ABSTRACT

“ONE GOD, ONE AIM, ONE DESTINY”: THE RELIGIOUS RESPONSE TO COLONIAL POWER IN THE UNITED IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY.

by Philip Anthony McCormick

This paper provides religious analyses of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association [UNIA] outside of previous religious interpretations that utilize normative religious categories, i.e. the eschatological, ecclesiastical, and theological dimensions of Garveyism. This paper utilizes a methodological approach that is comparative in nature and focuses on the rise of European colonialism as a religious and material context that gave rise to Marcus Garvey and his movement. Utilizing methodologies from history of religions approaches, Marcus Garvey is analyzed as akin to a Cargo movement prophet who created rituals, costumes and deployed colonial symbolism to reconcile the dehumanizing effects of colonialism, and to point to a new mode of existence for followers of the UNIA.
“ONE GOD, ONE AIM, ONE DESTINY”: THE RELIGIOUS RESPONSE TO COLONIAL POWER IN THE UNITED IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY.

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For my parents: Concetta Lucy Palestini-McCormick who passed from this life July 16, 2007 and my father Robert McCormick Jr.
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my family for their continued support in all of my endeavors: my brothers Mark and Robert McCormick and my sister Melissa Stewart, her husband Bob and my nieces Concetta and Abigail Stewart. I would like to acknowledge Grand Master Seung O. Choi who inspired me to face life and all it has to offer. An early influence in this endeavor was Jennifer Reid, who helped me understand the limitations I placed on myself and provided me with an understanding to surpass them. To Lisa Poirier, teacher, mentor and friend, I will always be indebted to your willingness to listen and talk, encouragement during extremely difficult times and kindness. To my colleagues: Thomas Nagy, Matt Connor, Paula Kallai for your conversations and companionship, and especially Jason Sprague for allowing me to stay at his apartment while I finished up. Lastly, words can not express the appreciation I have for Lori Pratt who makes life and love beautiful.
Introduction

The history of resistance to colonial domination is long and deep in American history. Numerous figures have articulated a means to rectify these difficult social, political, and economic situations. This thesis examines one such figure, namely, Marcus Garvey. Adored by his followers, and vehemently despised by his detractors, such as W.E.B. DuBois, Garvey made a historical mark as a prominent Black Nationalist figure. Others, like Malcolm X would, follow his outspoken lead, and more will probably come.

This thesis focuses on the religious nature of Marcus Garvey. The approach here is one found in the History of Religions academic discipline. Influenced by two personal theoretical considerations: Claude Levi-Strauss’ discussion of bricolage, and that of Philip Arnold’s assertion of the cipher of religion, this thesis attempts to reveal the religiosity of Garvey outside of theological considerations.

Claude Levi-Strauss, founder of structuralism in anthropology, used the analogy of a ‘bricoleur’ a French handyman, a jack of all trades, to elucidate the extremely difficult task of understanding mythical thought. As Levi-Strauss asserts,

The ‘bricoleur’ is adept at performing a large number of diverse tasks; but, unlike the engineer, he does not subordinate each of them to the availability of raw materials and tools conceived and procured for the purpose of the project. His universe of instruments is closed and the rules of his game are always do make do with ‘whatever is at hand’, that is to say with a set of tools conceived and procured for the purpose of the project...  

The purpose of this project is to analyze Garvey using the categories and methods found in the History of Religions. This thesis is primarily concerned with understanding the actions and speeches of Garvey as they relate to the history of colonial domination in the United States. The methods used in this analysis are those found in the History of Religions, primarily the literature on the religious nature of Cargo movements, post-colonial theory, and gender dynamics.

1 This thesis is the basis of an article that was sent to press prior to its completion. The article is set to appear in a special edition of the Journal of Black Studies, which is set for publication with a tentative date of November 2008. The special edition will focus on the work of Marcus Garvey, I would like to express my gratitude to Mark Christian for the invitation to submit a piece to the journal. Parts of the article will be cited throughout this thesis.


3 Ibid. 17 (My emphasis).
The second influence in this analysis is what Philip Arnold learned from Mircea Eliade as the cipher of religion. Arnold defines the cipher of religion as a process of interpolation, where “embedded within the seemingly simple task of describing Other traditions in such a way that they are comprehensible, and are enabled to say something about their understanding of the religious dimensions of human existence, one necessarily has to put at risk one’s own understandings and orientations.” This thesis proffers an analysis of Garvey that is religious and outside of the traditional religious categories that are associated with Christianity.

The definition of religion by Charles Long that “religion mean[s] orientation—orientation in the ultimate sense, that is, how one comes to terms with the ultimate significance of one’s place in the world,” is employed throughout the thesis. The works of Rudolf Otto, Joachim Wach, and Mircea Eliade have influenced the position of Long. His position is that religious experience is non-reductive in terms of Otto’s formulation of the *mysterium tremendum et fascinosum* and Wach’s assertion that religious experience is of ultimate reality. Also inherent in this non-reductive definition of religion is the Eliadian distinction that religious experience defines human orientation in relation to hierophanies. The most crucial influence on Long, from Eliade in that human religiosity is intricately intertwined with experiences of materiality.

In his *Patterns of Comparative Religion*, Mircea Eliade points to a religious valuation of materiality. In this text, Eliade examines archaic societies and locates consciousness in a religious world of “matter.” Through the constant negotiation of materiality, i.e. water, rocks, trees, etc., human consciousness unfolds and so do the symbolic qualities of the sacred. For instance, by employing a phenomenological method, Eliade is able to determine that the physical and material experiences of water hold a symbolic sacred meaning across cultures, this meaning is *fons et origo* (the origin or source of all forms). It is through the negotiations and experiences of materiality that

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5 Ibid., 97.
Eliade is able to locate and define hierophanies. Hierophanies are manifestations of the sacred that emerge from experiences and negotiations with materiality;⁸ “…it is quite certain that anything man has ever handled, felt, come in contact with or loved can become a hierophany.”⁹ For Eliade both human consciousness and human religiosity emerge in relation to materiality. Therefore, a material structure where a hierophany had occurred becomes a paradigmatic structure by which human beings orient their actions.¹⁰

The work of Charles Long expands Eliade’ analysis of religiosity from archaic societies to the material structures of colonialism. Long argues that the history of colonialism must be regarded as an environment that religiously impinged on humankind: its mercantilism, enslavement, genocides, and new hierarchies of power together constitute an originary structure—that human beings perforce have had to undergo, and in relation to which new modes of being human have been engendered.”¹¹ These new material structures inherent in colonial history are found in the commodification of the African body, the exchange of these and other commodities, and the European hierarchies of institutional power that are recapitulated in the New World and have an exacting influence on the colonized. It is from these theoretical considerations which influence the overall scope of this project.

Another theoretical position of Long is what he has coined the dynamics of concealment, which is a “Western stylization of the colonial and neo-colonial experiences through which non-European peoples have been rendered silent in respect of dominant discourses concerning the meaning of the human in society.”¹² Characterized as a demagogue by W.E.B. DuBois and E. David Cronon, the intellectual thought and work of Garvey is ‘rendered silent.’ Outside of Black Studies, and pro-Garvey scholars, his life and work is largely unacknowledged as a pivotal figure in American history. The fame and notoriety of W.E.B. DuBois overshadows Garvey, but Garvey had very important things to say not only about racial issues but also about the meaning of being a colonized

⁹ Eliade, Patterns in Comparative Religion, 11.
¹² Ibid. 3-4.
human being and the processes of colonization that thwart, discredit, and conceal a divergent thinker.

This thesis will attempt to elucidate a religious understanding of Garvey and his movement in the three chapters. The first chapter contextualizes Garvey socially and historically within the post-Great War context from the rampant violence to the Harlem Renaissance. Analysis is given to the debates between Garvey and W.E.B. DuBois about the ‘race problem.’ The chapter ends with a consideration of prior interpretations of Garvey and his movement by scholars such as E. David Cronon, Rupert Lewis, and Robert Hill.

The second chapter employs the model of Cargo movements to interpret the religiosity of Garvey within a colonial context. This apparent disjunctive model reveals the deeper concerns Cargo movements express in negotiating being colonized. Garvey is considered as a Cargo movement prophet that articulated a myth-dream in order to rectify the colonial situation. The Black Star Line, Middle Passage, and Africa are analyzed in religious terms using the category of myth. The ‘flamboyant’ attire of Garvey, and the annual parades is also analyzed in relation to Cargo movements.

The third chapter examines the institutional organization of the UNIA in Harlem. This section gives an analysis of the organization of the meetings, in particularly at Liberty Hall. Attention is given to the Book of Laws and how it shaped the organization. This chapter also considers the gender dynamics within the UNIA and the role women played in the bureaucratic affairs and the Black Cross Nurses.

The prior interpretations of the religiosity of Garvey have either significantly overlooked history or have contextualized him too tightly within the religious ethos of the early 20th century. Garvey needs to be viewed on a larger scale that considers the history and role of colonialism on his thought, person, and means to liberate himself—and those attracted to him—from hegemonic colonial rule.

Introduction

Marcus Garvey was arguably one of the most dynamic people to emerge during the “New Negro” movement. In order to understand the full scope of the dynamics of his charisma, voice, and vision, it is first necessary to contextualize the socio-historical influences on his consciousness. This chapter begins with such a contextualization, and outlines the general vision he had for his organization. It then moves to an analysis of the debates between Garvey and DuBois, which marked the tercentenary experience of “being a problem” and their solutions to solve the problem of racial signification. It concludes with an examination of previous interpretations of the religiosity of Garvey in order to establish the argument of this thesis, which is a comparative approach using current literature on Cargo movements and Garveyism.

Marcus Garvey, the Universal Negro Improvement Association, and Equality

Marcus Mosiah Garvey was born in St. Ann’s Bay, Jamaica in 1887. His mother intended to name him Moses because she “hope[d] he would be like Moses and lead his people.” However, his father prevailed and named him Marcus after himself. He determined his son’s middle name would be the less prominent biblical name of Mosiah. In 1909, Garvey printed his first newspaper called Garvey’s Watchmen, which ceased publication after only three issues. From 1910-1912, Garvey traveled around Central America, living and working in both Costa Rica and Panama. While in Costa Rica, Garvey worked as a timekeeper on a United Fruit Company banana plantation and as a laborer on the pier at Port Limón. Garvey became increasingly aware of the troubles faced by West Indian and non-white laborers; he edited a paper, La Nación, which pointed to the ineffectiveness of unions to rectify the issues of racism, economic

14 Cronon, 7.
discrimination, and unequal pay. Garvey agitated laborers on banana plantations to fight for better working conditions, which resulted in Garvey’s expulsion from Costa Rica.\textsuperscript{16} 

In 1912, at the age of 25, Garvey traveled to England. Garvey worked around the docks of London, and “gained a wealth of information about [the sufferings of] African and West Indian seamen.”\textsuperscript{17} While in London, Garvey was involved in literary endeavors and wrote articles for Duse Muhammad Ali’s paper, \textit{Africa Times and Orient Review} [ATOR].\textsuperscript{18} This journal combined a Pan-African outlook and covered news in areas where colonialism flourished, such as, China, Persia, Turkey, Egypt, Morocco, the West Indies, and the United States. The journal also tracked anti-colonial movements and the struggles of colonized peoples around the world.\textsuperscript{19} Black intellectuals, such as W. E. B. DuBois, Booker T. Washington, Edward Wilmot Blyden, and William Ferris regularly published in the journal and articulated different perspectives on the solutions to the problems facing the African-American community.\textsuperscript{20} Garvey’s articles primarily focused on the issues and concerns of black laborers in the West Indies.

Marcus Garvey established the Universal Negro Improvement Association [UNIA], in Kingston, Jamaica, August 1, 1914. Following the lead of Booker T Washington’s “Tuskegee Program,” Garvey intended to establish black educational and industrial colleges in Jamaica.\textsuperscript{21} In a letter to Booker T. Washington dated Sept. 8, 1914, Garvey indicated that the aims and goals of the UNIA were to “help the struggling masses of th[e] [Black] community to a higher state of industry and self-appreciation.”\textsuperscript{22} Garvey’s original intention was to create a movement that developed skilled labor and provided a sense of purpose to the Black community.

The UNIA did not find success among Jamaicans. As Garvey later observed, “there was not the same race consciousness in the West Indies as there [was] in the

\textsuperscript{17}Lewis, 45.
\textsuperscript{18}Ali is best known for his publication \textit{In the Lands of the Pharoah}, which was the first history of Egypt written by an Egyptian. Lewis, 46.
\textsuperscript{19}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{20}Martin, 6.
\textsuperscript{21}Hill, 1: 68. Hill notes that Garvey’s attempt to start an industrial school was not novel; there was discussion of such an attempt at the International Conference of the Negro, April 17-19, 1912. Hill 1: 69.
\textsuperscript{22}Ibid., 1: 69.
U[nited] S[tates] or Africa” and that “[African-Americans] live[d] in very close contact with organized racial prejudice, and this very prejudice force[d] them to a rare consciousness that they would not have had otherwise.” African-Americans in the post-Great War era of the United States experienced racial discrimination and organized violence on a catastrophic level.

A majority of African-Americans in the post-Great War era responded to Garvey’s message of racial pride, self-determination, and economic independence. The Great Migration of African-Americans to northern cities in the United States was a direct result of the economic hardship, political manipulation, and violence experienced in the south. Coupled with the Great Migration were African-American soldiers returning from the Great War. African-Americans who helped “make the world safe for democracy” in Europe returned to the United States faced the lack of democracy in their own country; racial segregation and tensions were exacerbated by Jim Crow laws.

The influx of African-Americans into northern cities resulted in the sudden resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan [KKK]. The KKK had strong ties with the government, especially the police and court systems, which left African-Americans without a source of governmental protection from their intimidation and violence. Thus, the KKK increased the practice of lynching without much interference from the government: thirty-six in 1917, sixty in 1918, seventy-six in 1919, and from 1920-1922 the numbers were in the fifties. The overall practices of racial discrimination, violence, and injustice throughout the United States resulted in the Red Summer of 1919; over twenty race riots broke out in predominantly African-American Northern and Southern cities over a six-month period.

These precedents and crises led to the cultural and intellectual ferment of the ‘New Negro’ movement, or Harlem Renaissance, which thrived following the Great War. The ‘New Negro’ movement occurred until the Great Depression, which marked the first

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23 Hill, 1: xxxviii.
24 Hill, 1:xxxviii.
25 Lewis, 61.
26 Lewis, 62.
27 Lewis, 62.
major movement of people from rural areas to city centers in the United States. It was a transformative era which resulted in the assertion of a new identity, as Huggins states:

> The expression “New Negro” told the world of their self-concept. They characterized this “New Negro,” this new man, as having shed the costume of the shuffling darky, the uncle and aunty, the subservient and docile retainer, the clown. He was, rather, a man and a citizen in his own right—intelligent, articulate, self-assured. The “New Negro” was telling all Americans that it was a new ballgame, and that he was a revived and inspired competitor. No longer could he be dismissed by contempt, pity, or terror. He would insist upon his rights and, if necessary, return violence, blow for blow.

The “New Negro” era was one of self-definition. The new literature, poetry, and artistic expressions articulated a shifting in consciousness that would no longer allow the denial of the rights guaranteed in the Emancipation Proclamation.

In 1916, Garvey came to the United States on a lecture tour and stayed until his deportation in 1927 on trumped-up charges of mail fraud. Garvey held the position that equality within the United States (or any nation that had a history of colonialism) would never occur due to the deep racism that was a legacy of slavery. Instead of focusing on integration, Garvey held the position that people of African descent should focus on accumulating economic prosperity through co-operatives and other communally-based business programs. The goal of these business ventures was to provide immediate economic opportunities for African-Americans, and lessen the economic dependence on whites. These business programs would also accumulate wealth for the UNIA, and blacks would have the opportunity for equality based on economic independence. The accumulation of wealth would ultimately lead to the creation of a UNIA led nation-state in Africa that would serve as a representative country in the League of Nations for all people of African descent who had suffered the Diaspora of the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

While in the United States Garvey started numerous business endeavors to counter the economic discrimination faced by a majority of African-Americans. He

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29 Ibid.
30 Ibid., 4.
31 This position directly contradicted the position of and work of W.E.B. DuBois and the NAACP, the rival organization of Garvey’s UNIA, which strove for integration and progress through developing the talented-tenth of African-Americans to serve as examples to the dominant white society.
32 Martin, 22-37.
developed co-operatives, and other communally-based business programs, such as the Black Star Line steamship company. He started the Black Star Line in 1919 with the purchase of the S.S. Yarmouk, and was later renamed the S.S. Frederick Douglass. The Black Star Line name was a direct critique of the White Star Line, which was notorious for discriminating against black passengers; its very name held symbolic qualities of whiteness. Garvey started the steamship company because he felt “Negroes are anxious to go back to Africa and the West Indies [to] create empires of their own as strong as that of the yellow and white man.” This is Garvey’s most symbolically significant and controversial endeavor while in the US. It captured “the imaginations of millions of ordinary black men and women throughout the world… [and] briefly harness[ed] the hopes and aspirations of…[an] African redemption.” It was controversial because some of the money raised from the sale of stocks was unaccounted for, and the endeavor was declared a ‘money scheme’ by W.E.B. DuBois and the United States government.

The Negro World, the Crisis, and Battling Perspectives

Marcus Garvey and W.E.B. DuBois embodied opposite ends of the philosophical spectrum during the “New Negro” movement. DuBois believed that integration and the realization of the ideals of the American Republic was a possibility. On the other hand, Garvey believed that separation, economic prosperity, and the creation of a nation-state in Africa were the only ways to reconcile the experiences of alienation for blacks living under the yoke of colonial conditions. Each used the editorial spaces of their respective newspapers to address their different perspectives and to discredit one another.

Founded and well funded by whites dedicated to the uplift of African-Americans, the NAACP had a spirit of integration and included whites from its inception. Formed to promote civil and social rights for blacks, the organization maintained a

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33 Martin, 152. The White Star Line was one of the largest steamship companies that connected white Europeans and Americans from Europe to America.  
34 Hill, 1: 411. 
35 Cronon, 223. 
36 Cronon, 73-102; Martin, 295. 
37 David Levering Lewis W.E.B. Du Bois: The Fight For Equality and the American Century, 1919-1963, (NY: H. Holt, 2000) 387. Lewis points out that the founders of the NAACP were white but desired the organization to be seen as black-founded, for the symbolic value that would convey to blacks.
predominately-white executive committee that continued through Garvey’s time.\textsuperscript{38} Garvey created, funded, and developed the UNIA as an all-black organization. The issue of race was an insult each hurled at each other in their publications. Race was the obstacle they were both attempting to overcome, yet they each used it to discredit and demean each other.

In an article published by DuBois in \textit{The Century}, Garvey was described as a “little, fat, black man; ugly, but with intelligent eyes and a big head.”\textsuperscript{39} Garvey’s retaliation for such a comment was to question the racial makeup and allegiance of DuBois. In his response, Garvey reflected on his visit to the NAACP in 1917. “Anything that is black, to him[DuBois], is ugly, is hideous, is monstrous, and this is why in 1917 he had but the lightest of colored in his office, when one could hardly whether it was a white show or a colored vaudeville he was running at Fifth Avenue.”\textsuperscript{40} The involvements of whites and the light complexion of DuBois prompted Garvey to equate DuBois with being white; the fact that DuBois had attained a doctorate from Harvard reaffirmed this point for Garvey.

In an editorial from \textit{The Negro World} dated February 13, 1923, Garvey questions the education of DuBois and its effectiveness in helping the race.

DuBois seems to believe that the monopoly of education is acquired by being a graduate of Fisk, Harvard, and Berlin. Education is not so much the school that one has passed through, but the use one makes of that which he has learned. If DuBois’ education fits him for no better service than being a lackey for good white people, then it were better that Negroes were not educated.\textsuperscript{41}

Garvey’s would later state that he received a graduate degree, and mastered the classics, which he did not. His critiques of DuBois’s education focus on how it created an integrationist aristocrat. The critiques of DuBois’s education were also a critique of white power structures in the United States. Therefore, the program of integration DuBois supported was the same power structure Garvey opposed.

Garvey’s “Back to Africa” program received the harshest criticism from DuBois. In an editorial from September 1922, DuBois openly and systematically criticized the

\textsuperscript{38} Martin, 274.
\textsuperscript{39} Garvey, 310-311; Martin, 286.
\textsuperscript{40} Garvey, 311.
\textsuperscript{41} Garvey, 318.
Black Star Line. His article, directed at discrediting Garvey and warning other readers of such ‘schemes’ was a systematic enumeration of all the problems the Black Star Line encountered, which the prosecution used against Garvey during his 1923 trial of attempting to deliberately fraud investors.\textsuperscript{42} DuBois overlooked the symbolic power of the Black Star Line, and viewed it as a business venture that defrauded people. The Black Star Line symbolically represented the ‘hopes’ and ‘aspirations’ of numerous blacks, not merely as a means to return to Africa, but also as a religious reappropriation of the Atlantic. In the history of slavery in the Americas, the Atlantic had introduced Africans to the terror of history. This means of taking back ownership of the waters was an essential symbolic element of Garvey’s program.

**Shared Experiences: Double Consciousness**

In the opening essay of *The Souls of Black Folk*, “Of Our Spiritual Strivings,” DuBois explains the experience of being black in America.\textsuperscript{43} The experience was painful, and forced African-Americans to understand how they appear to themselves and others that resulted in a double consciousness, which he described using the metaphor of the veil. The fundamental experience that gave rise to this double consciousness is the black body and the historical contingent realities that shaped a discourse about the body.\textsuperscript{44}

> Between me and the other world, there is ever an unasked question: unasked by some through feelings of delicacy; by others through the difficulty of rightly framing it. All, nevertheless, flutter round it. They approach me in a half-hesitant sort of way, eye me curiously or compassionately, and then, instead of saying directly, How does it feel to be a problem? they say, I know an excellent colored man in my town; or I fought at Mechanicsville; or, Do not these Southern outrages make your blood boil? At these I smile, am interested, or reduce the boiling to a simmer, as the occasion may require. To the real question, How does it feel to be a problem? I answer seldom a word…\textsuperscript{45}

After the Egyptian and Indian, the Greek and Roman, the Teuton and Mongolian, the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world, — a world which yields him no self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through

\textsuperscript{42} Martin, 295.


\textsuperscript{44} When thinking about something as abstract as the development of consciousness it is easy to overlook the visceral physical experiences of the body, by which we come to know the inner world of consciousness.

\textsuperscript{45} DuBois, 43-44.
the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness, — an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife, — this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He does not wish to Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa; he does not wish to bleach his Negro blood in a flood of white Americanism, for he believes — foolishly, perhaps, but fervently — that Negro blood has yet a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the door of Opportunity roughly closed in his face.

This, then, is the end of his striving: to be a co-worker in the kingdom of culture, to escape both death and isolation, and to husband and use his best powers.  

DuBois asserted that double consciousness is a commonality amongst African-Americans. It is a sui generis experience the black community possesses which can give back to the country, if given the opportunity. Charles Long argues that double consciousness is a common experience for oppressed peoples, and a central component in

\footnote{46 DuBois, 45-46. A similar experience is found in the prologue to Ralph Ellison’s The Invisible Man, (NY: Vintage Books, 1972) 3. I supply it here to emphasize the problematic nature of the black experience. Further, The Invisible Man is arguably Ellison’s commentary on DuBois’s racial uplift program. The main character, who remains nameless throughout the text is an idealist who constantly finds himself betwixt and between in white America, and in black America. This oft-cited quote by Ellison displays a shared experience of how blacks appear to white America.}

I am an invisible man. No, I am not a spook like those who haunted Edgar Allen Poe; nor am I one of your Hollywood-movie ectoplasms. I am a man of substance, of flesh and bone, fiber, and liquids—and I might even be said to posses a mind. I am invisible understand, simply because people refuse to see me. Like the bodiless heads you sometimes see in circus side-shows, it is as though I have been surrounded by mirrors of hard distorting glass. When they approach me they see only my surroundings, themselves, or figments of their imagination—indeed, everything and anything except me.

Nor is my invisibility exactly a matter of biochemical accident of my epidermis. That invisibility to which I refer occurs because of a peculiar disposition of the eyes of those with whom I come in contact. A matter of construction of the inner eyes, those eyes with which they look through their physical eyes upon reality....You wonder whether you aren’t simply a phantom in other people’s minds.
all religious movements that contend with colonial domination. Long discusses double consciousness as a “critical stance” against the ‘hegemonic languages’ of colonialism.

Double consciousness is awareness that the universalizing languages of the West are contradictory and exclusive. For instance, the Declaration of Independence makes self-evident universal claims about human beings, they are “endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” The universal language of the founding documents does not extend to the oppressed because of the negative meanings projected onto their bodies, which excludes them from this universal ideal. Double consciousness functions as critique of the dichotomous universal language that is exclusive, and provides a locus for the oppressed to imagine new meanings for themselves using the universalizing language of the Enlightenment. Thus, it is the inability to realize the Enlightenment ideals of the American Republican Democracy; Liberty, Justice, and Right, because of the significance placed on race that is the very pain of double consciousness for DuBois.

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.
They send me to eat in the kitchen
When company comes,
    But I laugh,  
    And eat well,  
    And grow strong.

    Tomorrow,    
    I'll be at the table
When company comes. 

    Nobody'll dare 
    Say to me, 
"Eat in the kitchen," 
    Then.

Besides,
Double consciousness is precisely the commonality that DuBois and Garvey share. Both attempt to alleviate the problems confronting African-Americans by creating and forming spaces where equality and the ideals of the American Republic can be fully experienced. The difference between the two men is their approach on how to reconcile the incongruity of ‘being a problem.’ Influenced by the New England ethos, with its emphasis on education, the myth of exceptionalism, and pragmatism DuBois held the position that the “Talented Tenth” of African-Americans would be exemplary models for African-Americans to gain and achieve equality in the United States.

John Winthrop’s “Model of Christian Charity” sermon aboard the Arbella exalted New England as a “City Upon a Hill” that the rest of the world would emulate for its exceptional relationship with God. This notion of New England as a chosen, special place that will uphold the covenant with God and will function as a model for the rest of the world is a foundational part of the myth of American exceptionalism. The myth of exceptionalism influenced DuBois’ conception of the ability of the “Talented Tenth.” The ‘Talented Tenth’ is the top ten percent of exceptional and college-educated blacks who were held by DuBois to be examples for other blacks to follow and emulate. Like the New England Puritans, they would be an exceptional example to the rest of the world of African-American prowess. Garvey’s appeal cannot be understated. His organization spread into every major city in the United States and extended into Africa, Australia, Europe, and South America.

Both DuBois and Garvey attempted to reconcile the incongruous experience of race through different approaches. Garvey believed that by creating an independent nation-state in Africa, and accumulating wealth, people of African descent would be able to experience equality. DuBois believed that through education and constantly being conscious of race issues, the problems would be reconciled and blacks would experience

They'll see how beautiful I am
And be ashamed--
I, too, am America.


the American Republic equally. Both leaders have a common desire to experience the Enlightenment ideals of the country: Liberty, Justice and Right, but have completely divergent methods of attaining that goal.

W.E.B. DuBois has been cast as the prominent black intellectual of this era and the importance of Marcus Garvey has largely been overlooked. The focus on DuBois has overlooked the deep colonial structures that Garvey critiqued and attempted to overcome. The process of imagining, creating, and sustaining the UNIA was a religious world for Garvey. It was as William Paden suggested, “structure[d] existence around sacred things.” This thesis attempts to give such a valuation to Garvey by exploring the symbolic and mythical elements that attracted millions to the movement he created.

**Prior Interpretations of Marcus Garvey and the UNIA**

E. David Cronon provided the first major analysis of Garvey and the UNIA in his suggestively titled book *Black Moses: The Story of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association*. His text, the first major publication on Garvey, is sympathetic to the historical and social context African-Americans endured in the early decades of the 20th century. The Foreword, written by John H. Franklin acknowledges Cronon for recovering documentation, preserving a historical record of Garvey, and the movement, the text gives considerable attention to the social and historical contexts of the early 20th century, which were fertile grounds for a figure, such as Garvey.55

However, Cronon’s interpretation of Garvey leaves us with a figure that at best, “‘[gave] Negroes everywhere a reborn feeling of collective pride and a new awareness of individual worth,’ yet who also was a demagogue that never produced any ‘tangible gain from the impressive movement he created.’”56 Throughout the text, this dichotomy is exemplified in his interpretation of Garvey. From considering him as an escapist

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55 Cronon, xxviii-xix. Tony Martin’s *Race First* used primary documents not considered by Cronon. Cronon did preserve an early record of Garvey and his research is limited in light of current scholarship on Garvey. However, it is an important contribution and his criticisms deserve serious consideration. *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers Project* has compiled has amassed the primary documents on Garvey.
demagogue, to a race leader that provided a much-needed chauvinistic racial pride, we are left with an ambiguous figure. For instance, in the conclusion Cronon states:

In assessing Marcus Garvey’s work as a Negro leader, one is hard put to discover any tangible gain resulting from the impressive movement he created. Garvey may have brought a much needed spiritual uplift to masses of discouraged and despairing blacks in the early twenties... Garveyism failed largely because it was unable to come up with a suitable alternative to the unsatisfactory conditions of American life as they affect the Negro. Escape, either emotional or physical, was neither a realistic nor a lasting answer.⁵⁷

This quote is an example of how Cronon’s analysis of the religiosity of Garvey is reduced to simply providing a ‘spiritual uplift’ to people attracted to the movement. This analysis relegates religion to a Protestant model that emphasizes emotionalism and tangible works over ritual, symbolism, and bodily redefinitions. The mythical aspect of Garvey’s “Back to Africa” program is reduced to escapist and the significance of the Middle Passage, slavery, and the terrifying affects of modernity for African-Americans are left unexplored.

Tony Martin provides a chapter focused on the religiosity of Garvey in Race First, which advances a positive examination of Garveyism.⁵⁸ Martin argues that Garvey had political uses for religion that advanced his “program of race pride and self-reliance”⁵⁹ As the title of the book states, Martin analyzes the ideological structure of Garvey’s political use of religion specifically to make Christianity fit with the experiences of African-Americans. God and Jesus Christ identified as black fit with African-American experiences of oppression and domination. Garvey’s revaluation of the sacred is a critique of the white Christianity that permitted slavery and urged blacks to give up the material world for Jesus Christ.⁶⁰ Thus, Martin emphasizes the experience of colonial domination and its oppressive nature as the basis for the new theological orientation that Garvey advanced. Further, the analysis of religion put forth in Martin’s work primarily

⁵⁷ Cronon, 224. The last sentence is in reference to the Black Star Line and the ‘back to Africa’ movement Garvey envisioned.
⁵⁸ Martin points out that Garvey converted Catholicism early in his life, which he asserts did not have an effect on the religious views of Garvey. Instead, Martin argues that Garvey plotted his own religious orientation that did not lend itself to religious dogma. Martin, 68.
⁵⁹ Martin, 69; McCormick (forthcoming).
⁶⁰ Martin, 71; McCormick (forthcoming).
focuses on the ideologies of Garvey’s thought and the theological reexaminations found in the Catechism produced by George Alexander McGuire.\textsuperscript{61}

Another analysis of Garvey is within the scholarship of Rupert Lewis in his \textit{Marcus Garvey: Anti-Colonial Champion}. Lewis’ account of Garvey is as a charismatic leader who attempted to break the chains of colonial subjugation. Lewis spends a large part of his analysis focusing on the key features that gained Garvey notoriety, such as his political astuteness, charisma, intelligence, and superb oratorical ability. Lewis also discusses the ideas that influenced Garvey, from Booker T. Washington’s desire to create all-black institutions, to Robert Love’s concern about European control and possession of African lands.\textsuperscript{62} Thus, Lewis asserts that Garvey was able to speak to the concerns and experiences of colonized people as an ‘everyday person’ who articulated working class concerns regardless of race.\textsuperscript{63} Lewis specifically discusses Garvey’s ability to attract millions of African-Americans with his charisma and ability to speak to issues held in common by people affected by colonial contact during this period, i.e. civil rights, anti-colonialism, and the redemption of Africa to be a new land for a historically landless people.\textsuperscript{64} Further, Lewis notes that Garvey was able to gain notoriety because he “appeared at a time when there was a vacuum in Black leadership in the United States.”\textsuperscript{65}

Infused with a Marxist approach, Lewis’ method of interpretation discusses the historical influences of slavery, colonialism, and economic exploitation experienced by colonized peoples and sees Garvey and his movement as an anti-colonial liberation movement. By claiming that Garvey was leading a liberation movement, Lewis pinpoints Garvey’s focus on emergent material concerns:

\begin{quote}
Garveyism...represented a liberation movement in that it rejected colonial oppression and exploitation, actively sought to reclaim lands and economic resources, and fought against the cumulative disinheretance of millions Africans both inside Africa and outside the continent of Africa.\textsuperscript{66}
\end{quote}

\begin{footnotes}
\item\textsuperscript{61} McCormick (forthcoming).
\item\textsuperscript{62} For a brief history of influential people on Garvey’s thought, see Lewis, 24.
\item\textsuperscript{63} Lewis, 12-13.
\item\textsuperscript{64} Ibid., 12
\item\textsuperscript{65} Ibid.
\item\textsuperscript{66} Lewis, 126.
\end{footnotes}
Here, Lewis identifies Garvey’s desire to acquire economic and political power for colonized people in order to alleviate economic, political, and historical exploitation. Also within this quote is evidence of the colonial impulse that Garvey articulated. The fifth objective at the inception of the UNIA reads, “To assist in civilizing the backward tribes of Africa,” and the eighth objective was “To promote a conscientious Christian worship among the native tribes of Africa.”

Garvey proposes a colonial program; although it is significantly different from European colonialism, it still attempts to impose European categories of importance upon Africa, i.e. Christianity, economics, and the importance of recapitulating institutions (the UNIA). Yet, this is different from European colonialism because the focus is to liberate Africa from European power and to institute a new type of political power within Africa headed by the UNIA that desired to unite all people of African descent in a common nation-state in Africa. The UNIA is a pro-African organization that desires to represent those displaced from Africa during the slave trade. However, Garvey wants to impose his organization upon Africa in what he projects is best for Africans. Thus, Garvey embodies colonial categories of importance in his vision of Africa and this discussion is missing from Lewis’s analysis.

A significant problem with the position of Lewis is his representation of Garvey as being a type of Marxist who was mainly concerned with emergent material concerns in an attempt to break the chains of colonialism. In addition, his assessment of Garvey’s redemption of Africa overlooks the fact that Garvey promulgated a colonial program. Moreover, Lewis underestimates the complexity of Garvey’s incorporation of colonial impulses in his program for Africa that are not all Marxist, and have European qualities of colonialism.

Robert Hill’s introduction to The Marcus Garvey and UNIA Papers provides a focused analysis of the socio-historical context of the 1920s. Hill focuses on the religiosity of Garvey as evangelizing a gospel of black success, racial self-determination

67 Lewis, 50.
68 In the introduction, Lewis states “some Garveyites adopted neo-colonial positions. However, examining the Garvey legacy in its true historical perspective we can reject what in it is now anachronistic or weakens the struggle against imperialism and we can look toward developing the positive, which in any case, represents the main thrust in Garveyism.” Lewis, 14, (my italics). This positivist historical focus on Garvey glosses over the complexity of Garvey’s colonial program, and is revisionist. By reframing Garvey to fit a positive interpretation, an opportunity for critical analysis of Garvey is missed.
and instituting a “variation on the white norm of success.” Hill’s position acknowledges Garvey’s vehement denial of being a theologian but asserts that the religious nature of Garvey is in his “gospel of black success.” This doctrine of racial success and political achievement incorporates the American cult of success, which was filled with optimism about the potential for economic gain in the market system. The interpretation by Hill argues that Garvey’s gospel of success was intended to produce economic gain and the respect and equality poor black communities lacked.

Conclusion

Religious interpretations of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association tend to examine the eschatological, ecclesiastical, and theological dimensions of the movement. These and other analyses of the movement focus on the economic, social, and political dissonance that gave rise to the movement and allowed it to reverberate globally with people affected by the legacy of the transatlantic slave trade. However, prior interpretations of the religiosity of the movement tend to focus on the ideological structures of the thought and speeches of Garvey. The argument proposed in the next chapter shifts the focus from examining the ideologies espoused by Garvey to one that employs a method found in the academic discipline of the History of Religions, which is a comparative model using current scholarship in Melanesian Cargo movements. This paradigm shift provides an analysis that better understands the religious response to colonial domination that Garvey articulated and subsequently capturing the imaginations of the people that were attracted to Garveyism.

69 Hill, 1: xli.
70 Ibid.
71 Hill 1: xl, lii.
72 McCormick (forthcoming).
Chapter Two: Making New Human Beings

Introduction

Chapter one established the socio-historical context of Marcus Garvey and examined the fundamental differences between he and DuBois. They shared a similarity in their desire to resolve the race issue, but their philosophical positions were so different that race became the dividing line between the two men and stifled their ability to communicate sincerely about the best solution to the problem. Garvey’s solution, after he established the UNIA in Harlem, was separatist, not violent, or even racist, since racial designations were the cause of the problem. In order to overcome the problem of race, Garvey saw the creation of a new nation as the only tangible solution to the problems faced by people of African descent.

Garvey, as this chapter explores, “showed how new black men could be made” through a variety of means at his disposal, but primarily through dress. Garvey was an exemplary model through which members established a new identity. His nationalistic dress coupled with the aims and goals of the UNIA resonated with those attracted to his movement. This chapter explores how these elements came together to form the most potent (outside of the church) all-black institution in the New World, and articulates my thesis that Marcus Garvey and his organization are best understood in conjunction with Cargo movements. In order to establish this, a systematic analysis of Cargo movements as a religious phenomenon is performed, and the analytical framework of Cargo movements is applied to Garvey and his organization.
Cargo Movements

Cargo movements emerged in Melanesia during the late nineteenth century as a direct result of European colonial contact. They gained notoriety in the Western imagination and in scholarship because of the “strange and exotic rites and ceremonies the purpose of which [was] to gain possession of European manufactured goods.” Thus, the name reflects how European material prosperity was a major factor in the development of the mythical and ritual frameworks of the movements.

The central feature of Cargo movements is “the shift in mythical and ritual frameworks in order to rectify the incongruity of racial, economic, and political problems as a result of European colonial contact.” Myths were altered to adequately comprehend the impinging historical contingency of being colonized, which resulted in radically new mythical orientations and in “new human beings, neither New Guinea[ns] nor Westerners.” Along with alterations in mythical orientations were reconfigurations “of time, and communal, ancestral, and colonial power relations.” The movements were fundamentally religious due to the extreme reorientation of mythical structures that expressed a new valuation of the historical, political, economic, and social categories. Thus, Cargo movements emphasized a re-attempt to come to terms with a sense of ultimate significance as a direct result of colonial domination.

Obvious discrepancies arise when considering Garvey and the UNIA in terms of Cargo movements, such as their different historical contexts and geographic locations. However, with further consideration, important similarities become apparent.

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74 Burridge, xix.

75 Burridge, xv; Reid, “A New Condition,” 50; McCormick (forthcoming).


77 Long, 135.

78 Reid, “A New Condition,” 50.

79 Reid, “A New Condition,” 49; McCormick (forthcoming).

80 Reid, “A New Condition,” 50.
especially when considering colonial domination in what Mary Louise Pratt defines as a “contact zone.” The ‘contact zone’ is

the space of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequity, and intractable conflict...often within radically asymmetrical relations of power.81

The commonalities between Cargo movements and Garvey’s movement are within the contact zone: colonial domination, racially based inequities, and conflicts regarding the importance of European material goods such as, axes, tins, and rifles.82 Further, commonalities lie within the mythic and ritualistic reorientations that appeared due to the incongruities in economic, political, and social experiences that were a direct result of European colonial contact.83

In both cargo movements and in Garveyism, a prophet or charismatic religious leader articulated a millenarian vision, or “myth-dream” that articulated a new valuation of the human being, and of the social, political and economic conditions in the contact zone.84 A myth-dream attempts to adjudicate the incongruous experiences in the contact zone: it “harken[s] to primal mythologies that accounted for social structures and individual responsibilit[ies] prior to colonialism.”85 The power of the prophet’s myth-dream is in his or her ability to accurately decipher and articulate the shared experiences and desires of the people attracted to the movement.86 Cargo movements circumvent the oppressive conditions of colonial domination by creat[ing] on a symbolic level so that their own creativity will posses a value freed from Western categories. On this sacred level they can manipulate the symbols, even become

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81 Mary Louis Pratt, Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation, (London: Routledge, 1992) 7. For an expanded discussion on contact zones, see Ania Loomba, Colonialism/Postcolonialism, 2nd ed. (NY: Routledge, 2005), 147.
83 McCormick (forthcoming).
84 McCormick (forthcoming).
85 Reid, 52. The historical and geographical differences between Cargo movements and Garveyism need to be noted. Cargo movements emerged at a point of initial contact; thus, their social and historical contexts were radically different from that of Garvey and those attracted to his movement. The social and historical experiences of Garvey and Garveyites were embedded in white hegemonic colonial power. This was significant because as we will see, the religious orientation of Garvey harkened back to the founding documents of the United States as part of his myth-dream..
86 Long, Significations, 130-131.
them and act them out when possessed, and thus understand and dominate them, although they may consider themselves controlled by them.\textsuperscript{87}

The myth-dream gives direction to make ‘new men and new societies’ in the historical reality of colonial domination by creatively revaluating myths and symbols, which resulted in new ritual behaviors.\textsuperscript{88}

J.Z. Smith focused on ritual behavior as a cognitive tension between praxis and language.\textsuperscript{89} For Smith, rituals are “a means of performing the way things ought to be in conscious tension to the way things are in such a way that this ritualized perfection is recollected in the ordinary uncontrolled course of things.”\textsuperscript{90} The impetus for ritual activity is due to the disjunctive experiences of ordinary life.\textsuperscript{91} As Smith asserts, analysis of ritual must focus on the incongruities that resulted in ritualized behaviors.\textsuperscript{92} Thus, rituals represented the attempt to make sense of the disjointed experiences of ordinary life.\textsuperscript{93} However, Smith’s focus on cognitive dissonance as prompting ritual activity has overlooked the importance of the body in rituals.

Catherine Bell provides a framework for understanding the body within rituals. She argues that rituals themselves are “fundamentally strategies of power” that are located “in the lived body, which is both the body of society and the social body.”\textsuperscript{94} Bell sees ritualized behavior as a “strategic play of power, of domination and resistance, within the arena of the social body.”\textsuperscript{95} Central to Bell’s position is how the body is used

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{87} Long, \textit{Significations}, 130.
\bibitem{88} Burridge, 29; Long, \textit{Significations}, 130.
\bibitem{90} Smith, 63.
\bibitem{91} Smith, 55. This position seems to be a critique of Rudolph Otto’s formulation of the \textit{mysterium tremendum et fascinosum} where the power of the sacred is overwhelmingly present. Instead of seeing the sacred as the cause of the \textit{tremendum}, Smith appears to emphasize historical existence as the cause of the \textit{tremendum}, which is the impetus for ritual activity. Rudolf Otto, \textit{The Idea of the Holy}, trans. John W. Harvey, 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed. (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1958).
\bibitem{92} Smith, 63.
\bibitem{93} Smith, 63.
\bibitem{94} Catherine Bell, \textit{Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice}, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 204. I have made the deduction that the social body is a communal group of ritualizing people and the body of society is a larger entity they are juxtaposed against. In her Introduction, Bell outlines the main argument for this section of the book to show that “ritualized ways of acting negotiate authority, self, and society (p. 8). For an excellent discussion on nebulous definitions of society see Joseph Kitagawa. \textit{Encyclopedia of Religion; Religious Communities: Religion, Community, and Society}, ed. Lindsay Jones, vol. 11 (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 7716-7721.
\bibitem{95} Bell, 204.
\end{thebibliography}
to gain ritual empowerment.\textsuperscript{96} The use of the body can articulate forms of resistance or domination through repetition of certain bodily gestures, and symbolically through self-fashioning.\textsuperscript{97}

In Cargo movements, the myth-dream points to the necessary rites and rituals that participants must undergo, such as the marching and parading of practitioners with objects representative of Western manufactured goods, like rifles made of sticks, symbolically mimicking the dominant culture as a call for reciprocal relations to emerge.\textsuperscript{98} In terms of Garvey’s program, the yearly parades represented the same type of ritualized expressions; the body was used to exert forms of symbolic empowerment. Heading the parades was Garvey, who wore outfits from doctoral robes to military garb. The auxiliary branches of the UNIA, such as the African Legions Society, the Black Cross Nurses, and the Universal Motor Corps also were adorned in nationalistic attire and were featured at all of the parades.

Moreover, there was yet another dimension to this process; the UNIA gave members the ability to deploy their own symbols of power, which represented their oppressor through mimesis. Iain Walker advances a definition of mimesis beyond simple imitation and performance, which rests on an internalization of the ‘other’ as an active “strategy for the construction of social identities.”\textsuperscript{99} Walker defines mimesis as

innovative social adaptation at its most efficient... a very practical and structurally significant mechanism by which alien influences and practices may be incorporated into specifically local forms of praxis which come to have an autonomy from their object.\textsuperscript{100}

This definition of mimesis emphasizes the ability for self-definition in the active representation of the ‘other.’ In this case, UNIA members mimetically represented colonial symbols; that is, they appropriated and owned the symbols. The symbolism became their own, and the parades were demonstrative of this assertion. African-

\textsuperscript{96} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{97} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{98} McCormick (forthcoming).
\textsuperscript{100} Ibid.
Americans reevaluated the symbols of white colonial hegemonic power, and appropriated them as their own in an attempt to attain nationhood and freedom.

Cargo movements view material items beyond their value as a commodity. Objects, such as axes, had no value beyond their ability to establish and maintain relationships between Europeans and Melanesians.\(^{101}\) Objects that were valued were those given as gifts, or through mutual exchanges.\(^{102}\) Cargo movements displayed a valuation of material items as the basis for establishing and maintaining equal and reciprocal relationships through the exchanges of material goods.\(^{103}\) Marcel Mauss, in *The Gift*, argues that material objects primarily function as a mode of exchange; exchange is a constitutive factor in the creation and maintenance of relationships between human beings.\(^{104}\) The objects that are exchanged “exert a magical and religious hold over [the receiver],” from whence definitive reciprocal human relationships emerge.\(^{105}\) Cargo movements represent a religious modality that attempts to revaluate the social, political, and economic structures, by which inclusive human relationships can emerge through properly reciprocated exchanges.\(^{106}\)

In analyzing Garvey’s movement, the role of commodities was complicated. Garvey desired land, economic wealth, and the creation of a nation-state. The communally based business programs sought to pool money within the organization. The Negro Factories Corporation, the Universal Grocery Stores, the Universal Millinery Store, and doll factory all functioned to produce commodities.\(^{107}\) However, the value of commodities runs deeper than manufactured goods. Chattel slavery signified the black body as a commodity. For nearly three hundred years people of African descent were

\(^{101}\) Trompf discusses how stolen material items, such as axes, were found lying about in hamlets, which points to the fact that participants in Cargo movements did not simply desire to own the newly introduced European material goods. Rather, the material items were not as valued by participants in Cargo movements because they were not given in a manner that would define and maintain reciprocal relationships. Trompf, 305-308.
\(^{102}\) Trompf, 303-304.
\(^{103}\) Ibid.
\(^{105}\) Mauss, 12.
\(^{107}\) Martin, 33.
viewed and treated as commodities by the dominant white culture. Thus, the value and meaning of the black body also needed to be reevaluated.

Cargo movements emerged at a point of initial contact between Europeans and indigenes; prior to European contact, Melanesians had their own history, indigenous customs, and means of orienting themselves in their various religious worlds. On the other hand, Garvey and those attracted to his movement were born and raised within the New World. This provided a radically different social and historical context of religious formation. This was significant because as we will see, Garvey used European Enlightenment categories of Liberty, Justice, and nationhood as the basis for his movement.

Marcus Garvey, Myth Dreams, and Mimesis

In 1913, while in England, Garvey wrote an article in the October edition of the ATOR that prophesied:

There will be soon a turning point in the history of the West Indies…the people who inhabit that portion of the Western Hemisphere will be the instruments of uniting a scattered race who…will found an Empire on which the sun shall shine as ceaselessly as it shines on the Empire of the North today.  

He focused on creating a new Empire by establishing the Universal Negro Improvement Association. On August 1, 1914, Garvey officially announced the creation of the UNIA under the motto “One God, One Aim, One Destiny,” which sought to unite "all the people of African ancestry of the world into one great body to establish a country and Government absolutely their own." The first five general objectives of the UNIA were:

To establish a Universal Confraternity among the race.
To promote the spirit of race, pride and love.
To reclaim the fallen race.
To administer to the needy.
To assist in civilizing the backward tribes of Africa.

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108 Lewis, 47.
109 Hill, I: xxxvii. August 1 is significant because it is the anniversary date of Jamaican emancipation from slavery.
110 Lewis, 50.
The UNIA was a space created for black people based on the universal experience of racial discrimination. It created social and economic opportunities. The aims and goals of the UNIA were to balance the disequilibrium of hegemonic colonial control by establishing a government, and eventually a nation-state in Africa that would give black people an equal voice in the political and economic affairs of the world.

Garvey implemented the Declaration of the Rights of the Negro Peoples of the World at the first annual UNIA convention in 1920. The original Declaration of Independence was a document of self-definition. It critiqued the governmental praxes of King George III in the colonies, broke political ties with England, and asserted the colonies as independent states. Mimetically representing the Declaration of Independence, the process of appropriating the power of the other as one’s own, Garvey also advanced a document of self-definition to remedy the experiences of tyrannical government power. It listed twelve complaints against racial discrimination in the New World. The first complaint stated:

> [t]hat nowhere in the world, with few exceptions, are black men accorded equal treatment with white men, although in the same situation and circumstances, but, on the contrary, are discriminated against and denied the common rights due to human beings for no other reason than their race and color. We are not willingly accepted as guests in the public hotels and inns of the world for no other reason than our race and color.

All of the complaints in the Declaration are based on the praxis of racial discrimination. A Declaration of Rights followed the list of complaints. The first stated:

> Be it known to all men that whereas, all men are created equal and entitled to the right of life, liberty and pursuit of happiness, and because of this we, the duly elected representatives of the Negro peoples of the world, invoking the aid of the just and Almighty God do declare all men, women and children of our blood throughout the world free citizens, and do claim them as free citizens of Africa, the Motherland of all Negroes.

In this declaration, Garvey extended the symbolic qualities of the founding documents of freedom, equality, and justice in the Constitution and Declaration of Independence to all people of African descent. The Declaration of Rights listed forty rights that were meant to extend throughout African diaspora. Like the original, it was a document of self-

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111 Hill, 2: 571
112 Ibid.
assertion. It appropriated the universal ideals of the American Republican Democracy to include all blacks. Since Western blacks were historically landless, there was no place to create a new nation, and Africa came to hold this symbolic meaning of land.

**Africa**

According to Long, Africa comes to hold a religious value for blacks due to the ‘involuntary presence’ of the black community in the United States, and the significance placed on race.\(^{113}\)

\[\text{[Race] constituted a complexity of experience revolving around the relationship between their physical being and their origins. So even if they had no conscious memory of Africa.....the image of Africa, [was] an image related to historical beginnings.....It constitute[d] the religious revalorization of the land, a place where the natural and ordinary gestures of the blacks were and could be authenticated.....The image of Africa as it appears in black religion is unique, for the black community in America is a landless people.....Their image of the land points to a religious meaning of land...always invested with historical and religious possibilities.}\(^{114}\)

Africa held tremendous possibility in Garvey’s imagination. Africa was a place that held the serious possibility for freedom from racial significations, which was why he declared all blacks free citizens of Africa. Historically, it was the place of beginnings; symbolically it held the possibility of freedom from the deep racial stigmas of the New World.

A major characteristic of Garvey’s speeches was the revaluation of African history into a glorious past that reversed Western significations of Africa. In a speech on August 13, 1922, during the third annual UNIA convention in Harlem, Garvey discussed the colonial problems surrounding Africa. He discussed how white colonial discourses had cast African history in a negative light, and considered it ‘uncivilized,’ ‘cannibalistic,’ ‘savage,’ and ‘unsafe.’\(^{115}\) For instance, in a speech on April 23, 1923, Garvey discussed the glorious past of Africa and the European process of signification:

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\(^{113}\) Long, *Significations*, 188

\(^{114}\) Long, *Significations*, 190

\(^{115}\) Blaisdell, 93.
The white world has always tried to rob and discredit us of our history. They tell us that Tut-Ankh-Amen, a King of Egypt, who reigned about the year 1350 B.C., was not a negro, that the ancient civilization of Egypt and the Pharaohs was not of our race, but that does not make the truth unreal. Every student of history, of impartial mind, knows that the Negro once ruled the world, when white men were savages and barbarians living in caves; that thousands of Negro professors at that time taught in the universities in Alexandria, then the seat of learning; that ancient Egypt gave to the world civilization and that Greece and Rome have robbed Egypt of her arts, letters, and taken all the credit themselves. It is not surprising, however that white men should resort to every means to keep Negroes in ignorance of their history, it would be a great shock to their pride to admit to the world today that 3,000 years ago black men excelled in government and were the founders and teachers of art, science, and literature. The power and sway we once held has passed away, but now in the twentieth century we are about to see a return of it in the rebuilding of Africa; yes, a new civilization, a new culture, shall spring up from among our people, and the Nile shall once more flow through the land of science, of art, and of literature, wherein will live black men of the highest learning and the highest accomplishments.  

In this speech, Garvey revaluated the history of Africa. He posited it as the first civilization, the place where literature, science, and art began. By positing that Africa was the first civilization, Garvey directly critiqued the European Enlightenment as the basis for civilization in Europe and the Western hemispheres. He revaluated African history as a fully developed intellectual, artistic, and scientific civilization. Moreover, this speech by Garvey was a critique of the deeper structures of European discourses about Africa. Garvey was redefining Africa as the place of origins, a place that was equal to or better than Europe. By creating a new discourse about Africa that emphasized its historical prowess, Garvey was reevaluating Africa mythically, as a place of beginnings that could be revived through the work of the UNIA. 

The political and economic exploitation of Africa by both American and European countries and corporations fueled the imagined sense of an African redemption for Garvey. American companies such as Firestone contributed to the exploitation of Liberia politically and economically by using their natural resources and labor for profit. Garvey’s desire to establish a nation-state in Africa was seriously concerned with balancing the unyielding power of the League of Nations. On August 31, 1921, Garvey closed the second annual International Convention of Negroes of the World with a speech.

116 Blaisdell, 121.
that discussed the colonial problem in Africa. The League of Nations decided that France and England would divide the 608,000 square miles of African land Germany had controlled. Garvey responded thus: “… [the League of Nations] took upon themselves the right to parcel out and apportion as they pleased 608,000 square miles of our own land; for we never gave it up; we never sold it. It is still ours.“\textsuperscript{117} The League of Nations redistributed vast amounts of land in Africa without any opposition. Thus, to Garvey, nationhood was necessary to establish fair and balanced relationships with other governmental organizations.

**The Middle Passage and the Black Star Line**

The myth-dream articulated by Garvey harkened back to the memory of the Middle Passage and re-opened the waterways of the Atlantic as a realm of possibility for African-Americans. According to Tony Martin, the Black Star Line

> fulfill[ed] a long felt need. Black Passengers were routinely subjected to racist practices on existing shipping lines. First-class tickets often did not prevent black people from having to eat after white passengers had finished. Black seamen, the last hired and first fired, also had reason to welcome a black company. And for black seamen with advanced nautical qualifications, life was especially hard.\textsuperscript{118}

Martin’s pragmatic interpretation of the Black Star Line views the shipping company as providing an economic resource and assuring that black passengers would be treated with the respect and dignity that they deserved. However, as Stephanie Smallwood points out, the watery Atlantic had been a one-way experience for African slaves. The boats made round trips, but the human beings that suffered in the hulls of the ships experienced modernity as the terror of slavery.\textsuperscript{119} Even though the Black Star Line was primarily an economic venture, as Martin pointed out, the mythical and symbolic elements associated with the ships and the water were quite resonant with UNIA members. For example, Henrietta Vinton Davis, who was a noted orator and former aide to Frederick Douglass, spoke of the importance of the Black Star Line at Liberty Hall prior to the inaugural UNIA parade:

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\textsuperscript{117} Blaisdell, 49.
\textsuperscript{118} Martin, 152.
\textsuperscript{119} My use of the term modernity reflects my understanding of the term as it is tied up with the colonial project both preceding and during the European Enlightenment, which affected the world due to colonial domination and promulgated a worldwide capitalist economy. McCormick (forthcoming).
In thinking of our great responsibility concerning the convention that will soon meet in Liberty Hall, where will be gathered the best brains of the race from all parts of the world, I was thinking what an important occasion it is—a most important occasion to us as a race that means that we shall either go forward or backward. There is no such thing as standing still. We must go forward or backward. It is the wish in every Negro’s heart that we should go forward, and in going forward we must enlist in the ranks of the UNIA, because it means the great forward movement of the 400,00,000 Negroes of the world. Those who have not yet joined are bound to join. They won’t be able to stay out of it, because as the Hon. Frederick Douglass once said about the Republican Party, that the Republican Party was the ship and all else was the sea, so the UNIA is the ship—the ship of safety—and all outside of that ship is the sea. (Applause) It behooves every Negro to get on board this ship, not alone on board the ships of the Black Star Line, but on board the ship of the UNIA and ACL [African Communities League], expressing as it does the hopes, the aspirations of a whole race of people... 

According to member Davis’s speech, the Black Star Line provided community and opportunities for the organizations members. Also within her speech was a revaluation of ships from being a place of terror to being a place of safety. According to Charles Carnegie, the Black Star Line represented power over the historical disjointedness that resulted from the Middle Passage.

The Black Star Line, then, reactivate[d] the sting of primordial memory, but also provide[d] its antidote... The middle passage carrier[d] with it in the collective imagination the terror of dislocation, dismemberment, and dispersal. It represent[ed] that irrevocable mythological break with an imagined collective past, with kin, with community. When viewed in this context, the Black Star Line manage[d] to embody hope and healing through the reconstitution of community, the renewal of family ties. 

By creating the Black Star Line, Garvey was able to deploy a potent symbol in African-American religious history; it revaluated ships, and the Middle Passage. The Black Star Line also symbolized entrance into the modern world system of scientific and mechanical achievement. Viewed symbolically, the Black Star Line held the potential of changing the Middle Passage from a formerly one-way process for blacks. The Black Star Line

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120 Hill, 2: 422.
122 Carnegie, 63; McCormick (forthcoming).
provided the possibility for new and different human meanings to emerge. On a
symbolic level, it meant empowerment over the watery origin of terror.123

The Black Star Line was discussed in Garvey’s speeches as providing
emigration to Africa. Africa was discussed by Garvey as a land of possibility, a place of
economic wealth. There was a strong desire among blacks to repatriate to Africa,124
which prompted E. David Cronon to dismiss Garvey and the UNIA as escapist.
However, Garvey’s thoughts on this subject must be examined on a symbolic level.
When interpreting the repatriation of Africa on a symbolic level, a deeper religious
orientation for blacks is revealed. According to Mircea Eliade, a material structure where
a hierophany has occurred becomes a paradigm that orients and activates.125

...through the repetition of paradigmatic gestures...archaic man
succeeded...in annulling time, he nonetheless lived in harmony with
the cosmic rhythms; we could even say that he entered into these
rhythms.126

The chaotic experiences of the Middle Passage served as a locus of initiation for slaves
into the New World; thus, they served as the primary experience of the cosmic rhythms
of the New World. According to Eliade, the material experience of water symbolizes
“fons et origo … the substance from which all forms come and to which they will
return….”127 Africans were initiated into modernity as the terror of slavery during the
experience of the watery Middle Passage. Upon landing on the shores of the New World,
along with their bodies, the water became a defining boundary for slaves. Therefore, on a
symbolic level, the Black Star Line was significant because it represented the possibility
of freedom from racial significations in Africa; it also made it possible to transverse the
boundary of water, and to reenter the paradigmatic gesture of origins, the potent watery
Atlantic Ocean.

32__________________________________
123 McCormick (forthcoming).
124 Martin, 121.
126 Eliade, The Myth of the Eternal Return, 95 (My italics).
127 Eliade, Patterns in Comparative Religion, 188.
Performative Dress

The UNIA provided its members with institutionalized social, economic, and political structures. These structures offered members self-definition through symbolic dress and bodily presentation. None was more exorbitant in his self-fashioning than Marcus Garvey. Robert Hill, in an essay entitled *Making Noise*, examined the various images of Garvey and their symbolic meanings. In particular, he examined the most famous image of Garvey captured at the 1922 annual international convention of the UNIA. Hill observed: “Clad in a field marshal’s uniform of World War I vintage, plumed and gold braided, Garvey dresses the part of commander-in-chief of his visionary African empire.”\(^{128}\) Two other common images of Garvey display him dressed in doctoral robes, or sporting natty business attire.\(^{129}\)

![Marcus Garvey dressed in Field General uniform](image)

**Figure 1** Marcus Garvey dressed in Field General uniform

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On the use of symbolism, Robert Hill stated:

The carnivalesque aspect of Garvey and the UNIA’s rituals contained an element of dissimulation. “Sometimes you have to use camouflage, you know,” Garvey readily acknowledged. The fact is that satire supplied an essential weapon in the otherwise impoverished arsenal at Garvey’s disposal. What might first appear to be simply naïve mimicry actually disguised a more settled purpose. “They laugh and say that I am spectacular.” Garvey declared in responding to his critics. “Who is more spectacular than the Pope? The critics ask why Garvey wears a red robe. Marcus Garvey flings back the retort, “Why does the Pope wear a red robe? Why does the King of England wear purple robes?”

131 Hill, “Making Noise,” 194
Charles Carnegie has analyzed the nationalism expressed in Garvey’s symbolic deployments; however, a religious analysis of Garvey’s dress as it relates to the phenomenon of Cargo movements is also required. Erving Goffman argues that dress is a visible mode of presentation which is a form of ritual behavior, representing “to those in [one’s] immediate presence that [one] is a person of certain desirable or undesirable qualities.” Like a Cargo movement prophet, Garvey’s dress was an entrée into the arenas of colonial power. Viewed mimetically, Garvey’s dress permitted him to invoke different forms of symbolic power in which he asserted new possibilities and potential meanings for African-Americans that previously had been confined only to the dominant white culture. Garvey extended this symbolic empowerment to the auxiliary branches of the UNIA.

**The Parades**

A notable parade for the UNIA was during the August 1, 1920 convention at Liberty Hall. The convention was the largest African-American parade ever, displaying over 5,000 members in full organizational attire in front of about 50,000 onlookers. Marcus Garvey led the parade in his field marshal’s uniform. The parade also featured the Black Star Line Choir, and the Black Cross Nurses, who “made a truly inspiring spectacle. Clad in their white costumes, with their flowering caps and their black crosses, these beautiful women of a sorrowed and bleeding but determined race, thrilled us men with pride and devotion to the cause…” The UNIA band followed the Black Cross Nurses along with delegates from Canada, the Caribbean, South and North America and Africa.

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133 McCormick (forthcoming).
134 Hill, 1: 480. There were later parades that were larger than the convention of 1920, notably the 1922 and 1924 parades.
135 Hill, 1: 493.
136 Hill, 1:493.
Honor Ford-Smith’s article, *Unruly Virtues of the Spectacular*, discusses the parades and variety shows of the UNIA in terms of performance theory.\(^{137}\) Ford-Smith focused on the use of performance because it offered a visible language of power by “releasing memory and unofficial ways of knowing encoded in the body, dress, and voice.”\(^{138}\) Her primary concern in the article was the way in which anti-colonial performances used the body to express “emancipatory ideas” symbolically.\(^{139}\) *Things were not the way they ought to be.* The parades of the UNIA gave a visual representation

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\(^{137}\) Honor Ford-Smith, “Unruly Virtues of the Spectacular,” *interventions* 6, no. 1 (2004): 18-44. Her article focuses on the UNIA as it returned to Jamaica in 1927, after Garvey’s deportation from the U.S. Her analysis of staging and use of performance theory is also useful in analyzing the UNIA parades in Harlem.

\(^{138}\) Ford-Smith, 23.

\(^{139}\) Ford-Smith, 23.
of African-Americans embodying colonial power. Like Cargo movements, they deployed the symbols of domination in order to demonstrate their desire to enter into reciprocal relationships with their colonizers by embodying their symbols. Unlike Cargo movements, chattel slavery in the New World deemed the black body a commodity for nearly three hundred years.

Marcus Garvey “show[ed] how new [black] men may be made” within the social, historical, political, and economic context of the United States in the 1920’s. \(^{140}\) There was no self-determination for commodities; they were things, bought and sold in the market economy. The UNIA provided a space for the de-commodification of the body and self-determination. On August 20, 1920, during the first annual UNIA convention, Garvey stated, “we desire to see a spirit of bravery in every Negro...that spirit that will not down even if the forces of hell came against it—that spirit that will stand at all times and demand the rights of the Negro.”\(^{141}\) Members were ritually empowered to deploy nationalistic symbols, and to appropriate them as their own in their radically new moments of self-definition; Garvey made new people.

**Conclusion**

The previous sections of this chapter established my methodological framework of interpretation. Using the literature on Cargo movements, a comparison was drawn between the movements in Melanesia and Garveyism. Like Cargo movements, Garveyism harkened back to prior myths to rectify the experiences of incongruity. Unlike Cargo movements, Garvey’s religious framework was bound to the socio-historical context of the New World. Garvey’s double consciousness was oriented to see the value in the ideals of the founding documents; however, the praxis of racial discrimination stunted the ability to be free in the New World. This dichotomous experience prompted Garvey to mime the historically significant creation of American republican democracy in the Declaration of Independence.

Garvey’s myth-dream held that the creation of a nation-state would rectify the problems faced by blacks. Paradoxically, the attachment to land in the New World had

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\(^{140}\) Burridge, xvii.

\(^{141}\) Hill, 2: 616.
been forged through enslavement, as slaves worked the land without any claim to the land either financially or symbolically. As a result, Africa came to hold a more resonant value as land. Further, the involuntary presence of blacks in the New World was a paradox heightened by the historical contingencies that was discussed in chapter one, such as Jim Crow, and the praxes of lynching. These pressing historical realities pointed to the fact that things were not the way they ought to be.

Garvey pointed to the necessary rites and rituals to rectify these incongruous experiences through the UNIA. The UNIA ‘made new human beings’ by providing power, the mimetic power of colonial nationalist symbols, which constructed new social identities. The daily, weekly, and yearly rituals empowered members to embody this new identity, and put it on public display. Those attracted to his movement would alleviate the incongruous experience of being colonized and assert the new self-definitions that the UNIA ritually provided.

Moreover, Garvey revaluated the historical religious event of the terror of slavery. The Black Star Line reopened the ‘primordial sting’ of the Middle Passage but also ‘provided its antidote’ symbolically. The Black Star Line revaluated the terror of slavery symbolically by reopening the wound and healing it. As member Davis stated, “the UNIA is the ship—the ship of safety—and all outside of that ship is the sea.” The symbolic appropriation of the watery Atlantic was directly tied to the revaluation of Africa as a place of origins and possibility, both economically and socially. The next chapter examines the UNIA in Harlem. Analysis is placed on the UNIA as a sacred space and how it functioned as an organization. Consideration is given to the form and content of UNIA meetings, and the analysis of Cargo movements is extended.

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Chapter Three: Sanctuary for the “Problem”

Introduction

Garvey’s outspoken criticism of colonialism voiced the common experiences of people affected by the legacy of slavery. The early decades of the 20th century marked the height of European colonial contact at eighty-five percent of the world.143 According to Ania Loomba, “[i]n any colonial context, economic plunder, the production of knowledge and strategies of representation depended heavily upon one another. Specific ways of seeing and representing racial, cultural and social differences were essential to the setting up of colonial institutions of control...”144 Racial identification and subjugation was part of the European colonial program that justified enslaving Africans. European colonialism recapitulated itself through creating and developing colonial cities and their subsequent institutions. According to David Carrasco, “cities function[ed] to continue, prescribe, and modulate [the colonial] order...[by]...inscrib[ing ] the normative order.”145 Thus, colonial institutions functioned to ‘prescribe and inscribe’ order legally, socially and economically.

For example, an extremely poignant moment of incongruity in African-American history followed Reconstruction. The 1883 overturning of the Civil Rights Act of 1875 by the Supreme Court declared that the 14th Amendment precluded states, and not citizens from the practice of racial discrimination, which left African-Americans with little, if any legal protection. This legal problem existed until the passage of the National Civil Rights Act in 1964.146 When Garvey emerged, the deep and long history of colonialism in the United States reached its tercentennial point of racialized discourses, policies, and institutions.

143 Loomba, 3.
144 Loomba, 85.
146 McCormick (forthcoming).
The UNIA gained tremendous support in the United States, particularly in the south. In Harlem, which was largely composed of southern African-Americans due to the Great Migration, and recent immigrants from the Caribbean, the organization grew rapidly through its social programs, economic ventures and the visibility of the parades.

However, within the UNIA, the colonized appropriated the ideas of the West and altered them to assert their self-determined identities in the contact zone. According to Ania Loomba, this is a process of hybridization, which is an interpolation process by colonial resistant movements.

Anti-colonial movements and individuals often drew upon Western ideas and vocabularies to challenge colonial rule and hybridized what they borrowed by juxtaposing it with indigenous ideas, reading it through their own interpretative lens, and even using it to assert cultural alterity or insist on an unbridgeable difference between colonizer and colonized.

As previously discussed, The UNIA provided a space of self-determination. The UNIA was created as an institutional space to meet the pressing social and economic needs of blacks. The institutionalized racism of this era made it impossible to be self-sustaining. Through a variety of business programs, and creative endeavors, the UNIA provided blacks not only with a renewed sense of self, but also with a space that met their economic and social needs.

**The UNIA: Harlem**

In April of 1916, Garvey left Jamaica to fundraise and lecture in the United States, where he stayed until his deportation in 1927. The early meetings of the UNIA in the United States had a loose structure. In July 1918, as the UNIA developed a strong base of members and grew as an institution, the organization formulated a strong structure through its Constitution and Book of Laws. The Constitution and Book of Laws dictated the structure of the weekly and annual meetings. The hymn “From Greenland’s

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147 UNIA records documented the branches of the organization in the United States; Louisiana had 74 branches, Virginia had 48, North Carolina had 47, West Virginia and Mississippi each had 44. Martin, Table 1, 14.
148 Martin, 9.
149 Loomba p. 146. (My emphasis).
Icy Mountains” written by the missionary Lowell Mason opened every UNIA meeting. A prayer dedicated to the UNIA by John E. Bruce-Grit followed the singing of the hymn. The singing of the newly drafted Ethiopian Anthem closed the meetings.

The recently compiled Constitution and Book of Laws made it mandatory for all meetings to adhere to this opening and closing structure. Article V, Section 37 of the Book of Laws established the colors for the UNIA: “red for the blood of the race, black to symbolize pride in the color of the skin; and green for the promise of a new and better life in Africa.”

The Book of Laws also solidified other structures of the UNIA meetings; for instance, Article, V, Section 49 made it mandatory for all local divisions to rent, lease, or own a building to house their weekly Sunday meetings from 3-6, and for other meetings during the week. Further, Section 58 of the same article made it mandatory for each division to have a musical band or orchestra at all meetings, along with an organized choir. The meetings generally held the same internal structure of having prominent local officials, clergy, and UNIA members lecture on a variety of topics.

Reluctant to continue in the tradition of black religion, Garvey attempted to institute the UNIA as a space that would lead to the accumulation of wealth. As Robert Hill observes,

Garvey outspokenly declared himself to be not religious in the traditional sense and repeatedly defined his concern as secular. In closing the second UNIA convention (1921), he asserted that “we are living in a material world, even though it is partly spiritual, and since we have been very spiritual in the past, we are going to take a part of the material now, and will give others the opportunity to practice the spiritual side of life.”

Throughout his life Garvey remained impatient with what he saw as the piety of traditional black religion and with anything else that he felt might interfere with the pursuit of worldly, personal success. In a 1937 article, significantly entitled “The Cold Truth,” Garvey urged blacks “to argue their way out to success” by recognizing that “with all its religion and its philosophy, the most potent factor of the world’s civilization is its austere materialism, through which races and individuals see themselves enthroned, guaranteed and protected by the

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150 Hill 1: 278.
151 Ibid., 279.
152 Ibid., 279.
153 Hill 1: 268.
154 Ibid., 1: 276-277.
155 Ibid., 1: xliv.
Here, Hill points out Garvey’s critique of religion as spiritual, passive, and non-materialistic, which is really a critique of Protestant Christianity. Colleen McDannell in Material Christianity: Religion and Culture in America states that the opposition to recognizing that religion is concerned about materialistic and monetary ends is part of the Puritan religious model of understanding religion.

The Puritan model of religious historiography denies the rich complex of American Christianity and serves as a blindfold to the strong materialist trends in materialist culture. If we immediately assume that whenever money is exchanged religion is debased, then we will miss the subtle ways that people create and maintain spiritual ideals through the exchange of goods and the construction of spaces.

McDannell’s emphasis on materiality as a necessary negotiator of constructing religious meaning and identities cannot be overstated. By creating the UNIA Garvey attempted to address the economic needs of blacks, and demonstrated to blacks the various forms of social power they could possess. Foremost, economics was a crucial issue; it was the driving force for Garvey to start the UNIA. Second, the UNIA provided a material structure for the UNIA rituals.

Moreover, the lack of reciprocal exchanges in the colonized world prompted Garvey to start his movement. The problematic valuation of commodities was the basis for Cargo movements to engage in ritual activities. This was the same for Garveyism; however, there was a shift in emphasis from the acquisition of commodities to the black body as a commodity that needed to be revaluated. In this sense, Liberty Hall constituted a space where the material body was exchanged and created anew.

The Palace Casino in New York City housed a majority of the early UNIA meetings until July 27, 1919, when the UNIA purchased the Metropolitan Baptist Church and renamed it Liberty Hall. During an address at the 1920 UNIA convention, Garvey discussed the importance of Liberty Hall,

So we are assembled for the second time in this cradle of liberty—
Liberty Hall is indeed the cradle of liberty. It is the Mecca at which all men who desire freedom assemble for the purpose of giving expression

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156 Ibid., 1:xlv.
to their thoughts and we no less than the rest of mankind shall continue to give expression to our thoughts until we achieve what we have set for ourselves. There is a glorious destiny for the Negro and before the Negro but that destiny is to the Negroes own making and we of the [UNIA] are determined to carve a way to a brighter and more glorious future….welcome to Liberty Hall…Be without fear. There is but one fear that we know and that is the fear Roosevelt talked about, namely: Fear God and know no other fear. 158

Inscribed with the Enlightenment ideal of Liberty, Liberty Hall was a space of self-determination, a space that provided freedom from the significations placed on the black body. Since the body was the defining factor of liberty, Garvey created Liberty Hall as a sacred space. On sacred space, Belden Lane states that

Th[e] indefatigable effort to anchor meaning in place is…inescapable contextually. All limit experiences cause us to gather up every thread of meaning from the context in which they occur. In our memories, therefore, we return to the place “where it happened” 159

Historically, outside of the church, it never happened for blacks in the Unites States, besides in their imagined longings. The pain of double consciousness, as previously discussed, was the inability to experience the Enlightenment ideals of the American republican democracy; Liberty, Justice, and Right, because of the significance placed on race. Garvey established the UNIA as a space where it could happen. It was a hybridized space, taking the specific meaning of the Enlightenment ideal of Liberty and inscribing it into the name and walls of the institution. Robert Hill noted the influence the UNIA headquarters had across the United States: “Liberty Hall became the spiritual tabernacle for the entire UNIA, inspiring UNIA divisions everywhere to establish Liberty Halls as meeting places in their communities.” 160 Inscribed with sacred meanings, Liberty Hall was a space of free expression in the African-American community, but also was a space to contend with the pressing economic contingencies of the 1920’s.

Membership in the UNIA had two criteria: first was blackness and the second was the regular payment of monthly dues. 161 The racial criteria of the organization

158 Hill 1: 481.
159 Belden Lane, Landscapes of the Sacred; Geography and Narrative in American Spirituality. (NY: Paulist Press, 1988) 5. (My emphasis.)
160 Ibid.
161 Ibid., 1: 266.
created what Max Weber terms “open and closed relationships.” Open relationships view outsiders as enhancing the social experiences and possibilities of the group. On the other hand, closed relationships are controlled and exclusive and members are given specific means to meet the predetermined ends of the group. Closed relationships in the UNIA provided dignity and esteem for members, along with jobs. The communally-based economic programs of the UNIA were designed to garner economic power for the UNIA and people of African descent. As Garvey stated in 1929, “Negro producers! Negro distributors! Negro consumers! The world of Negroes can be self-contained. We desire earnestly to deal with the rest of the world, but if the rest of the world desire not, we seek not.” In this statement, one can see Garvey’s desire to enter into egalitarian reciprocal relationships with ‘the rest of the world.’ The cooperatives and businesses the UNIA created were to conduct business both locally and globally, providing jobs and economic opportunity to UNIA members.

The Negro Factories Corporation, incorporated in 1920, was to establish factories in the United States, South America, the West Indies, and Africa. The Black Star Line, incorporated in 1919, was to conduct trade between the United States, the Caribbean, and Africa and distribute the goods produced at the factories. These global business ventures never prospered; however, there were businesses ventures that did provide immediate local economic relief. Jobs were provided for members at the numerous UNIA-owned businesses such as the Universal Laundries, the Universal Restaurants, the Universal Grocery stores, the Bee Hive printing plant, the Men’s Manufacturing Department, which made UNIA uniforms, and the Women’s Manufacturing Department, which made the uniforms for the Black Cross Nurses and other textile goods. The cooperatives and business ventures provided economic relief and were empowering.

The Constitution and Book of Laws also established the governmental structure of the organization by establishing a hierarchy of power resembling colonial forms of government. Garvey was the Potentate and Supreme Commissioner, and the subordinate

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\[\text{References}\]
163 Ibid., 97.
164 Ibid., 101-102.
165 Martin, 35.
166 Ibid., 22-37.
167 Ibid., 33-34. For an exhaustive list of business and economic ventures of the UNIA see Martin, 22-37.
positions also had elaborate titles: the Supreme Deputy was his assistant and replacement, the President General and Administrator was responsible for facilitating the Potentate’s workload, and the Secretary General and High Commissioner was responsible for general correspondence and organization. \(^{168}\) Again, the mimetic process of *appropriating as one’s own the power of the other* was at work with Garvey. The elaborate titles Garvey used in the organization reflected various forms of colonial governmental structures.

As previously stated, on these elaborations, Garvey questioned the legitimating power of colonial institutions by asking, “Who is more spectacular than the Pope? The critics ask why Garvey wears a red robe. Marcus Garvey flings back the retort, ‘Why does the Pope wear a red robe? Why does the King of England wear purple robes?’”\(^{169}\) In his response, Garvey was questioning the justification of colonial authority and power. From where did they get their power? Where did Garvey get his power? European colonial hegemonic control was based on an ideological construction of white supremacy that assumed its power by signifying ‘others’ they encountered in the New World, and in Africa. Here, Garvey used the creation of spectacle to question the validity of traditional religious and colonial forms of power. Further, one has to wonder how Europeans appeared to Africans and Native Americans when they arrived on the coasts of the New World. Garvey received his power through his sartorial mimesis of the legitimating forces of colonial authority, the military, the academy, and the business world.

The Constitution and Book of Laws, along with the later drafted Declaration of the Rights of the Negro Peoples of the World with a Declaration of Rights, \(^{170}\) mimicked the founding documents of the United States of America. The documents incorporated the Enlightenment ideals of the country, Liberty, Justice, and Right, and was critical of racial discrimination. For instance, article 7 of the Declaration of Rights stated that “We believe that any law or practice that tends to deprive any African of his land or the privileges of free citizenship within his country is unjust and immoral, and no native should respect any such law or practice.”\(^{171}\) Here, the double consciousness of Garvey is

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\(^{168}\) Hill 1: 258-262.
\(^{170}\) Declaration of the Rights of the Negro Peoples of the World was implemented during the first annual UNIA convention August, 13, 1920. Hill 2: 571.
\(^{171}\) Ibid., 2: 573.
present; he simultaneously respected the established laws of the country but also critiqued the practice of racial discrimination.

The organizational structure of the UNIA was that of a nation-state. It was a self-contained organization premised on racial uplift and economic opportunity.\(^{172}\) It developed an Army in the African Legions Society, medical care with the Black Cross Nurses, and various economic and business opportunities through cooperatives and entrepreneurial ventures. This structure grew and developed as the UNIA got a foothold in Harlem, and spread to four other continents: Australia, South America, Europe, and Africa. Thus, the UNIA was a globally received institution wherever economic disparity and racial discrimination existed. However, within the United States, there were internal gender dynamics that defined the roles of both men and women.\(^{173}\)

**Gender Distinctions**

Barbara Bair argues that the concept of difference is an essential theoretical framework for understanding race and gender in the UNIA. It was in the sociopolitical context of Harlem Renaissance that the UNIA changed from a benevolent organization in Jamaica to a separatist organization in the United States, based solely on race. Bair argues that this “separatism offered a liberating vision, a concrete alternative to the realities of discrimination and exclusion suffered in a world dominated by whites and a utopian model for future independence and strength that would belie negative white constructions of black ability and value.”\(^{174}\) According to Bair, the emphasis by the UNIA on difference in its organization and philosophy, stemmed from “culturally constructed concepts of gender,”\(^{175}\) which in turn defined highly gender-specific social roles in the UNIA.\(^{176}\)

The auxiliary organizations cemented the gender distinctions of the UNIA.

Created in relation to the African Legions Society, the Black Cross Nurses and the

\(^{172}\) Martin, 32.

\(^{173}\) However interesting the dynamics of the international branches are, they are beyond the scope of this project.


\(^{175}\) Ibid., 155.

\(^{176}\) Ibid., 155.
Universal Motor Corps represented two female auxiliaries of the UNIA. George Alexander McGuire, the head of the African Orthodox Church, compiled the Universal Negro Catechism in March of 1921. The Universal Negro Catechism provided a “course of instruction in religious and historical knowledge pertaining to the [Black] race." Moreover, in a speech delivered in Guabito, Cuba in April of 1921, Garvey discussed the religious nature of the newly drafted catechism: “Now we are going to cut out all in the Bible that does not suit us. We are just completing a new Bible which is the first Bible of the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League.” The catechism represented a sacred text of the UNIA that provided specific definitions of the African Legion Society and the Black Cross Nurse Society.

The Universal Negro Catechism outlined the gender-specific roles of the UNIA. The third section of the Catechism, entitled the Constitution and Laws of the UNIA, reveals the gendered definitions of the African Legions Society and Black Cross Nurses. The African Legions Society was defined as “[a]n allied organization under the direction of the Executive Council and Potentate, for the purpose of giving military training to men from our race between the ages of eighteen and fifty-five.” Immediately following the definition of the African Legions Society is a definition of the purpose of the Black Cross Nurses Society, “[a]nother allied organization for its purpose the training of women of the Negro race in First Aid to the Injured and in promoting the charitable objectives of the organization as may be required of them by the High Executive Council.” These two definitions gender men as militaristic and women as healers, providing a framework for the institutionalized gender dynamics of the UNIA.

The definitions of the African Legions Society and Black Cross Nurses in the catechism do not fully capture the vision Garvey had of these two organizations in his speeches. Garvey’s rhetoric and the publications of the UNIA summoned the symbolic power of these two auxiliary branches as participating in anti-colonial wars in Africa. On September 11, 1921, Marcus Garvey delivered a speech in New York about the Rif War in Morocco that highlights their militaristic appeal:

177 Hill 3: 302.
178 Ibid., 3: 319.
179 Ibid., 3: 315.
180 Ibid., 3: 315.
Wait till the African Legion gets on the battle plain of Africa (applause); wait until the Black Cross Nurses get on the battle plains of Africa; wait until we say to Captain Gaines, “Go forward!” Then and not until then will they know Africa is a continent not to be trifled with...Don’t start anything here, wait until we get there [Africa], boys...They seem to think Negroes are laughing still. Yes; we are laughing still, but this is a new laugh; it is a serious laugh, as somebody says. The old Uncle Tom grin, the old Jack Johnson smile is gone, the smile of death is here. Brave men smile when they die. And that is the smile that is on the countenance and face of every Negro today. It is a smile of determination. “Give me liberty, or give me death!” We re-echo the words of the Hindus and the Mohammedans...“Hindus and Mohammedans take vows to be free or die.” Why, the thing sounds good.181

In this impassioned speech by Garvey, he expresses the symbolic potency of both the African Legion Society and the Black Cross Nurses. The Black Cross Nurses were the feminine aid to their militaristic male counterparts, the African Legions Society, in this epic battle for Africa. Their participation in a cataclysmic anti-colonial war on the battle plains of Africa symbolically represented the practical aspect of masculine men as militaristic, and feminine women as healers.182

The Black Cross Nurses

The African Legions Society

The organizational branches of the African Legions Society and the Black Cross Nurses were seen by Garvey and McGuire to coexist in a symbiotic fashion, where each possessed a specific gendered role and maintained its identity in relation to these definitions. Although Garvey and McGuire had different understandings of the roles and

181 Hill 4: 53.
182 Garvey’s speeches always portrayed these two organizations as being prepared for an epic battle in Africa. However, although I assert this was always on a symbolic level, in 1921, the UNIA was operating three steamships and Garvey was speculating about purchasing battleships. Hill 2: 343.
functions of each society, they both used gender to define specific roles for women and men in the UNIA.

The highly gender-specific social roles of the African Legions Society and the Black Cross Nurses appropriate the Victorian ideology of ‘true women, real men.’ This appropriation provided blacks and UNIA members with a mode of self-definition. Bair contends this structure was

\[\text{[t]he predominant model of gender relations [in the UNIA, which] was similar to that of the companionate marriage, with wife/woman and husband/man cooperating while asserting authority over separate spheres of influence. In the scheme, the wife/woman’s sphere (and her roles as mother, teacher, nurse, or office worker) was deemed important but secondary to and supportive of that of the husband/man (and his role as policy maker, executive, or diplomat)}.\]

This assertion of gender identity was largely in response to the stereotypes that whites constructed for both black men and women. For black men the gender stereotypes were of feminine characteristics, i.e. passivity, subordination, and exclusion from skilled and professional employment.\(^\text{184}\) On the other hand, black women had masculine characteristics attributed to them, i.e. strength, authority, and physicality.\(^\text{185}\) In this way, defined feminine and masculine organizations like the African Legions Society and the Black Cross Nurses appropriated the traditional white categories of gender.

**The Black Cross Nurses**

The Black Cross Nurses typified the construction of female gender in the UNIA.\(^\text{186}\) The UNIA convention report of August 15\(^\text{th}\), 1920 reported that the Black Cross Nurses had 200 members; Mrs. Sarah Branch was the president and Mrs. Agnes Babbs was the vice-president.\(^\text{187}\) The function of the BCN was to provide services to the local black community and ultimately to prepare for liberation wars in Africa.\(^\text{188}\) The nurses were trained to oversee the social welfare of the black community; this was done

\(^{182}\) Bair, 155.
\(^{184}\) Ibid., 156.
\(^{185}\) Ibid., 156.
\(^{186}\) Ibid., 157.
\(^{187}\) Hill, 2: 584.
by giving lectures on such topics as first aid, geriatric care, bodily care, and nutrition.\textsuperscript{189} The Black Cross Nurses also provided supper kitchens to the economically depressed black community. At the 1921 convention, a delegate from Cleveland Ohio heralded the Black Cross Nurses for their work in the local community by reporting that “a committee of women was looking after the feeding of about 138-148 out of work men and women per day. In a little over two months about 6,000 had been fed.”\textsuperscript{190}

The UNIA convention reports always noted the “inspiring spectacle” of the Black Cross Nurses attire.\textsuperscript{191} Coupled with the African Legions Society, the Black Cross Nurses were a feature at every parade. They always followed their male counterpart, the African Legions Society, in the parades. They wore long white robes with an emblem of a Black Latin cross on their caps. The costumes of both the African Legions Society and the Black Cross Nurses represented the nation-state Garvey was building.

The president, Sarah Branch of Liberia, had a very successful tenure in her position. She was extremely successful in organizing the Black Cross Nurses as an auxiliary for the UNIA, and fundraising for the organization. As John E. Bruce noted in his “Bruce Grit” column “Sister Sarah Branch is a fine type of African womanhood and is a good organizer an indefatigable worker, an enthusiastic speaker and can get more money for the association in a drive than almost any other women speaker on the list of speakers.”\textsuperscript{192} Beyond her keen fundraising and organizational abilities was her desire for the Universal Negro Improvement Association to modify the name Negro to African or Ethiopian. From the report of the speech delivered by Sarah Branch on August 3, 1920 at the UNIA convention:

‘We are tired of being called Negroes,’ she said, we are not Negroes, we are Africans. And we want to be called Africans. God gave us the name Ethiopians and we want to be called Ethiopians or Africans. Negro is simply a pet name that the white man, when he went to Africa and stole our fore parents, gave us. Let us all in this convention, with one voice, cry out “we will not be called Negroes any longer, but Africans.”\textsuperscript{193}

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\textsuperscript{189} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{190} Hill, 3: 649.
\textsuperscript{191} Ibid., 2: 493, 3: 566.
\textsuperscript{192} Hill, 2: 69.
\textsuperscript{193} Ibid., 2: 517.
Here, Branch asserts a new terminology about the body that identifies with African roots and subverts the historically negative valuation of the black body by whites. Branch’s desire to replace the word Negro with African or Ethiopian is a revaluation of racially-based language. It also shows the participation of women in the process of revaluation and self-definition in the UNIA. 194 The Black Cross Nurses auxiliary was one of the most successful fundraising operations within the UNIA, second only to sales of stock in the Black Star Line, demonstrating the pivotal role women had in the functioning of the organization. 195

Gender distinctions in the UNIA extended beyond the textual definitions of the Universal Negro Catechism and into the lives of members. Beryl Satter’s article “Marcus Garvey, Father Divine and the Gender Politics of Race Difference and Race Neutrality” focuses on how race was a central tenet along with strictly defined gender roles in Garveyism. According to Satter, women were to produce black babies, which in turn eventually would lead to the production of a strong black race. 196 Garvey insisted that women should not take birth control because it interfered with “the course of nature” and the “will of God.” 197 Thus, Garvey’s emphasis on child rearing and restriction on birth control allowed a control over women’s bodies and sexuality.

The ideal woman in the UNIA was to have babies, live in a strong patriarchal family, and survive off the earnings of the man. 198 Beryl Satter argues that the emphasis on racial purity in the UNIA ultimately restricted black women’s sexuality and relegated women's sexuality into the gendered roles of “wife and mother.” 199 Further, Satter states that women in the UNIA were to “to cede public roles to their men in order to devote themselves to their offspring and so strengthen the race.” 200 However, this does not

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194 The records of Sarah Branch become minimal after this speech. Her speech at Liberty Hall on June 27, 1920 was noted but not recorded in The Marcus Garvey and UNIA Papers Project. She signed the Declaration of the Rights of the Negro on August 13, 1920.

195 McCormick (forthcoming).


198 Satter, 64.

199 Ibid.

200 Satter, 52.
seem to have been entirely the case. Women had a voice and had avenues of power within the UNIA outside of being wife and mother.

Satter overlooks the creative power of women in strictly defined gender roles. There was a disjunction between the idealized gender construction in the UNIA and the reality of women’s crucial roles in the maintenance of local UNIA chapters. Women were the backbone of local UNIA chapters through their fundraising and organizational activities. Moreover, the gender distinctions established in the UNIA placed a majority of the women in the practical role of healer, not wife, and mother.

Barbara Bair has asserted that the Black Cross Nurses represented the typified construction of gender in the UNIA, and Beryl Satter argued that strictly defined gender roles defined women as wife and mothers. However, there were women within the UNIA who did not want to fall into accord with these gendered distinctions. For instance, on the last day of the third annual UNIA convention in August 1922, which was termed “Women’s Afternoon,” the convention report noted that the “women cleverly maneuvered to monopolize a large part of the session, feeling they had not been given proper recognition during all the former sessions and being determined to be heard before the convention closed.” The female delegates laid out a list of complaints and recommendations to the convention. Victoria Turner of St. Louis started the list of complaints about the roles of women in the UNIA by stating:

> We, the women of the UNIA and African Communities League [ACL] know that no race can rise higher than its women. We need women in the important roles of the organization to help refine and mold public sentiment, realizing the colossal program of this great organization, and as we are determined to reclaim our own land, Africa, we have resolved to submit the following recommendations:

1. That a woman be the head of the BCN and Motor Corps and have absolute control over those women, and this shall not conflict with the Legions.
2. That women be given more recognition by being placed on every committee, so that she may learn more of the salient workings of the various committees.
3. That more women be placed in the important offices and field work of the association.
4. That women be given initiative positions, so that they may formulate constructive plans to elevate women.

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201 McCormick (forthcoming).
202 Hill 4: 1037.
5. That Lady Henrietta Vinton Davis be empowered to formulate plans with the sanction of the President-General [Garvey] so that the Negro women all over the world can function without restriction from the men.  

The delegate from Chicago, Mrs. Morgan, claimed,  
…the women in the convention had been completely ignored and were not even given the chance to second a motion. The women, she declared, were not willing to sit silently by and let the men take all the glory while they gave the advice.

Nine women from around the country aired grievances against the male hierarchy of the UNIA, which Garvey dismissed. He arrived late to the afternoon session, missed the opening declaration by Turner, and asserted that the UNIA was an organization that recognized women. Garvey asserted the problems the women addressed were indicative of their local branches and not the policy of the UNIA.

However, given this list of complaints by the women, it is evident that women wanted to be free from the controlling power of men in the organization. The women expressed a desire to have more of a voice in executive decisions and control over the all-female auxiliaries. Contrary to the position of Satter, women had expansive roles within the UNIA. The men constricted them, but they did have positions of power beyond being wife and mother. They were critical to the daily operations of the organization, and their work was key in shaping the overall identity and purpose of the UNIA in local contexts.

Moreover, the overall position of women was tenuous in the United States; this conference was held three years after the recently ratified Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States; which gave women the right to vote. The fact that they were at the annual conventions, and advancing concerns such as those expressed by Sarah Branch, points to the voice they had within the organization and to their ability to shape and form the organization.

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203 Hill, 4: 1037.
204 Ibid., 4: 1038 (My emphasis).
72 Ibid., 4: 1038. Slight resolutions were made to the Constitution but the salient concerns of the women that afternoon were not addressed. If anything, the way Garvey handled the situation typified the construction of gender in the UNIA by dismissing them and seeing them in a support position and not allowing them to hold executive positions and function freely outside of the constraints of men.
Conclusion

The significance of this chapter lies in its identification of the UNIA as a sacred space that met the historically contingent needs of African-Americans in the 1920’s. The lack of institutionalized forms of protection and support for blacks was rectified by the UNIA. It was a hybridized organization in which African-Americans redeployed the power and authority of their oppressors to carve out their own meaning and significance within the walls of Liberty Hall, which was their own sacred space. Although the building was a former Baptist church, the new identity of the building stressed redemption in the here and now. As Garvey stated, “we desire to see a spirit of bravery in every Negro.” The institution met the economically, socially, and spiritual needs of African-Americans. In Liberty Hall, and in the activities and organizations of the UNIA, they made meanings for themselves beyond the hegemonic definitions imputed on their bodies.

The Constitution and Book of Laws solidified a textual identity for the organization. It provided a framework of reference for the institution to replicate itself throughout the United States. At first glance, it organized the gender dynamics of the institution, but deeper analysis has revealed that women had an active voice in the organization and that their involvement surpassed that of wife and mother. The construction of gender in the UNIA also illustrated the needs of the black community. Men and women both needed to be remade on their own terms, and this necessity solidified the gender dynamics of the institution. Although men were a focus in Garvey’s speeches, the women were critical organizers, providing sustenance with both food and medical care. However, most importantly to my argument, on a symbolic level, men were gaining the courage to assert themselves, and women were healing the traumatic effects of colonial domination.
Conclusion

For well over two years, Marcus Garvey has been on my mind, woke me from sleep, and even constituted some of my dreams. His dynamic persona drew me to him, and only a small degree of his life’s work exists in the pages of this thesis. Further, only select parts of two years worth of research have found their way into this thesis. The journey has been difficult intellectually and personally. Garvey is an inspiration in dealing with difficulty and this work is a very small step toward shifting the paradigm of interpreting and understanding the religiosity of Garvey. His work was serious and it is dealt with seriously in this thesis.

Garvey is a complex creature, a New World creature. In order to situate the complexity of Garvey, I deliberately used the terms New World and “New Negro” throughout this thesis. These terms designate the backdrop of European colonial history of this project and perforce, the negotiations of its material structures by people of African descent. Garvey’s discourses directly confront the history of racial significations in the New World and his mimetic ability revaluated and appropriated the symbols that clothed, colored, and signified his body. He was ‘a second son,’ as DuBois states, of the New World.

This thesis began with an examination of previous religious interpretations of Garvey. Religious analyses that examine the ideological thought of Garvey, such as Tony Martin’s and E. David Cronon’s, do not consider the material conditions of colonialism that gave rise to Garvey’s myth-dream, nor do they attend to why his myth-dream reverberated so strongly with those attracted to his movement. Rupert Lewis’ examination underestimates the complexity of Garvey’s incorporation of colonial impulses in his program for Africa that are not all Marxist, and replicate European qualities of colonialism. Robert Hill’s contextualization of Garvey situates him closely within the religio-historical movements of the early twentieth century, but overlooks the long history of colonial domination that both informed Garvey’s religious response and the critiques he articulated in his myth-dream.\(^{206}\)

Throughout the chapters of this thesis, the issue of race and its revaluation by Garvey was considered. If, I could give Marcus Garvey a nickname it would be “The

\(^{206}\) McCormick (forthcoming).
Great Re-appropriator.” It is central to understanding Garvey’s ‘by any means necessary’ approach to solving the puzzle of race. In the last two chapters of thesis, I attempt to demonstrate how Garvey did this. Like a Cargo movement prophet, Garvey showed a way toward self-definition within the New World. Bound by the religio-historical context of the New World, Garvey harkens back to the mythical elements of modernity as the basis for his myth-dream, which is really a critique of an oppressive modernity. In this thesis, modernity is understood as intertwined with the colonial project and the European Enlightenment, which affected the world through colonial domination, the creation of a global market economy, and the establishment of nation-states.

In his myth-dream, Garvey appropriated the founding documents of the United States in an attempt to establish an independent nation in Africa. The Declaration of Independence is a critique of English governmental praxes, through which the colonies were able to get their freedom after the American Revolutionary War. Garvey used the founding documents of the United States of America to level a critique against the experiences of an oppressive modernity that deployed a racialized discourse to signify the body. Garvey turns critiques of England back onto the United States of America. Therefore, his critique is a revolutionary critique against the “universal” Enlightenment language that, in truth, did not extend to all human beings in the New World because of the significations of race. To remedy the problems of racialization, Garvey desired to build an independent nation in Africa that would rectify the imbalances of power between nations and peoples.

Garvey’s desire to establish a nation-state was also a direct critique against nation building and the lack of reciprocal exchanges that have had their historical bases in chattel slavery. He appropriated a colonial economic development model that emphasized raw materials as the basis for economic wealth. This too was a critique of colonial power because the wealth acquired by American and European countries in the New World harnessed the labor of slaves in its acquisition. No wealth was redistributed to the laborers of the land and the historical contingency of the 1920’s was racially-based

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207 McCormick (forthcoming).

208 McCormick (forthcoming).
economic hardship. The lack of wealth was the very reason the UNIA was a closed relationship organization.

Finally, Garvey’s third critique of modernity focused on appropriating the objectives of traditionally colonial and missionary organizations, as articulated in the fifth and eighth objectives of the UNIA:

5. To assist in civilizing the backward tribes of Africa.
8. To promote a conscientious Christian worship among the native tribes of Africa.  

It is important to note that emigration to Africa was established by the American Colonization society in 1820. The American Colonization Society was the model for emigration to Africa for both African Methodist Episcopal Bishop Henry McNeal Turner and Marcus Garvey. Historically, the American Colonization Society wanted missionary work performed in Africa; this prompted numerous African-American missionaries to go back-to-Africa. These missionaries were working in accordance with the Theory of Providential Design that decreed that the suffering of slavery brought on by civilization had its redemption in bringing the light of Christianity to Africa, to civilize the Africans. This was the theological justification for the actions of missionaries. However, this was also apparent in Garvey’s program to promote a conscientious Christian worship among the native tribes of Africa and to assist in civilizing the backward tribes of Africa. These actions look a lot like those of colonizers. Moreover, the Africa Garvey religiously imagines is wealthy with raw materials that need to be harnessed.

My analysis of Garvey in terms of Cargo movements is not dismissive of religion. Nor is it asserting a sort of wishful thinking about religion. The model demonstrates a valuation of material objects beyond mere commodity. It articulates the value of materiality as its ability to join people together in egalitarian reciprocal relationships. Thus, the value of material objects, as Mauss states, is to function as a mode of exchange, and to continue modes of exchange between people. To refuse a reciprocal exchange establishes a Self/Other dichotomy that does not acknowledge the value of the other

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209 Lewis, 50.
person. Garvey attempted to solve the problem of human value with his myth-dream; and he simultaneously critiqued the oppressive practices of racial significations.

For people of African descent, the Self/Other dichotomy is rooted in the commodification of their bodies and the lack of autonomy this creates. What do you do when your body is valued as a commodity in chattel slavery? How do human beings go about altering that conception of their bodies? This is a critical question in this thesis: how does one rectify race? The problem it presents is religious because Garvey was attempting to answer a question of ultimate human significance. Moreover, anthropologist Kennelm Burridge argues that Cargo movements ask a fundamental question about the valuation of human beings, “They ask, bluntly, whether a man is a vote, a unit of labour, or endowed with a divine spark-worthy of playing a part with other unique individuals.”

In the third chapter, I attempted to demonstrate how the UNIA came to hold the ideals of the American republican democracy for its members. Like a Cargo movement’s prophet, Garvey mimetically represented the power of the other and reappropriated their symbolic meanings to fit the needs of those attracted to his movement. Through mimetic processes, Garvey religiously negotiated the material structures of colonialism, primarily through dress, to identify his ultimate significance within the New World. His message of self-definition said something potently meaningful to the millions who were attracted to his movement. Further, looked at in this way, Garvey’s means to attain liberation from racial significations was bound by the social, political, and historical context of the New World. However, his mimetic ability allowed him to own the power of the other and to hybridize the meaning to fit his experiences of alterity.

As the third chapter highlighted, the dynamics of the UNIA centered on gender distinctions. Omitted due to time constraints was an in-depth analysis of Amy Jacques Garvey. She was a pivotal figure in the movement and contributed significantly to the organization and to African-American communities. Her contributions to the organization received discussion in two articles: Ula Y. Taylor’s “Negro Women are Great Thinkers as well as Doers”: Amy Jacques Garvey and Community Feminism in the United States, 1924-1927,” and Karen S. Adler’s “Always Leading Our Men in Service

\[ ^{58} \text{Burridge, xx.} \]
and Sacrifice:’ Amy Jacques Garvey, Feminist Black Nationalist.” The role of Amy Jacques Garvey is silent in this thesis, but her voice was effective in shaping and forming the UNIA, especially when Marcus Garvey was imprisoned from 1925-1927.

A discussion of Amy Jacques Garvey would have bolstered my argument on the effective role women had in the organization. Her example is direct evidence against Satter’s argument. The role of women in the UNIA was crucial; they were not automatons, nor were they simply wives and mothers, as Beryl Satter suggests. They were active members in the UNIA that participated in the revaluation process of the UNIA by articulating their concerns.

DuBois is widely seen as the premier intellectual of this time. His canonization in the academy casts a shadow over the importance of Garvey. Garvey for the most part, has remained outside of academic discourse. Marcus Garvey may not have been formally educated, but he was an extremely intelligent man. He was prolific; he thought about everything and related it to the material experiences of racial significations. His writings and thought influenced the Black Panther Party for Self Defense, Malcolm X, the Rastafarians, and numerous other movements that attempted to rectify racial inequities. Garvey’s work is just as important as that of DuBois. He is not as palatable as Dubois because he requires one to seriously consider the role race has played, and continues to play, in the creation of the New World. It is interesting to note that the persistent problem of race was the impetus for DuBois’ 1961 emigration to Ghana. With this in mind, Garvey should be seen as a normative figure within the New World and academic discourse, not as an ‘escapist,’ ‘demagogue,’ or ‘buffoon,’ as W.E.B. DuBois once termed him.
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