Amadou.⁹⁷

With shared cultures, heritages, histories, and realities, it is of the utmost importance to reimagine Black immigrant mobilities and spaces and the material, media, literary, historical,

⁹⁵ Labiran, Catherine. "Our Stories & Visions Gender in Black Immigrant Communities." BAJI, 2020. <https://baji.org/our-stories-and-visions/>.

⁹⁶ African Communities Together, and TakeRoot Justice. "Licensing a Legacy." African Communities Together, January 28, 2021. <https://africans.us/licensing-legacy>.

⁹⁷ Diallo, Kadiatou, and Craig Thomas Wolff. *My heart will cross this ocean: My story, my son, Amadou*. One World/Ballantine, 2004. 247.

cultural artifacts, and primary resources born out of them, to initiating the “exploration of the new reconceptualized form of knowledge”⁹⁸ of Blackness in the United States. They show us, Africans and African descendants across borders, the models we have made, in past and present, that re-imagine the world and Black life and living. Across ethnic enclaves, Baptist churches, and HBCU campuses, in anthologies and periodicals, even in musical compositions and song lyrics, Black immigrants and Black Americans are bound to each other across centuries. Revisiting the record and actively reconceptualizing ourselves and our humanity is essential to our praxis of Blackness.

⁹⁸ McKittrick, Katherine, ed. *Sylvia Wynter: On being human as praxis*. Duke University Press, 2015. 23.

Paper Two:
Meeting in the Metropole: African and Caribbean Students' Geographies
in France and United Kingdom

Vignette - The Story of Kofoworola Aina Moore (1913-2002)

To understand Nigeria, you need to appreciate where it came from. In 1900, Britain officially assumed responsibility for the administration of the whole of what we now know as Nigeria from the Niger Company. And then, gradually over the years, British protectorates were established throughout the territory. In 1914, the protectorates were amalgamated into one Nigeria. Actually, there's one additional detail that bears mentioning. In order to take over the territories from the Niger Company, the British Government paid 865,000 pounds, a huge amount in 1900. So let's establish a simple truth. The British didn't travel halfway across the world just to spread democracy. Nigeria started off as a business deal for them, between a company and a government. Incidentally, the Niger Company is still around today. Only it is known by a different name, Unilever. But that's another story.⁹⁹

Lady Kofoworola Aina Moore (Ademola), notable Nigerian educationist and writer, was the first Black African woman to earn a degree from Oxford University. She was born in 1913, one year prior to the amalgamation of Nigeria and would come of age during the Interwar Period. In Moore's 1936 autobiography, *The Story of Kofoworola Aina Moore, of the Yoruba Tribe, Nigeria*, she narrates herself into history - sharing her perspectives and critiques of the societies she and fellow students from the colonies navigated. She begins, stating,

Opinions vary with regard to the status of the so-called 'educated African'. While some regard him as the greatest enemy of his country, from which he becomes detached, and for which he can only develop a sophisticated form of patriotism: others look upon him

⁹⁹ Burna Boy and M.anifest, "Another Story," 2019, Atlantic/Bad Habit/Spaceship Records, track 10 on *African Giant*, 2019, compact disc.

as the means of creating a link between two countries of such different culture, with both of which he is acquainted.¹⁰⁰

Her time at Oxford was one of disillusionment and loneliness - with the exception of her engagement with fellow students from the colonies. She shares,

If I were asked to sum up my ideas and impressions about Oxford, they would be expressed in the wish that there could be, at least, two African girl scholars in Oxford each year... Oxford is no longer 'a city of dreaming spires', and no longer the secluded arbour of the privileged and the rich. With the incoming of the scholarship undergraduate, the Oxford outlook has widened and has become openly more liberal... Oxford is keenly alive to the question of the colonies: India has recently been very much in the limelight; African questions are always at issue. In fact, though I have been disillusioned often by the Oxford Union, I find I retrace my steps there to hear debates on some problems of the Colonies. The education of Oxford is liberal in the old sense of the word. It does not train specialists for any trade or profession its aim to improve and make it a good instrument for whatever work it may be put to. These then are the reasons for my expressed wish that there could be a number of African girls in Oxford.¹⁰¹

On her return to Nigeria, she expresses anxiety mixed with excitement. Her eagerness to return home, newly awarded with degrees in education and English, materialized into a lifelong career dedicated to the educational needs and experiences of Nigerian girls and women.¹⁰²

Before ending her narrative, she states clearly, "I hold no theories on 'the African' and what he should be. I have sadly failed indeed to understand the phrase, which I have noticed is applied by the Europeans and never by an African himself."¹⁰³ Years later, the "theories on the African" live

¹⁰⁰ Moore, Kofoworola Aina. "The Story of Kofoworola Aina Moore, of the Yoruba Tribe, Nigeria." *Ten Africans* (1936): 323-43. p. 323., George, Abosede A. *Making Modern Girls: a history of girlhood, labor, and social development in colonial Lagos*. Ohio University Press, 2014. 30.

¹⁰¹ Moore, Kofoworola Aina. "The Story of Kofoworola Aina Moore, of the Yoruba Tribe, Nigeria." *Ten Africans* (1936): 331-332.

¹⁰² Roberts, Pamela. *Black Oxford: The Untold Stories of Oxford University's Black Scholars*. Andrews UK Limited, 2014. 37.

¹⁰³ Moore, Kofoworola Aina. "The Story of Kofoworola Aina Moore, of the Yoruba Tribe, Nigeria." *Ten Africans* (1936): 340.

on, as do the words of Moore as insight into and caution against the homogenization of African students enrolled at institutions abroad.

Introduction

Because European colonial education policies and institutions were grounded in European/white supremacy, education systems throughout the colonies largely focused on subjugation and assimilation to meet the labor needs and political agendas of the empire. Throughout the colonial period, education systems were developed and implemented for the purpose of: 1) ensuring widespread, unquestioned subjection to European colonialism and imperialism, 2) the devaluation of indigenous systems and productions of knowledge, and 3) overall assimilation into and acceptance of imperial society.¹⁰⁴ Educational access to and opportunities at the postsecondary level for colonial subjects were limited, making the pool of eligible university students small and the pipeline to the university narrow, as higher education institutions in the colonies were mostly established between the 1920s and 1950s. However, despite the lack of higher education systems and institutions in the colonies prior to the end of the colonial era, a small stream of eligible students migrated to Europe in pursuit of bachelor's and advanced degrees. Out of these migrations, fueled and regulated by needs determined by the colonial government, higher educational institutions and European metropolises at-large became, ironically, bastions for intellectual and cultural productions and resistance that contributed to the decline and disintegration of the empire.

The purpose of this paper is to interrogate and reframe conventional understandings of the metanarrative of African and Caribbean student mobility, migration, and agency during the

¹⁰⁴ Rodney, Walter, A. M Babu, and Vincent Harding. *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. Rev. pbk.ed. Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1981.

early half of the twentieth century. The primary question guiding this paper is: How do African and Caribbean colonial students' geographies in the United Kingdom and France, up until the mid-twentieth century, represent placemaking and network-building based on their multiple, intersecting identities and needs? The analysis prioritizes colonial students' cultural artifacts and accounts of the impact of colonial rule on their individual and collective experiences to provide a nuanced discussion on the transnational impacts and implications of African and Caribbean students' mobilities and geographies.

Historical Presence of African and Caribbean Students in European Universities

The metanarrative of early African and Caribbean student migration to Europe is embedded within and influenced by the European imperial project, which functioned (for colonial powers) as a means of creating and maintaining societal stratification along racial, gender, ethnic, and class lines while facilitating skills acquisition among colonial subjects who were identified as capable of taking on high skilled labor positions.

Just as colonialism constructed modern day borders and positioned certain nations as regional leaders, centuries of conquest, conflict, and coalitions facilitated the creation and development of modern Europe and European nation-states. Of the nations comprising the European continent in 1890, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Russia and to a lesser extent Spain, Portugal, and the Netherlands were recognized as great powers.¹⁰⁵ Of these eight nations, Britain and France maintained the vastest economic, political, and military strength as well as the largest number of colonies throughout Africa and the Caribbean. It is for that reason that this discussion

¹⁰⁵ Kennedy, Paul M. *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers : Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000*. 1St Vintage booksed. New York: Vintage Books, 1989.

focuses on student migration to the United Kingdom and France, with noted acknowledgement of the presence and significance of African students in Portugal during the same period.

As captured in university enrollment and archival data in Cambridge's Alumni Database¹⁰⁶, it is during the late seventeenth century that the first wave, albeit rather small, of students from the West Indies were admitted to premiere English (Cambridge and Oxford) and Scottish (Aberdeen, Glasgow, Edinburgh) universities. The nineteenth century ushered in demographic expansion with a wave of African students migrating to the United Kingdom - Scotland more specifically - for medical training deemed necessary for the maintenance of the colonies.¹⁰⁷ Focusing in on West Indian and African student migration, Perraton states,

The more prosperous members of the West Indian plantocracy continued to send their children to school as well as to university in Britain, as they had in the previous century. They were now joined by the children of the developing middle class as anyone with the means sent his children to England for all but most of elementary education...Similarly, in the 1820s and 1830s, the Sierra Leone middle class, whether European or African, continued to send their children to England...[and] were joined by children of the aristocracy from the Gold Coast, the Gambia, and southern Nigeria.¹⁰⁸

The increased enrollment of African and West Indian students in British universities during the nineteenth century expanded student demographics in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, and class. This trend was cross-continental and facilitated the galvanization of student activists across the British Isle¹⁰⁹ advocating for decolonization, independence, equity, and equality for people of all races (at home and abroad).

¹⁰⁶ Venn, John, and John Archibald Venn. *Alumni Cantabrigienses: : A Biographical List of All Known Students, Graduates and Holders of Office at the University of Cambridge, from the Earliest Times to 1900*. P. 2 Vol. 3, from 1752 to 1900 Gabb - Justamond. Vol. P. 2 Vol. 3, from 1752 to 1900. Gabb - Justamond. Nendeln/Liechtenstein: Kraus, 1974.

¹⁰⁷ Adogame, Afeosemime U, and Andrew G Lawrence, eds. *Africa in Scotland, Scotland in Africa : Historical Legacies and Contemporary Hybridities*. Africa-Europe Group for Interdisciplinary Studies, V. 14. Boston: Brill, 2014.

¹⁰⁸ Perraton, H. D. *A History of Foreign Students in Britain*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. 42.

¹⁰⁹ Olusanya, G. O. *The West African Students' Union and the Politics of Decolonisation, 1925-1958*. Ibadan: Daystar Press, 1982.; Adi, Hakim. "West African Students in Britain, 1900–60: The Politics of Exile." *Immigrants*

By the twentieth century, streams of students from the colonies were enrolled in universities across Europe. The growing student population from the colonies was now more representative of the African and African descendant majority throughout the African and Caribbean colonies. During the first half of the twentieth century, several significant shifts in social, economic, and political events, trends, and ideologies served as the undercurrent for new migration pathways from Africa and the Caribbean. The Second Industrial Revolution, the Russian Revolution (and the rise of Communism), and the Great World Wars, served as catalysts for increased labor migration while opening up pathways to institutions as far east as Russia¹¹⁰ for educational migrants in pursuit of postsecondary degrees and certifications. Recognizing the critical role they played in advocating for their people in the face of colonial subjugation, student organizers and activists took on the charge of striking back at the empire. The exploited labor of migrants to the metropole who took on crucial, vacant positions (as European men had been sent to the war front), the heightened prejudice and discrimination faced by Africans and West Indians across sectors and institutions of the metropole (and Europe at-large), along with the push for the recognition of contributions of colonial subjects to the war effort became a major point of argument for racial equality and justice, independence and decolonization.

Colonial Students Entering and Navigating Imperial Terrain

& Minorities 12, no. 3 (1993): 107–28. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619288.1993.9974821>.; Brathwaite, Lloyd. *Colonial West Indian Students in Britain*. Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2001.; Lahiri, Shompa. *Indians in Britain : Anglo-Indian Encounters, Race and Identity, 1880-1930*. Cass Series--The Colonial Legacy in Britain. London: Frank Cass, 2000.

¹¹⁰ Carew, Joy Gleason. “Black in the Ussr: African Diasporan Pilgrims, Expatriates and Students in Russia, from the 1920s to the First Decade of the Twenty-First Century.” *African and Black Diaspora: An International Journal* 8, no. 2 (2015): 202–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17528631.2015.1027324>.

In focusing on the physical, intellectual, and cultural spaces created by African and Caribbean students, it is essential to contextualize the larger socio-political terrain that was 20th century Europe during and immediately after World Wars I and II to better understand its impact on socio-spatial relations and experiences. The racial terrain of France and the United Kingdom prior to World War I was overwhelmingly white, despite historic documentation confirming the presence of non-white populations well before the 20th century.¹¹¹ Exposure of the population at large, aside from select personnel from the Colonial Office and Le ministère des colonies, to the cultures and people of the colonies was minimal. Metropolitan culture and educational curricula in the colonies and the imperial nation-state¹¹² worked in tandem to create and disseminate dehumanizing, racist imagery and stereotypes that obscured holistic, humanistic portrayals of the colonized and aggrandized the colonizer.

Migration from Africa and the Caribbean increased with the global shift of social, economic, political trends and tensions resulting from the first World War. Specific to the Caribbean, Byron and Condon¹¹³ touch on several crucial points in relation to migration out of the Caribbean region to the metropole following the end of World War I. Being that the English and French were only minimally invested in the creation of complex, multifaceted economies throughout the Caribbean, the decline of sugar production and exportation resulted in unemployment that promoted migration as a means of securing higher incomes. This, coupled

¹¹¹ Earle, T. F., and K. J. P. Lowe. *Black Africans in Renaissance Europe*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

¹¹² Geoffroy de Laforcade. “‘Foreigners’, Nationalism and the ‘Colonial Fracture’: Stigmatized Subjects of Historical Memory in France.” *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 47, no. 3-4 (2006): 217–33. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020715206066165>; Cole, Malcolm P. J., and J. A. Mangan. “The Imperial Curriculum: Racial Images and Education in the British Colonial Experience.” *History of Education Quarterly* 36, no. 2 (1996): 205–. <https://doi.org/10.2307/369514>.

¹¹³ Byron, Margaret, and Condon Stéphanie. *Migration in Comparative Perspective: Caribbean Communities in Britain and France*. Routledge Research in Population and Migration, 6. New York: Routledge, 2008.

with the need for military personnel and industrial and public service workers during and in between the two World Wars, catalyzed the establishment of the 1946 French Overseas Departments and the enactment of 1948 British Nationality Act. This marked the “incorporation” of colonial subjects into the metropole as citizens who had rights of entry, settlement, and work - arguably extensions of the colonial project as it allowed for the migration of African and Caribbean people as a solution to labor shortages (the necessity of human labor to industrial development) throughout the metropole while continuing to control the colonial space and the population.

In exploring the terrain of African and Caribbean student placemaking, it is also useful to consider the socio-spatial conflicts that arose from conflicting law, policy, and practice. Whereas the enactment of legislation put educational expenditures in place for the pursuit of post-secondary scholarships for colonial students in both France and the United Kingdom¹¹⁴, African and Caribbean students faced insufficient funds to cover tuition and cost of living as well as housing discrimination.¹¹⁵ Moreover, the growing population of African and Caribbean people, subjects of the empire, gave rise to racialized xenophobia¹¹⁶ as shifting racial and ethnic demographics and increased criticism and opposition to colonial rule disrupted the ethos of “the

¹¹⁴ McCloy, Shelby T. *The Negro in France*. New York: Haskell House, 1973.; White, Bob W. “Talk About School: Education and the Colonial Project in French and British Africa, (1860-1960).” *Comparative Education* 32, no. 1 (1996): 9–25.

¹¹⁵ Adi, Hakim. *West Africans in Britain, 1900-1960 : Nationalism, Pan-Africanism, and Communism*. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1998.; Clover, David. "Dispersed or destroyed: archives, the West Indian Students' Union, and public memory." In *Society for Caribbean Studies Annual Conference Papers*, vol. 6. The Society for Caribbean Studies (UK), 2005.; Daily, A. M. “Race, Citizenship, and Antillean Student Activism in Postwar France, 1946-1968.” *French Historical Studies* 37, no. 2 (2014): 331–57. <https://doi.org/10.1215/00161071-2401629>.; Foster, Elizabeth Ann. *African Catholic : Decolonization and the Transformation of the Church*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2019.

¹¹⁶ Fleming, Crystal Marie. *Resurrecting Slavery : Racial Legacies and White Supremacy in France*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2017; Jenkinson, Jacqueline. *Black 1919 : Riots, Racism and Resistance in Imperial Britain*. Postcolonialism Across the Disciplines, 5. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009.; Solomos, John. *Race and Racism in Britain*. 3rd ed. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.; Thomas, Dominic Richard David. *Africa and France : Postcolonial Cultures, Migration, and Racism*. African Expressive Cultures. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013.

mother country.” London, in particular, proved to be a difficult space for Africans and Caribbean people. As noted by Matera, increased hostility towards African and Caribbean presence preceded the 1919 race riots that “target[ed] non-European and mixed-race working-class communities in the seaside and riverside districts of London, Liverpool, Cardiff, South Shields, and Glasgow.”¹¹⁷ Met with aggression and resistance from white European natives, African and Caribbean migrants learned to navigate, negotiate, and broker their identities to acquire the necessary skills, credentials, and income to function within the imperial nation-state. The unique positionality of African and Caribbean students, more specifically, as intellectual producers, place-makers, and activists, proved to be essential to disrupting coloniality and expanding the decolonization project. Along with increased presence and recognition of the rugged, racialized terrain of the imperial nation-state, modern Pan-Africanism and the development of Négritude formed the base for intellectual and cultural orientation and production across classes of African and Caribbean migrants. Whether accessible via gramophone through Calypso and Highlife records¹¹⁸ or through the literary productions of intellectuals in the latest publication of *Presence Africaine*¹¹⁹ or *La Dépêche africaine*¹²⁰ or via radio on BBC’s Caribbean Voices¹²¹, the

¹¹⁷ Matera, Marc. *Black London : The Imperial Metropolis and Decolonization in the Twentieth Century*. The California World History Library, 22. Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2015. 23.

¹¹⁸ Coester, Markus. “Localising African Popular Music Transnationally: ‘Highlife-Travellers’ in Britain in the 1950s and 1960s.” *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 20, no. 2 (2008): 133–44.; Oliver, Paul, ed. *Black Music in Britain : Essays on the Afro-Asian Contribution to Popular Music*. Popular Music in Britain. Milton Keynes England: Open University Press, 1990.

¹¹⁹ Mudimbe, V. Y. *The Surreptitious Speech : Présence Africaine and the Politics of Otherness, 1947-1987*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.

¹²⁰ Boittin, Jennifer Anne. *Colonial Metropolis : The Urban Grounds of Anti-Imperialism and Feminism in Interwar Paris*. France Overseas: Studies in Empire and Decolonization. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2010.; Sharpley-Whiting, T. Denean. *Négritude Women*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002.

¹²¹ Breiner, Laurence A. “Caribbean Voices on the Air : Radio, Poetry, and Nationalism in the Anglophone Caribbean.” *Communities of the Air : Radio Century, Radio Culture* , P. 93-108 (2003).; Newton, Darrell. “Calling the West Indies: The Bbc World Service and Caribbean Voices.” *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 28, no. 4 (2008): 489–97. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01439680802310308>.

construction of African and Caribbean aesthetics in the metropole was growing and would be further influenced by students.

The entry and agency of African and Caribbean students into Europe and European society facilitated and catalyzed anti-colonial and anti-imperialist organizing, mobilization, and activism. Among them, following their matriculation through university, were renowned artists, intellectuals and leaders of larger cultural, intellectual, and political movements and organizations. The increased presence of Black people, relegated to and stigmatized as merely colonial subjects on already segmented and stratified terrain, was coupled with an audacity to take space and make place in a manner directly opposed to the anticipated outcomes of the colonial education project. In an interview, Jamaican philosopher and playwright Sylvia Wynter (a former colonial student, alumna of King's College London) recalls the entanglements of education, empire, sharing that

...in the different islands we had been totally cut off from each other. We weren't even taught Caribbean geography in the schools. The geography that was taught was that of England, the history that was taught was English History. We weren't even taught the geography of the United States. At that time the United States was considered a second-rate country. London was the centre of empire and the British Empire was still very powerful. So we met Trinidadians there, and the Trinidadians brought calypso...But it wasn't only about being West Indian. There were many Africans there, all of them struggling for independence, so there was a powerful pan-African sensibility. And not just a pan-African sensibility either. There was a diverse group of colonial students, including students from India, so there was also a feeling of what would later be called Third Worldness. So there was a ferment at that centre, because these are going to be the days that will see the climax of the definitive struggles against the British Empire.¹²²

In the center of empire, as Wynter describes, students from the Caribbean and Africa were learning together and learning about each other's cultures and struggles for liberation. Their solidarities and networks uncover histories that transformed the world, with Wynter herself

¹²² Wynter, Sylvia and Scott, David. "The re-enchantment of humanism: An interview with Sylvia Wynter." *Small Axe* 8, no. 120 (2000): 173-211. 129.

transforming the humanities, natural sciences, and art with her extension canon of scholarly and literary works. Within organizations specifically, students' worldmaking projects come to light as they navigated within and between nations.

The Presence and Impact of African and Caribbean Student Organizations

The following section provides an overview of the most prominent African and Caribbean student organizations during the early and mid-twentieth century. As was ascertained through reviewing both scholarly literature, available archival records, and personal narratives and interviews from highly renowned African and Caribbean students, intellectuals, and leaders, both African and Caribbean students recognized the significance of relocating to the imperial nation-state as educational migrants. They also understood the impact of acquiring credentials and accolades on their positionalities in their nations of origin and within their Diaspora communities. However, the anti-Blackness of the socio-political terrains of London and Paris, exacerbated by the hosting academic institutions' negligence with regards to colonial student support, growth, and development, created the climate necessary for the creation of organizations accessible to all those interested in building community and camaraderie as migrants from the colonies. Renowned author George Lamming, who first gained critical acclaim with the publication of *In the Castle of My Skin*, shares how West African and West Indian students' meetings and discussions influenced his classic text.

Every Sunday I used to go over to a place called WASU in Chelsea—it was the West African Student Union—to listen to the same discussions that went on there as went on in the WISU, the West Indian Student Union. I got this very great interest in hearing and feeling Africa, the *political* Africa, the anticolonial Africa...London was a very important political capital at the time; that aspect of it had not yet disappeared. And I'm very conscious, I think, of writing a book that is now not really just about Barbados, but is

about a historical moment of transformation in the world with that anticolonial movement in Africa.¹²³

In London, as Lamming alludes to, as well as Paris, young people from Africa and the Caribbean engaged in placemaking that would change the world as they knew it. In London, the West African Student Union (WASU) and West Indian Students' Union (WISU) were central to student life, just as Fédération des Étudiants d'Afrique Noire en France (FEANF), L'Association Générale des Étudiants Guadeloupéen (AGEG), Association Générale des Étudiants Martiniquais (AGEM), and L'Federation Antillo-Guianese des Étudiants Catholiques (FAGEC) were central to Black student life in Paris. In addition to creating space for refuge from racist hostilities from society at large, these organizations were central to African and Caribbean students': (1) political education and activism, (2) intellectual and cultural production, (3) ethnic, national, and regional identity development, and (4) faith and spirituality identity development.

The West African Student Union

The West African Student Union (founded in 1925) in the United Kingdom aligned early on with anti-imperialist, anti-racist agendas, most likely a result of its members' positionality within the imperial hierarchy; Black Africans were thought to be uncivilized. As captured in a 1945 publication of the West African Student Union's Magazine,

The life of an average student is supposed to one of a happy-go lucky irresponsibility. Not so that of a West African student whom circumstances have tricked into placing his destiny under the absolute control of an external foreign power...He must, if he has any national pride at all, defend, without being bitter, the sanctity, integrity and honour of his native country and her ancient institutions against the onslaught of pseudo-scientists and self-appointed colonial experts, whose pens are being devoted towards driving a wedge between Great Britain and the peoples of West Africa.¹²⁴

¹²³ Lamming, George, and David Scott. "The Sovereignty of the Imagination: An Interview with George Lamming." *Small Axe* 6, no. 2 (2002): 72–200. p. 111.

¹²⁴ West African Students' Union. WASU Magazine, March 1945. W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries. 3.

Deeply aware of the responsibilities that accompanied pursuing a post-secondary degree, The West African Student Union centered its work around the following aims,

1. to provide and maintain a hostel for students of African descent; 2. to act as a bureau of information on African history, customs, law and institutions; 3. to act as a centre for research on all subjects appertaining to Africa and its developments; 4. to promote through regular contacts a spirit of goodwill, better understanding and brotherhood between all persons of African descent and other races of mankind; 5. to present to the world a true picture of African life and philosophy, thereby making a definitely African contribution towards the progress of civilisation; 6. to promote the spirit of self-help, unity and co-operation amongst its members; 7. to foster a spirit of national consciousness and racial pride amongst its members; 8. to publish a monthly magazine called Wasu.¹²⁵

WASU Magazine captures the organization's commitment to repatriation and decolonization, sovereignty and nation building, solidarity and capacity building. The March 1945 edition of WASU Magazine captures the complexity of the organization and the local and global reach and impact of its members' work. Advertisements with information for securing academic tutoring are featured alongside editorials intellectualizing the Nigerian Youth Movement. Reflections on the difficult role of the West African students as representatives, *en masse*, of the intellectual capacity of the entire African continent were presented alongside congratulatory messages for graduates returning home. A critique of the cocoa industry was published alongside a report on African students in the United States, with the rigor and excellence of analysis and critique throughout the issue in its' entirety, capturing the multiplicity of African student life and networks.

West Indian Student Union

¹²⁵ Adi, Hakim. *West Africans in Britain, 1900-1960 : Nationalism, Pan-Africanism, and Communism*. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1998.

Despite the absence of extensive archival records on the West Indian Student Union (WISU), Braithwaite provides an extensive overview of the organization and its work and members. Braithwaite shares that the aims and objectives of WISU were:

(a) To promote fellowship between WI students in the UK; (b) To concern itself with the general well-being of West Indian students in the UK; (c) To stimulate interest in the cultural, political and economic development of the West Indies; (d) To promote facilities for higher education in the West Indies; (e) to establish contacts with similar organizations in the UK and other parts of the world.¹²⁶

The WISU functioned as both a welfare organization and as a space of and for imperial resistance. Braithwaite's analysis of organizational newsletters showcases a breadth of topics and issues, including open letters on the discrimination faced by West Indian nurses in hospitals and reports on racism in South Africa and the United States. Members also inserted themselves into imperial policy making spaces, providing opinions and analyses on and recommendations for agricultural and educational policy as well as West Indian federalization.

WISU also engaged in cultural identity building via the acquisition and development of cultural and artistic space. In efforts mirroring that of WASU, WISU was able to create a center in 1955 and became "...a focus not just of full-time student activities, but also a popular venue for part-time students permanently resident in London and every type of West Indian social, political and cultural event."¹²⁷ The West Indian Student Centre would host radical thinkers, including C.L.R James¹²⁸ and Wilson Harris¹²⁹ and others from the Caribbean. In 1968, the Centre hosted James Baldwin, who would deliver his talk entitled *N---*. In his address, Baldwin

¹²⁶ Braithwaite, Lloyd. *Colonial West Indian Students in Britain*. Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2001. 134.

¹²⁷ Clover, David. "Dispersed or destroyed: archives, the West Indian Students' Union, and public memory." In *Society for Caribbean Studies Annual Conference Papers*, vol. 6. The Society for Caribbean Studies (UK), 2005

¹²⁸ Parris, D. Elliott. "Notes from a Life Influenced by Wendell Bell." *Futures* 43, no. 6 (2011): 602–6. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.futures.2011.04.009>.

¹²⁹ Harris, Wilson. *Tradition and the West Indian Novel: A Lecture Delivered to the London West Indian Students' Union on Friday, 15th May, 1964*. London: London West Indian Students' Union, 1965.

implored the audience to excavate the history that connected them all as people of the African Diaspora. He said,

It seems to me though that the great difficulty that we face... to excavate our actual history and I'm part of the history which occurred in the Caribbean. And you were part of the history which occurred in Harlem. One's got to find the terms. One's gotta accept that and find how to use that.¹³⁰

Even with limited archival documentation remaining of the organization's presence and influence, the intentions and necessity of the space created for all those hosted within it can be ascertained from the caliber and candor of discussions and programs developed and sustained.

Fédération des Étudiants d'Afrique Noire en France (FEANF)

Founded in 1950 following convenings held in Bordeaux and Lyon, L'Fédération des Étudiants d'Afrique Noire en France (*FEANF*) was at the forefront of African student activism in France and was focused primarily on the "struggle for the political and economic freedom of West Africa."¹³¹ The main statutes of the organization were:

1) Bring together all Black African student groups in France; 2) Defend the material and moral interests of these students; 3) Establish and maintain relationships with a) Black African associations whose activities are compatible with the Federation; b) Black African scientific and educational institutions; c) French or international federations and associations whose activities are compatible with those of the Federation; 4) Formally/Officially represent Black African student associations to all administrative and academic authorities; 5) Send, if necessary, delegations responsible for defending the interests of the metropolitan African community to local administrative authorities; 6) To study the problems relating to Black Africa, disseminating by all means the knowledge of the African social environment and make it known to its members, the French, and foreigners; 7) To serve as an intermediary between its members and student support committees and associations.¹³²

¹³⁰ *Pressure: Baldwin's Nigger*. BFI, 2005.

¹³¹ Unesco. *The Role of African Student Movements in the Political and Social Evolution of Africa from 1900 to 1975*. The General History of Africa, 12. Paris: Unesco Pub, 1994.

¹³² "Congrès Extraordinaire De La Fédération Des Etudiants D'afrique Noire En France (F.e.a.n.f.) Paris (21-22-23 Juin 1958)." *Présence Africaine* 18-19, no. 18-19 (1958): 250-55.

Broken into 14 territorial-based sections and various city-based academic sections, FEANF was governed by an executive committee, and organizational initiatives, platforms, and activities were determined during annual congresses. FEANF stood on the principles of anti-imperialism, total independence for African nations, and African unity. Blum adds that FEANF “address[ed] the problems of the African student diaspora: housing, isolation, etc. Soon radicalised, it spearheaded pro-independence claims before becoming, after the independences, a political force of opposition to various African Governments.”¹³³ FEANF’s open embrace of decolonization and open resistance to French colonial rule often came at the cost of police intimidation and detainment.¹³⁴ Despite this, FEANF continued to encourage and create space for colonial agitation.

FEANF also published its own journal, *L’Étudiant d’Afrique Noire*. In his manuscript dedicated to showcasing the essential role of Black African students in the development of Black, Francophone African literature, Dieng highlights the impact of Black African literary production on French politics. A former member of FEANF, he expounds on the significance of FEANF’s creation of space for intellectual production via the journal and congresses dedicated solely to African creative writing. He states FEANF

gave African students the opportunity to define the role of literature in political battles and to properly appreciate the commitment of the writers of our countries who spoke French. At no time was there any question of overestimating this genre of the immense political tasks deriving from the struggle for the liberation of our countries. But it was the duty of African intellectuals, even if divided by ideological, religious and philosophical difference and convictions, to gather around the words of independence and unity of

¹³³ Blum, Françoise. “Transfers of Knowledge, Multiple Identities. the Example of Students from the Feanf (Fédération Des Étudiants D’afrique Noire En France).” *African Identities* 16, no. 2 (2018): 130–45.

¹³⁴ Germain Félix F. *Decolonizing the Republic : African and Caribbean Migrants in Postwar Paris, 1946-1974*. Ruth Simms Hamilton African Diaspora Series. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2016.

Africa, to make a critical assessment of the Negro-African literature of French expression.¹³⁵

The 1953 volume of *Présence Africaine* exemplifies the transnational commitments and network of FEANF as the publication presents the perspectives, critiques, and testimonies of Black students across the world. Casa dos Estudantes do Império (The House Of The Students Of The Empire), another prominent student organization in Lisbon, captures the shared and collective realities of African students and believed that

The role that the African student intends to play in Africa depends on many factors; on his awareness of the continent's vital problems, on his professional capacity and on the limitations to his activity. By conscience, we mean his integration into questions relating to African life. Since we know that all colonialist policy rests essentially on the uprooting of the native, the African student must, at a certain stage of his intellectual development, turn back as much as possible towards his transfigured soul. This, in our opinion, is the first condition of authenticity: to feel African and to express oneself as such.¹³⁶

Capturing sentiments of African students across borders, Casa dos Estudantes do Império's essay was published alongside the narratives and analysis of students across linguistic borders. The attentiveness of FEANF to translation and transnational conversation was shared with fellow students from the French Antilles. Among them, cohorts of African and French Antillen students alike would lead movements for independence and the larger, intertwined Négritude movement.

L'Association Générale des Étudiants Guadeloupéen (AGEG), Association Générale des Étudiants Martiniquais (AGEM), and L'Federation Antillo-Guianese des Étudiants Catholiques (FAGEC)

¹³⁵ Dieng, Amady Aly, and Fédération des étudiants d'Afrique noire en France. *Les Étudiants Africains Et La Littérature Négro-Africaine D'expression Française*. Mankon, Bamenda Cameroon: Langaa Research & Pub, 2009. xi.

¹³⁶ Situation des étudiants noirs dans le monde. (1953). *Présence Africaine*, 14(1), 222–240. <https://doi.org/10.3917/presa.014.0221>). 238.

Antillean student groups and activism focused on students' social welfare and socio-cultural needs. Germain notes that student participation in L'Association Générale des Étudiants Guadeloupéen (AGEG) and L'Association Générale des Étudiants Martiniquais (AGEM), two of the most prominent groups which were created in the late forties, centered on the social experiences and needs of Antillean students. He states, "...for most Caribbean students the late forties and early fifties symbolized good times. The students felt confident about departmentalization, thinking that the new political status would end the long colonial chapter of exploitation."¹³⁷ Similarly, the Federation Antillo-Guianese des Étudiants Catholiques (FAGEC) created space both for religious worship and practice as well as social events. Daily's (2014) work on Antillean student organization emphasizes the value placed on sociability as a means of managing homesickness and combating social isolation. He shares that

...FAGEC founded a social center that hosted dinners and organized lectures and retreats for its members. Communal dinners on Christian feast days such as Christmas, Lent, Easter, and Pentecost were particularly important... In addition to organizing fellowship and religious activities, FAGEC coordinated with the Union of African Catholic Students (UECA) to arrange speakers and events that featured political leaders like Jacques Soustelle, Léopold Sédar Senghor, and Ralph Bunche, as well as artists and writers including Mercer Cook, Joseph Zobel, and Michel Leiris.¹³⁸

Alongside religious, cultural, and political space, Antillean students were responsible for the founding of several publications including periodicals such as *Aliéz*, *Trait d'union*, *Patriote guadeloupéen*, *Matouba*, and *L'étudiant Noir*¹³⁹ in which contributors "...detailed the difficulties

¹³⁷ Germain Félix F. *Decolonizing the Republic : African and Caribbean Migrants in Postwar Paris, 1946-1974*. Ruth Simms Hamilton African Diaspora Series. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2016. 9.

¹³⁸ Daily, A. M. "Race, Citizenship, and Antillean Student Activism in Postwar France, 1946-1968." *French Historical Studies* 37, no. 2 (2014): 331–57. 338. <https://doi.org/10.1215/00161071-2401629>

¹³⁹ Ako, Edward O. "'L'étudiant Noir' and the Myth of the Genesis of the Negritude Movement." *Research in African Literatures* 15, no. 3 (1984): 341–53.; Bonilla, Yarimar. *Non-Sovereign Futures : French Caribbean Politics in the Wake of Disenchantment*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015.

émigrés encountered in France.”¹⁴⁰ In the third issue of *L’étudiant Noir*, Aimé Césaire would articulate his perspectives on the pitfalls of assimilation and introduce students and the world to the word “negritude.” In *Racial Consciousness and the Social Revolution*, Césaire insists that

Before the Revolution and to make the revolution - the true one - the destructive bottom-blade and not the quivering surfaces, a condition is essential: break the mechanics of the identification of the races, tear up the superficial values, grasp in ourselves the immediate Negro, planting our **negritude** like a beautiful tree until it bears its most authentic fruits. Only then will we be conscious of ourselves; only then will we know how far we can run alone; only then will we know where our breath is deficient, and because we will have grasped our particular difference, and because we will "faithfully enjoy our being," we will be able to triumph over all slaveries born of civilization.¹⁴¹

Increased consciousness and embodiment of Blackness, a young Césaire argues, is crucial to African and French Antillean students. Grasping onto and planting seeds within Blackness would be a necessary condition to make the revolution true and triumphant over the oppressions born out of European civilization. In an interview with René Depestre in 1967, Césaire recalls the time shared by African and Antillean students in Paris as one of increased “as an awareness of the solidarity among blacks...we had come from different parts of the world. It was our first meeting. We were discovering ourselves...I have a feeling that it [Négritude] was somewhat of a collective creation. I used the term first, that's true. But it's possible we talked about it in our group. It was really a resistance to the politics of assimilation.”¹⁴²

Conclusion

Within and throughout this concise exploration of colonial African and Caribbean students’ geographies in the United Kingdom and France, university students’ narratives and

¹⁴⁰ Bonilla, Yarimar. *Non-Sovereign Futures : French Caribbean Politics in the Wake of Disenchantment*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015.

¹⁴¹ Césaire, Aimé. “Conscience raciale et révolution sociale.” *Association des étudiants martiniquais en France. L’étudiant Noir : Journal De L’association Des Étudiants Martiniquais En France*, 1935. 2.

¹⁴² Césaire, Aimé. *Discourse on colonialism*. NYU Press, 2001. 88.

cultural artifacts have been significant to unsettling public memory and the historiography of Black migrant student mobilities across space and time. Before the artists, scholars, and intellectuals cited were renowned and beloved, they were youth who nervously and anxiously awaited what the metropole had to offer them. After several weeks of travel by sea to their destinations, hundreds of Black youth who earned access to the universities of London, Edinburgh, and Paris, through merit, were met with hostilities and discrimination and housing and financial insecurity. Students were forced to navigate these conditions in addition to meeting the demands and expectations of university enrollment and matriculation. These responsibilities and expectations were further heightened and complicated by coloniality which necessitated curriculum for and instruction of the Black, colonial (unfree) student to be in service to the future labor needs and demands of community, nation, and empire. Their awareness of their circumstances, their growing political consciousness as colonial Black subjects, as well as their resistance to the colonial project, are documented in their periodicals, autobiographies, interviews, and the artifacts of their organizations and associations. Their poems, novels, and essays capture the audacity and bravery of young migrants subverting their surroundings to educate, organize, and mobilize for their rights and the sovereignty of their nations. They shared spaces for cultural, social, and spiritual needs, alongside academic and political activism and advocacy. Their networks unsettled the empire and spearheaded the independence and liberation movements of the mid-twentieth century, which ushered in and continue to inform the ongoing decolonial project within and across African and Caribbean nations to date.

Discussion

Black geographies, a deliberate, decolonial examination of Black spatiality and Black life across borders and texts, is situated at the nexus of Black intellectual traditions and modes of inquiry that allow for an examination of Black migrations that, in the context of the proposed dissertation, facilitates the uncovering and recovery of Black immigrants and international students' socio-spatial formations and networks. In *Subversive Knowledges and Praxes of Black Immigrants in the United States: Reflections from a Scholar-Advocate* as well as in *Meeting in the Metropole: African and Caribbean Students' Geographies in France and United Kingdom*, the personal, intellectual and cultural texts and artifacts of Black immigrants (inclusive of immigrant and international students) are entangled, to capture the multiplicity of their narratives and influence. These migrants articulate clear understandings of the political, cultural, and economic contexts of their migrations. They write across genres, convene across borders, form groups and associations, build and lead movements, build communities and imagine worlds in which they, and their movements, are disentangled from coloniality.

Across time and terrain, as captured in both papers, the sharing of ideas and information between and the organizing and advocacy of Black im/migrant students within their networks were key components for worldmaking and had transnational impacts and influences. Varying in terms of political commitments and action, these students have been conscious of each others' national and regional liberation struggles from their earliest encounters with each other to present. The most notable of these students act on increased consciousness and shape social and cultural movements in their varied capacities. This praxis of Blackness, which is embedded within Diasporic worldmaking, functions to present - with Black international and immigrant student organizers and leaders across the United States, in particular, moving forward national

and transnational advocacy efforts. The presence and contributions of Black international and immigrant students in the United States, within larger higher education, social movement, and migration histories, have been marginalized - rendering their migrations, experiences, narratives, and networks as insignificant. Black international and immigrant students' artifacts in conversation across time and space, with emphasis on the United States, presents the opportunity to further understand the transnational reach and impact of students' past and present networks and movements.

Vignette - The Legacy of Sarah Kinson

*Africa is my home. Although I am in America...my heart is there.*¹⁴³

Sarah Kinson

In 1839, Sarah Magulu Kinson arrived in the United States after having been enslaved and trafficked from her homeland in Sierra Leone on *La Amistad*. The only girlchild of the Amistad Africans, she was remanded and taught by abolitionists throughout the duration of the *United States v. The Amistad* court case - which would conclude with the release and return of Sarah and all other Amistad Africans to Sierra Leone in 1842. Her love for learning, and later teaching, would lead her back to the United States to enroll in Oberlin College in 1846. She was roommates with abolitionist Lucy Stanton, who spoke admirably of Sarah's pride in her African heritage. In letters to the American Missionary Association, she shares her objective in coming to Oberlin is "to be qualified to do good in the world."¹⁴⁴ especially in her home, in Africa. She

¹⁴³ Lawson, Ellen NicKenzie. *The three Sarahs: Documents of antebellum black college women*. Mellen-Press, 1984. 29.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid. 26.

shares her dream of becoming a teacher, which becomes her reality after completing three years of coursework as one of the earliest (if not the earliest) international female students in the United States.

Discovering Sarah Kinson on this project's journey was pivotal, methodologically and personally. Her determination to matriculate through her coursework at Oberlin College to return home to Africa (as she would say frequently in her diary), captivated me. My unfamiliarity with her and her story enraged me and then catalyzed me to explore the archives to uncover as much as I could about her. Our stories, in some ways, were similar. We were Black girls navigating spaces and crossing borders with the goal of bettering ourselves and our communities. We were Black girls who believed education would provide better present and future circumstances for ourselves and our communities. We endured hardships and traumas, matriculated through higher education institutions as Black women from foreign lands and of foreign origins. And we persisted.

Sarah is one of several dozen students whose artifacts and records are centered in this project of uncovering, in an act of revision and intervention to address anti-Black distortions, erasures, and exclusions in historical record across the Global North. Together, across time and space, the stories of these students are testimony on the impact and effect of schooling, socialization, and governance born out of and entangled with "colonial and national projects that have sought to categorise, divide, oppress, enslave, and assimilate people on the basis of race."¹⁴⁵ Through their documents, data, manuscripts, and artifacts, I have learned about the worldmaking and Diaspora-making praxes of these young Black people on the move in pursuit of knowledge and networks, skills, and credentials to change their lives and circumstances.

¹⁴⁵ Gerrard, Jessica, Arathi Sriprakash, and Sophie Rudolph. "Education and racial capitalism." *Race Ethnicity and Education* (2021): 1.

Conclusion

Over a decade ago, following a summer immersed in the Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, I produced a prospectus that commenced a life-long commitment to the study of Black immigrant life, with a focus on students. One in a cohort of ten undergraduate summer humanities fellows, under the direction of several Black immigrant historians in Harlem, I began exploring government records, board minutes and documents, colonial textbooks, and missionary narratives and artifacts to better understand relationships between the colonial mentality and school curricula across English-speaking African and Caribbean nations. In my prospectus, I posited that the colonial mentality - or when *de ting wey Black no good and na foreign [white] tings we dey like*¹⁴⁶ - was the objective of imperial education governance premised on “education for subordination, exploitation, the creation of mental confusion, and the development of underdevelopment¹⁴⁷” for Black students across borders.

While exploring the stacks, the stories of the elders in my family and community and the novels I had read throughout my undergraduate coursework about colonial schooling weighed on my heart. Thousands and thousands of Black youth suffered through colonial schooling, corporal punishment, rigid, white-washed, imperialist curriculum, tyrannical school administrators and teachers, and hierarchical schooling environments that left them yearning for European schools where they had “*better equipment, better teachers, better furniture, better food, better everything.*”¹⁴⁸ Schooling was, thus, a microcosm of an international society “governed by a

¹⁴⁶ Anikulapo-Kuti, Fela. "Colonial mentality." Sorrow, tears and blood. Kalakuta KK001-A, 1977.

¹⁴⁷ Rodney, W. (2018). How europe underdeveloped africa. Verso Books. 599.

¹⁴⁸ Dangarembga, Tsitsi. *Nervous conditions*. Faber & Faber, 2020. 483.

“logic of exclusion-inclusion,”¹⁴⁹ in which non-European nations were excluded from the full rights of membership but remained subject to the obligations of inclusion... [that] emerged out of concurrent political and ideological processes during the nineteenth century—the legacies of emancipation in the Americas, imperial expansion in Africa, and a growing racial identification among Europeans and their settler counterparts. Beginning with the Haitian Revolution and culminating in Brazil in 1888, the nineteenth century was the age of emancipation as chattel slavery was gradually abolished in the Americas. But in almost each case, emancipation, which promised citizenship and inclusion, gave way to new forms of coerced labor and exclusion from political membership.¹⁵⁰

Those who endured curricular and pedagogical violence to secure the few seats in the few secondary schools in their nations or regions, could access higher education: “*those who by character, ability and temperament show[ed] themselves fitted to profit by such education.*”¹⁵¹

The colonial education apparatus, I learned, lionized American and European educators and educationalists, philanthropists, missionaries, and administrators, and through its machinery collaboratively, pruned and groomed a class of bureaucrats who were examples of “*the moral advancement of the native population.*”¹⁵²

In school houses thousands of miles away from the courthouses and governing bodies that made decisions impacting their lives, and under conditions unacceptable for even the lowest classes of European society, Black students still learned and dreamed, and some matriculated through universities across the world. This project, a continuation of that which guided me

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Getachew, Adom. "Worldmaking after empire." In *Worldmaking after Empire*. Princeton University Press, 2019.

¹⁵¹ Advisory Committee on Native Education in the British Tropical African Dependencies. "Education Policy in British Tropical Africa." (1925).

¹⁵² Ibid.

through the Schomburg, allowed me to uncover more about and honor the lives they lived across time and space. The artifacts left behind by past classes and cohorts of the colonial schooling project – autobiographies, novels, poems, studies, reports, and photographs – provided testimonials, documentaries, and expert witness evidence of the criminality and moral bankruptcy of colonialism while providing insight into the worlds Black im/migrant students navigated and created.

Black im/migrant students articulated the complexities and conundrums of their migrations. As mobile Black subjects in the Global North in pursuit of higher education, they found and made home with each other and surrounding Black communities and institutions. Their intellectual and political perspectives and analyses – often aligned across borders and languages with respect to colonial rule – are embedded in their student newspapers, meeting minutes and agendas, poetry, and manifestos. Pan-Africanism, Negritude, ethnic and national identity, gender identity, and decolonization are as present in their work as are their experiences of love, hope, and suffering. They understood the expectations of higher education access and completion, from their families, communities, countries, and the world, and they were agents in determining their educational pathways and aspirations, to the best of their abilities. As early as 1925, Nkomo, a Black immigrant scholar shared that

Students who have come to the United States for study have come from all classes...In spite of many bitter experiences of race prejudice, we African students become deeply rooted to the United States. This devotion, however, does not make us forget to be useful to our country...Our stay in this country and what we learn from our professors about service to humanity make us loyal not only to the country but to our own native people at home.¹⁵³

Nearly a century later in 2020, Mwangi, a Black immigrant scholar, shared that

¹⁵³ The Foreign Student in America: A Study by the Commission on Survey of Foreign Students in the United States of America, Under the Auspices of the Friendly Relations Committees of the Young Men's Christian Association and the Young Women's Christian Association. United States: Association Press, 1925.

Black international students may feel uncertain about their role in fighting racial injustice, given that their heritage did not stem from historical racial marginalization in the United States, even as they are impacted by the ramifications of that history. Yet, many Black international students are also committing to antiracist work and the fight against anti-Blackness across the Diaspora by mobilizing through community activism, cultural organizations, and protests around the United States.¹⁵⁴

From past to present, migrating to and through the spatiotemporal plantation¹⁵⁵, Black im/migrant students have dared to question, dream beyond borders, and subvert power structures wherever they found themselves and wherever they are found in history. They read the university¹⁵⁶, as theorized by Black immigrant scholar Andrea N. Baldwin, and the societies they navigate between and create “creolized elsewhere spaces”¹⁵⁷ for futuring; theorizing new systems, institutions, and worlds we have yet to see.

As this project closes and makes room for further inquiry, storytelling, and conversations across time and space, I keep in mind McKittrick’s *Letter to Science*, in which she shares how her readers urge the praxis of story and remind her of the science of Black livingness, or the “fluctuating codes and stories of black life, new and long-standing.”¹⁵⁸ Throughout my dissertation, Black geographies have served as both methodology and onto-epistemology and have allowed me to interweave and center the stories, artistic, cultural, and intellectual knowledge and artifacts of Black im/migrants, to interrogate and revise conventional understandings of Black im/migrant students’, mobility, migration, and agency. Synthesizing and

¹⁵⁴ Mwangi, Chrystal A. George. "Black International Student Lives Matter." *International Higher Education* 104 (2020): 7.

¹⁵⁵ McKittrick, Katherine. "Plantation futures." *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism* 17, no. 3 (42) (2013): 1-15.

¹⁵⁶ Baldwin, Andrea N. *A Decolonial Black Feminist Theory of Reading and Shade : Feeling the University*. Routledge Research on Decoloniality and New Postcolonialisms. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2022.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ McKittrick, Katherine. "Dear science and other stories." In *Dear Science and Other Stories*. Duke University Press, 2021.

interpreting past and present experiences and realities of Black im/migrant students, through their own words, theories, artifacts, and knowledges, has elucidated interrelationships between education, migration, and empire among Black im/migrant students across eras and terrains, and recognizes their Diasporic worldmaking as “*innovative black diaspora practices...[and] spatialize[d] acts of survival.*”¹⁵⁹ Further exploration of the lives and livingness of Black im/migrant students presents the opportunity to uncover, rememory¹⁶⁰, and preserve Black im/migrant students’ knowledges and praxes of Black diasporic life with the full humanity and complexity they deserve and have been denied for far too long.

¹⁵⁹ McKittrick, Katherine. "Plantation futures." *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism* 17, no. 3 (42) (2013): 2.

¹⁶⁰ In Toni Morrison’s *Beloved* on pages 35 and 36, Sethe (the main character) introduces the reader to rememory as tool and strategy for remembering memories – personal and interpersonal – for the sake of new narratives and perspectives for Black livingness. She centers place as key to remembering the memory and create new narratives as “...the place—the picture of it—stays, and not just in...rememory, but out there, in the world.”

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