Broadcasting Friendship: Decolonization, Literature, and the BBC

Dissertation

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Abstract

Broadcasting Friendship: Decolonization, Literature, and the BBC analyzes the politics and form of literary radio broadcasts produced in London and broadcast to the West Indies, South Asia, and Africa during the decolonization era. This dissertation focus on the relationship between individual agency and institutional power in the BBC's Overseas Service and the U.S. grant funded Transcription Centre. I argue that writers working within metropolitan broadcasting institutions found friendship to be a productive political and aesthetic concept even as liberal models of friendship were being used as tools of British soft power. By showing how literary radio broadcasts were used for both cultural imperialism and anti-colonialism, we can better understand the interrelated developments of late modernism and postcolonial literature across multiple media.

While my dissertation joins recent debates on mid-century literature and radio and transnational modernism, it is the first comparative study of the intersections of radio, literature, and cultural politics in the decolonization era. Each chapter focuses on a different concept of friendship and brings together a range of media with original archival research conducted at the BBC Written Archives Center, the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas, and other collections. In Una Marson's Jamaican literary magazine, *The Cosmopolitan*, and "Calling the West Indies" programs for the BBC, for example, we find the idea of cosmopolitanism being nurtured through poetry, while the Indian novelist

Mulk Raj Anand portrays interpersonal friendship between English citizens and Indian subjects as an incentive to political action in his novel, *Across the Black Waters* and his World War II BBC propaganda talks. In the BBC's *Caribbean Voices* and the Transcription Centre's *Africa Abroad* radio programs, we see writers like George Lamming and Lewis Nkosi examining the development of international communities of writers of African descent in the 1950s and 60s. This research brings forward new material and bring to current scholarship a focus on the West Indian, South Asian, and West African writers within the BBC and other radio organizations. Ultimately, I argue that assertions of friendship between broadcast institutions and audience were used to mask British and American political interests while writers also used radio to transcend geographic and ideological distances for shared anti-imperial projects.

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Fields of Study

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Introduction: Radio Relationships: The Politics and Forms of Colonial Literary Broadcasts

Photos of colonial writers in the BBC's Overseas studios have become iconic representations of the BBC's role as a cultural institution in the 1940s and 1950s and appear in a number of current studies of colonial writers in London.[1] In a photo documenting the recording of a *Caribbean Voices'* program, four West Indian writers sit around a table—George Lamming from Barbados, Andrew Salkey from Jamaica, Jan Carew from Guyana, and Sam Selvon from Trinidad—with Irish BBC producer Henry Swanzy seated off to the side (Image 1).[2] A second photo of writers and BBC employees recording a program of "Voice" for the Indian Section in 1942 provides a striking glimpse of the diversity of the BBC's Overseas Service (Image 2). A large group of British and South Asian writers are gathered around the table. Sitting, from left to right, is Indian novelist and assistant to George Orwell, Venu Chitale; Tamil poet J. M. Tambimuttu; British poet T. S. Eliot; Jamaican poet Una Marson; Indian novelist Mulk Raj Anand; BBC employee Christopher Pemberton, and Indian writer Narayana Menon; standing is British novelist George Orwell, Orwell's British secretary Nancy Barrat, and British poet and critic William Empson.

Image 1. *Caribbean Voices.* Henry Swanzy, George Lamming, Andrew Salkey, Jan Carew, Sam Selvon

Image 2. "Voice." Seated: Venu Chitale, J. M. Tambimuttu, T. S. Eliot, Una Marson, Mulk Raj Anand, Christopher Pemberton, Narayana Menon; Standing: George Orwell, Nancy Barrat, William Empson.

It may seem counter-intuitive to open a dissertation on radio by analyzing photographs, but these images tell a story of diverse groups of people brought together by the microphone, literature and, of course, the BBC itself. Audio broadcasts, over the

course of a fifteen or thirty-minute program, or in series that ran for weeks or even years, sought to more gradually establish a sense of collegiality and shared purpose that was part of the BBC's project of promoting "understanding and friendship" (Reith [1932] qtd. in Gillespie and Webb 8). Although a common critique of radio is that it provides the illusion of intimacy while only allowing the exchange of disembodied ideas from remote distances, these photos illustrate the types of relations that the programs themselves highlight—friendships between colonial writers from across the British empire, colonial and British writers working together, and radio creating connections with unseen listeners. The colonial writers are the focal points, whether that is Marson at the center surrounded by a large group or the four West Indian writers who fill most of the frame. The presence of the British producers Orwell and Swanzy, however, remind us of the BBC's institutional power and the colonial writers' position within imperial structures. Orwell stands above the large group, supervising, and Swanzy's facial expression and body language convey alert attention.

In my archival research on English-language literary broadcasting to South Asia, the West Indies, and Africa, friendship emerges from the scripts, literary texts, and policy documents as a means to organize political, personal, institutional, and media relationships. Radio institutions and writers used various articulations of friendship—cosmopolitanism, friendship between individuals, literary communities, and brotherhood—to negotiate the relationship between colonial and postcolonial audiences and Britain as well as between writers and the imperial institution. I focus on the period from the beginnings of colonial broadcasting at the start of the Second World War (1939) through the first wave of African decolonization (1968). In the geopolitical sphere, these

were years of global warfare, anti-colonial struggles, political independence for former colonies, the beginning of the Commonwealth era, and the Cold War. Critics have sought to better understand colonial writers' role within radio institutions founded to promote British and U.S. imperial interests through examining interpersonal networks and intermedial relationships between radio and print, cinema, and television. Recent research has explored the role of radio within "modernist networks . . . [that] began to function as sites of exchange between metropolitan and colonial writers" in mid-century London (Kalliney *Commonwealth of Letters* 3-4).[3] Scholars have also examined the relationship between literary modernism and British broadcasting as well as radio's overlapping propagandistic and cultural objectives.[4] Most studies of London-based radio in the mid-century focus, understandably, on the BBC, but the Transcription Centre's literary broadcasting for African postcolonial audiences has also been the subject of recent attention.[5]

Current studies of metropolitan-based literary broadcasting for colonial and postcolonial audiences predominantly remain organized along geography and national borders; particularly in regard to the BBC, scholarship often follows the organizational divisions within the institution itself. Research focuses on the BBC's Eastern Services, for example, or specific influential programs like the BBC's *Caribbean Voices* or the Transcription Centre's *Africa Abroad*. This project, therefore, is the first comparative project examining London-based colonial and postcolonial broadcasting to the West Indies, South Asia, and Africa. Much of the current research on writers and radio has also divorced specific pieces of literature from the broadcast contexts, and my analysis brings a focus on the aesthetics of the radio broadcast with the study of institutional history and

politics. The history of broadcasting looks quite different in each of the locations I analyze due to the ways specific colonial histories and literary traditions shape the development of technological infrastructure and programming decisions. In each location and time-period, a different concept of friendship emerges from the radio scripts, literature, and BBC policy documents. In early West Indian broadcasting, cosmopolitan ideals organize imperial, international, and institutional relationships; in South Asia, broadcasts draw on a long tradition of Anglo-Indian friendship rhetoric; in the West Indian Service's *Caribbean Voices*, literary communities as microcosms of the West Indies Federation predominate; and finally, the Transcription Centre's broadcasts seek global pan-Africanist alternatives to models of racial brotherhood. The writers that I have selected for this dissertation are those for whom assertions of friendship might be surprising; each author expresses anti-imperial commitments through their writing, their affiliation with groups such as the All-India Progressive Writers Association, and often in their broadcasts themselves.[6] The friendships imagined on-air were often explicitly or implicitly delimited by gender. Therefore, my dissertation not only includes examples of colonial and postcolonial women writers working in radio, I also examine the ways gendered assumptions about literary and broadcast communities were portrayed on air.

My focus on friendship within these institutions and their broadcasts could imply that I find the BBC and the Transcription Centre to be spaces in which personal relationships transcended structural inequalities, but my research leads me to the opposite conclusion. Friendship as a liberal political metaphor was particularly resonant in the decolonization era as Britain sought to maintain ties with former colonial states through political structures such as the Commonwealth or West Indies Federation while moving

away from direct, resource-intensive governance. Friendship functions within these radio institutions and in their broadcast rhetoric as a Bourdieun form of social capital to "[transform] contingent relations, such as those of neighborhood, the workplace, or even kinship, into relationships that are at once necessary and elective, implying durable obligations subjectively felt (feelings of gratitude, respect, friendship, etc.) or institutionally guaranteed (rights)." ("The Forms of Capital" 87).[7] At the same time, colonial and postcolonial writers appealed to friendship as something that could transform the material relationships between people and nations, often in ways contrary to British policy and the institutional goals of the BBC and the Transcription Centre.

BROADCASTING TO THE COLONIES AND COMMONWEALTH

The British Broadcasting Company was founded in 1922 and became the British Broadcasting Corporation in 1927. The BBC's project of creating "a more intelligent and enlightened electorate" under its first Director-General, John Reith, was initially aimed at a domestic audience (Reith, qtd. in Cohen, "Annexing the Oracular Voice" 143). The Empire Service was launched in 1932, and while actual audiences were not limited to British colonialists (particularly in the case of cricket broadcasts), the service focused on making a settler-colonial audience feel "part of a global Britannic community" (Potter 1).

Broadcasting specifically crafted for non-settler colonial audiences began in response to multiple threats to imperial unity in the late 1930s, and in 1939 the "Empire Service" was merged into a larger "Overseas Service" (Briggs 161). The global economic crash of the 1930s brought problems of unemployment and low wages to a head throughout the British Empire, and anti-colonial movements were intensifying,

particularly in India. In the West Indies, the British government responded to labor strikes and uprisings with the Moyne Commission Report, which included the suggestion "that [radio] broadcasting could also promote loyalty to Britain and deflect damage that might be done by foreign propaganda" (Rush 176). The British government hoped to use radio not only to counter fascist influence, but also American and communist messages, both of which potentially encouraged anti-colonial feeling and activity. The BBC expanded the Overseas Service when the government recognized radio's strategic potential as a tool to increase colonial cooperation during the Second World War. Radio, though not a new technology in the 1940s, was, in colonial locations, in "the novelty years, transitional states, and identity crises" that Lisa Gitelman describes as particularly fruitful places to examine the role of media forms in society (1). As print helped make possible modern nation-building and national consciousness, radio also played a role in creating imagined communities of not only the nation but of empire.[8]

By 1943, the Overseas Service broadcast to the Caribbean, North and South America, Africa, the Middle East, South and South-East Asia, as well as to shipping lanes, and had programming in over twenty different languages (Briggs 492-3, Gillespie and Webb 5). The BBC employed writers, broadcasters, translators, and producers from across the colonized world. On the West Indies Service, Una Marson developed and produced "Calling the West Indies" to encourage troop morale and increase civilian support for the war effort. Marson's variety programs and literary programs emphasized bonds between the West Indies and Britain for the war effort but also for increased political self-determination and economic equity in the West Indies after the war. The BBC also courted Mulk Raj Anand, due to his reputation as an anti-colonial Indian

intellectual, to broadcast talks on politics and literature designed to encourage the Indian elite to side with the British cause during the war.

The Overseas Service had a clear ideological imperative and was funded by the British government, but their broadcasts maintained a certain level of independence as the BBC needed to maintain its reputation as a trustworthy and independent news source in order to be effective. Neither the Overseas nor the domestic service, however, could broadcast material that conflicted with government policy, especially during the Second World War.[9] As Anne Spry Rush writes,

> wartime conditions inevitably intensified the BBC's relationship with the British government. Empire Service staff worked closely with the Colonial Office, the Dominion Office, the India Office, and also with the newly established Ministry of Information to develop program policy, and sometimes specific programs, for overseas distribution. As with the Home Service, scripted programs were subject to approval, and for unscripted programs, the state approved a 'switch censor' in the studio who could cut off a program at once if security seemed threatened. BBC announcers could not report anything that might create a security risk, including the weather. (Rush 159)

Marson's and Anand's programs show how literary content varied in the different sections given the varying colonial histories and the BBC's specific aims in each region. Z.A. Bokhari, the Director of the Indian Section, refused Anand's suggestion for a program of Hindustani poetry, for example, because All India Radio was better situated to create such programming (see Pinkerton, "Radio and the Raj"). The BBC's Eastern

Services Director, Z.A. Bokhari argued, should "project England to India, and not India to India" (Letter to Anand [9 September 1942]). In broadcasting to the West Indies, a region with an English-language literary tradition and a less developed regional broadcasting system, the BBC focused extensively on West Indian literature, beginning with Marson's poetry programs and variety programs such as "At the Barbecue." Most of the BBC's literary programs were intended primarily for elite audiences, as they were modeled on the BBC's "high" culture "Third Programme," although the West Indian Services tried to reach a broader base of soldiers and their families and later included vernacular literature.

With the end of World War II and India's independence, the BBC sought to maintain global influence while redefining its overseas programming for the Commonwealth Era. In India, for example, where the Indian national government took control of the well-established All India Radio, BBC officials saw the BBC as more important than ever for "the projection of Britain" (Barbour 1). The Commonwealth, defined by "free and equal" member states, recalls Aristotelian theories in which interpersonal friendship was also a "freely entered into" relationship and a "federation" in which the parties involved need not "abandon their individualities to a larger identity" ("The London Declaration [1949]" 220; Jusdanis 1, 24). Within the Eastern Services, BBC policy makers emphasized their new ability to speak of friendship between Britain and India to maintain political, economic, and cultural ties now that the Britain was no longer India's colonial ruler. The writer and actress Attia Hosain produced a number of talks about friendship, especially with British women, on the Eastern Services. If the Commonwealth was, as Peter Clarke describes it, "imperialism with a human face," then

the BBC's radio programs put a voice to neo-imperialism. The BBC increasingly saw its role not only in strengthening ties between colonies or former colonies and Britain, but in teaching formerly colonized people about self-governance. The relationship between individual determination and collectivities are foundational questions of liberal democracy, and such questions were at the forefront of these London-based programs. *Caribbean Voices*' debates and disagreement model democratic principles and echo the ways Britain attempted to guide the West Indies through the process of federation and increased self-governance. In South Asia, many BBC policy makers considered British influence to be necessary to maintain peace between India and Pakistan.

In the early 1960s, U.S. interest in radio and literature during the Cold War intersects with British postcolonial cultural project in the Transcription Centre, an organization directed by former BBC employee Dennis Duerden. The Transcription Centre produced literary and political programs, most notably the program of literature, music, and politics, *Africa Abroad*, which was produced by South African writer Lewis Nkosi. *Africa Abroad* celebrated the explosion of African literature in English by writers including Chinua Achebe, J.P. Clark, Christopher Okigbo, and Ama Ata Aidoo and asserted connections between mid-century African writers and literature of the African diaspora. In the 1960s, London no longer held the same position as Britain's imperial center, but colonial historical structures continued to shape cultural development through publishing, education, and broadcast institutions. Duerden asserted the Transcription Centre's unique autonomy as neither government funded nor commercial, and the Transcription Centre does seem to have been largely autonomous. However, the revelation in 1966 that the funders of the centre—the Congress for Cultural Freedom and

the Farfield Foundation—were CIA fronts emphasizes the seeming inescapability of entanglement in Cold War conflicts. Although the Transcription Centre aired critiques of the United States and asserted shared interests between members of the African diaspora based on slavery and colonial history, the programs also sought to transform the pan-Africanist project to something more open to U.S. imperialist intervention.

RADIOGENIC FORMS OF FRIENDSHIP

Radio Cosmopolitanism: Friendship With The Whole World

Alasdair Pinkerton traces an ongoing affective relationship between postcolonial Indian and Pakistani listeners and the BBC. In an analysis of listeners' letters, Pinkerton writes:

> The letters received in Bush House variously expressed thanks for, or censure of, the BBC's tone, interpretation of detail or editorial standards. But they also expressed profound emotional investments in the BBC's international broadcasts; from simple notes of appreciation, loyalty and 'friendship' to more intense expressions of disappointment, perfidy and fear, but also hopefulness. That the BBC might inspire such a range of emotions is suggestive of a power or influence which is certainly worthy of further investigation. It is also intriguing to consider how these emotions might be mapped and connected with political processes in the pursuance of an 'emotional geopolitics' of international broadcasting and public diplomacy (Pain 2009). ("The BBC in South Asia" 154)

The BBC and the Transcription Centre actively cultivated many of these diverse emotional responses in their broadcasts. What Pinkerton terms, citing Rachel Pain, the "'emotional geopolitics' of international broadcasting" also describes the interpersonal relationships within the institutions themselves.

Radio's cosmopolitan possibilities were celebrated from the early days of wireless technology. Director-General John Reith writes in *Broadcast Over Britain* (1924) of radio's potential to spread "the message of peace on earth" (222) and many hoped that the ability of radio signals to cross vast distances irrespective of national borders would encourage understanding between diverse peoples. Radio's aspirations to use affective means to create community, sociability, and intimacy has been frequently noted.[10] When formulated as a cultural venture, radio's possibilities for social connection merge with conceptions of art's ability to foster empathy heightened understanding. Gregory Jusdanis has argued for a natural affinity between literature and friendship as quintessential examples of "a dialogue of the similar with the other" (5). The writers and producers in this dissertation held similar beliefs; moreover, they thought that radio could be particularly effective at making possible such reciprocal communication.

European cosmopolitanisms such as Reith's are, however, often characterized by what Rebecca Walkowitz describes as the "heroic tones of appropriation and progress," and his vision of global human community in *Broadcast Over Britain* echoes the political structures of the British Empire (2). Reith anticipates that wireless "will soon take continents in its stride, outstripping the winds; the divisions of oceans, mountain ranges, and deserts will be passed unheeded. It will cast a girdle round the earth with bands that are all the stronger because invisible" (219). Wireless' ability to travel across geographic

space becomes a way to possess that space. Hopes that radio would encourage expanded and more inclusive communication existed alongside fears of the technology's potential use for demagogic control. Dictators like Hitler and Mussolini used radio to broadcast political speeches and propaganda, expanding the possible audience of inciting rhetoric beyond the masses gathered in a public square (Goody 60). Members of the Frankfort school were highly skeptical of radio. Theodor Adorno, who worked with the Princeton Radio Research Project, critiqued radio for "foreclose[ing] the potential for two-way communication" (Jenemann 92) and concentrating all the power in the institution and its funders. In "Reflections on Radio" (1931), Walter Benjamin argued that the public's only option to contest a radio message was "sabotage (switching off)," a limited form of resistance as it neither countered the message with the listener's own nor prevented the radio message from reaching other listeners (391).[11]

Debates over radio's potential for encouraging democratic access to information and culture and as a tool of demagoguery are particularly relevant within the colonial context. Recent scholarship emphasizing individuals' agency within radio institutions and the act of listening as public engagement cautions against reductively equating colonial participation in British broadcasting with the ventriloquization of Empire (Lacey 7). At the same time, the history of the BBC is Overseas Service shows its role in supporting British imperial goals even as colonial and postcolonial writers contributed literary works and often produced programs themselves.

Personal relationships played an important role in connecting colonial writers with work at the BBC and Transcription Centre, from Anand and Orwell's friendship and professional relationship within the BBC's Indian Section to the oft-repeated accounts of

Henry Swanzy finding paying work with *Caribbean Voices* for financially struggling West Indian writers such as Sam Selvon and George Lamming. The Transcription Centre was likewise built on personal and professional friendships organized by the director, Dennis Duerden, who sought to make the centre a gathering place for writers and not merely a place to record radio programs.[12] At the same time, Sharika Thiranagama argues that, "while there was indeed genuine collegiality and friendship between the British and Indian staff in the BBC, attested to by many references within the archival records, this was nonetheless a colonially forged encounter" (44). I find Marie Gillespie and Alban Webb's characterization of the BBC's Overseas Service as a site of "corporate cosmopolitanism" a compelling description of the unequal power positions of personal and institutional relationships within the BBC (5-6).

Una Marson's experience at the BBC vividly illustrates the ways in which the BBC's institutional cosmopolitanism operated within the structures of empire. Marson worked with Cecil Madden on BBC television, and he recommended her for work with BBC radio. Marson, the first "Coloured staff" member employed by the BBC, spoke frequently about the cosmopolitan possibilities of radio in terms that echo formulations by Reith and other European proponents of radio's global possibilities ("Coloured Staff"). She also used her radio platform to advocate for the transformation of the bonds between imperial subjects for anticolonial ends. Marson wielded considerable creative control as the producer of "Calling the West Indies" programs; she produced individual programs and shaped the direction of West Indian broadcasting at its conception. She also experienced significant personal and institutional racism at the BBC and was forced by BBC officials to leave both the BBC and the U.K. against her will. Broadcasting

institutions and radio as a media form brought people together who were working for diverse and often contradictory ends, allowing remarkable access to audience but also shaping broadcasts and individual's work experience in significant ways. My interest is in the way radio as an aural and wireless medium describes, mediates, or replicates these often contradictory relationships through broadcast forms.

Radiogenic Forms: Orality, Reciprocity, and Intimacy

The literary magazine is arguably colonial broadcasting's most formally innovative and influential achievement. As Peter Kalliney notes, "[b]y design, at least, literary magazines such as *Voice, Caribbean Voices,* and *West African Voices* subscribed to the idea of a culturally integrated British Empire" (*Commonwealth of Letters* 4). The radio magazine emphasizes diverse texts and perspectives unified by aesthetic values and a common theme. These programs model not only the shared culture of Empire and Commonwealth but also a liberal understanding of a democratic public sphere. "Voice," which I discuss in more detail in Chapter 2, was the first radio magazine produced by the BBC to air contemporary poetry read, often, by the poets themselves.[13] The first episode makes it clear that Orwell expected the formal conceit of the program to be unfamiliar to his listeners in India:

> . . . our magazine – 'Voice' we are calling it – isn't quite an ordinary magazine. To begin with it doesn't use up any paper or the labour of any printers or booksellers. All it needs is a little electrical power and half a dozen voices. It doesn't have to be delivered at your door, and you don't have to pay for it. . . .

> ‘Voice’ has now been in existence nearly three minutes. I hope it already has a few readers, or I should say listeners. I hope as you sit there you are imagining the magazine in front of you. It’s only a small volume, about twenty pages. One advantage of a magazine of this kind is that you can choose your own cover design. I should favour something in light blue or a nice light grey, but you can take your choice. Now turn to the first page. It’s good quality paper, you notice, pre-war paper – you don't see paper like that in other magazines nowadays – and nice wide margins. Fortunately we have no advertisements, so on Page 1 is the Table of Contents. (80-81)

The detailed description continues to include a full table of contents, “Notes on Contributors, and instructions throughout the program on when the listeners should imagine turning the page. Orwell’s introduction to “Voice” showcases important questions about radio form and broadcast relationships in the way he encourages his readers to create a mental image of the magazine, describes radio’s technological apparatuses, and directly addresses the listeners with commands and frequent use of you, I, and we. Orwell creates an intimate “reading” experience with his listeners and highlights the way radio both continues the project of print media but also transforms it.

In “Poetry and the Microphone” (1945) Orwell expands on the rationale and process of producing “Voice” as a poetry program for Indian audiences. This essay makes it clear that he saw unique opportunities in radio’s oral distribution of literature:

> The editorial staff were supposedly sitting in their office, discussing what to put into the next number. Somebody suggested one poem, someone else

> suggested another, there was a short discussion and then came the poem itself, read in a different voice, preferably the author's own. This poem naturally called up another, and so the programme continued, usually with at least half a minute of discussion between any two items. For a half-hour programme, six voices seemed to be the best number. A programme of this sort was necessarily somewhat shapeless, but it could be given a certain appearance of unity by making it revolve round a single central theme. For example, one number of our imaginary magazine was devoted to the subject of war. . . .
>
> This formula may seem slightly ridiculous and also rather patronising, but its advantage is that the element of mere instruction, the textbook motif, which is quite unavoidable if one is going to broadcast serious and sometimes 'difficult' verse, becomes a lot less forbidding when it appears as an informal discussion. The various speakers can ostensibly say to one another what they are in reality saying to the audience. Also, by such an approach you at least give a poem a context, which is just what poetry lacks from the average man's point of view.

The passage emphasizes the role of radio in cultural education, which was an explicitly propagandistic goal in Indian Section programming. Orwell also highlights the radio magazine's carefully constructed formal attributes. The differences between the desired impression and reality are emphasized repeatedly: "staff were *supposedly* sitting in their office," "be given a certain *appearance* of unity," "can *ostensibly* say." All radio programs are, of course, *produced*, but the specific ways in which literary works and

criticism are presented within these radio programs, especially the radio magazine, deserves further consideration.

The perspective of over a decade of literary radio studies allows an examination of the radio medium as part of "a dynamically complex conversation among cultural forces" with unique but not determinative "aesthetic and rhetorical effects" (Cohen and Coyle 2, Whittington, "Radio Studies" 635). As my individual chapters will show, there was rich interaction between different print and broadcast media in the mid-century, and I do not examine radio in isolation. I am, however, interested in the unique effects of wireless transmission and aurality.[14] Attempts to bridge the geographic and technologically mediated distance between broadcaster and listener reveal excitement in radio's ability to create or simulate intimacy as well as the limitations of the medium and its role within imperial structures. In exploring the question of radio form, I adopt what Thomas Davis, in his analysis of late modernist literature, describes as "a critical formalism [that] does not imply that artworks transcend their historical circumstances" (20). I am interested in the relationship between literary texts, radio institutions, and state policy, but, like Davis, do not "value only those works that . . . appear to replicate or rebuke ideological forces" (20). As Orwell's discussion of the literary magazine demonstrates, the form of the radio episodes themselves mediated broadcastings' geopolitical context. While some of the literary magazines, interviews, discussion, and talks may simply replicate or rebuke, most emerge from and contest imperial and institutional ideologies in more nuanced and sometimes contradictory ways.

My study of these audio broadcasts is necessarily mediated through text. The BBC kept no audio records of these programs; only the written scripts or transcripts were

preserved. Many of the Transcription Centre tapes are available but in separate locations from the written scripts, and I have not yet been able to analyze these recordings closely. Production and contextual clues are available from the scripts themselves as well as associated documents—schedules, listener accounts, internal correspondence—although information on the Transcription Centre's distribution history is scarce. My goal is to never forget that these broadcasts were created and received as sound, but to also recognize the impossibility of fully recreating the original sonic experience.

Radio's existence as an aural medium reaching a larger and more diverse audience than print publications made the convergence of literature and broadcasting particularly compelling in the mid-century. Not only could radio reach listeners who could not read, access, or afford printed texts, the return of sound to literary life was seen as reviving lost or dying cultural modes for the modern world. Orwell writes of the way broadcasting returns the element of sound and performance to poetry and occasions a "reconciliation between poetry and the common man" ("Poetry and the Microphone). In the West Indies and Africa in particular, radio programs emphasized the connections between literature and oral traditions. In *Caribbean Voices,* for instance, literary pieces that used dialogue and vernacular language encouraged the development of an "oral aesthetic" in West Indian literature (Simpson 2). While they tried to make the most of radio's aural attributes, producers and writers grappled with their audience's inability to see textual elements such as punctuation as well as the ephemerality of the spoken word.

Much more than the literary text was invisible or downplayed in the radio broadcast. While individual's voices indexed race, ethnicity, and nationality through accent, vocabulary, and syntax, visual markers of race would not, of course, be

transmitted. Rush sees radio, then, as a particularly apt tool for liberal BBC employees to "[project] a very particular color-blind, middle-class Caribbean version of Britishness" (Rush 174). Adrienne Munich argues that when Commonwealth audiences listened to Queen Elizabeth, "Desire could conceivably transform Elizabeth into a queen of many colors, while to others the queen's very voice could create a barrier constituted of racial and status difference" (231). The transmission of a voice, experienced as one person speaking to another, could also obscure the various types of mediation at play in these radio programs—state and institutional power that funded and shaped the programing goals; the technologies that recorded, transmitted, received, and made audible the voice; and the formal structures and conventions of various radio genres.[15]

The disembodied voice could itself be a source of anxiety. Debra Rae Cohen, writing of the second generation of modernists, claims that,

> a thematizing of voice in which exactly those aspects of wireless that had seemed most potentially liberatory manifest themselves metaphorically as their dark opposites. The freedom of "voices in the air" becomes an unsettling separation of sound from visual referent; accessibility becomes inescapability; education, indoctrination; radio's phatic power an almost Marinettian destructive force; and its peculiar intimacy, intrusion, seduction, violation. ("Annexing the Oracular Voice" 145)

Accusations of "indoctrination" were not only leveled at figures like Hitler and Mussolini, but also at British intellectuals who saw the BBC as a means to shape the tastes of their listening publics. In the 1930s, the BBC's Director-General John Reith was frequently critiqued as an aspiring cultural dictator within England. The Jamaican writer

Cedric Lindo described how West Indian writers sometimes viewed Henry Swanzy, the producer of *Caribbean Voices* as "a hard to please, unpredictable and implacable arbiter" (qtd. in Nanton 14). These complaints about Reith and Swanzy's paternalistic use of media typically focus on content; the effects of the radio voice in literary programming are also significant, especially as such programs' calm, rational tone can obscure their interests.

The programs I analyze are not on the whole as obviously formally experimental as 1920s German broadcasts, American radio dramas, or the BBC Home Service's radio plays and features in the 1940s, but interviews, talks, discussions, and literary magazines all self-reflexively explore the possibilities of the radio medium to create emotional and interpersonal connections with listeners.[16] Creators of radio programs attempted to subvert a univocal metropole-periphery influence or to at least provide the illusion of reciprocity. Radio personalities were cultivated; Marson, who gave the most individual talks of any writer discussed in this dissertation, built relationships with her West Indian listeners and imagined that her listeners could share in her cosmopolitan perspective through these talks. Broadcasters directly addressed their listeners to make them feel part of the conversation, and interview programs created imagined points of contact between the colonial interviewer and the British interviewees. Larger debates or discussion programs allowed the broadcast of many voices and opinions; producers hoped listeners would find their voice represented on air.

These radio programs did create connections between broadcasters and listeners; however, some of their limitations are indicated in the surviving scripts or transcripts themselves. This is most striking in the case of *Caribbean Voices'* "West Indian

Symposium": while this program of West Indian writers was described as a discussion, time and production constraints did not allow over a dozen individuals to participate in a rousing exchange of ideas. *Africa Abroad*, partly, Duerden claimed, due to the institution's flexibility in practices as compared to the BBC, did portray more sustained debate over differing perspectives, but the finished programs still framed and shaped the audiences' understanding of the discussions' outcomes in significant ways. Colonial and postcolonial broadcasting compounds the skepticism of critics such as Sartre at radio's ability to recreate the "reciprocity of discourse" (272).

PERIODIZING AND MAPPING MID-CENTURY LITERARY RADIO

London-based radio institutions played an important role in the creation and distribution of the emerging fields of Commonwealth, postcolonial, and Global Anglophone literature in the mid-twentieth century. The writers I examine in this dissertation participated in international organizations and networks that proliferated in London from the 1930s through the 1960s, and their works were published in English by London and New York publishers to be distributed in the U.K., the U.S., and throughout the Commonwealth. The decades of the 1940s and 1950s are still overlooked within studies of literary modernism and postcolonial studies, and despite calls by scholars including to extend scholarly focus beyond a limited "range of literary works," literary criticism continues to focus primarily on the novel (Lazarus, *Postcolonial Unconscious* 19). Literary radio episodes are unique and understudied cultural forms in their own right, but studying these programs also returns critical focus to poetry and short stories, shorter pieces that were more suitable for broadcasting.

My research is situated within the intersecting fields of world literature, transnational modernism, and postcolonial studies.[17] Ultimately, these field designations are less meaningful for my research than are the central debates over the relationship between the center and periphery and the various models for understanding modernity and globalization. Critics who follow Fredric Jameson's conclusion that modernity is necessarily associated with capitalism and that literary modernism "is essentially a by-product of incomplete modernization" examine the ways literary form mediates these historical forces, seeing modernity as globally singular and the experience of modernity as "irreducibly specific" (Jameson 103-04, Lazarus, "Modernism and African Literature" 233). Other scholars, most notably Pascale Casanova in *The World Republic of Letters*, focus on how literature is produced and distributed within global cultural and commercial markets within a center-periphery model that describes the historical distribution of power set up by European colonialism and the rise of the British world system. Challengers to the center-periphery model assert that it reinforces Eurocentric canons and methodologies and posit models of alternative modernities, planetary perspectives, and the longue durée.[18] Susan Stanford Friedman, for example, in her recent *Planetary Modernisms: Provocations on Modernity across Time*, "aims to 'unthink' the West's idea of itself as the Ur-modernity by rethinking modernity on a planetary scale" through comparing texts from vastly different time-periods and locations (3).

My interest is not only, or even primarily, on the "*idea* of modernity as an invention of the West," although the role of culture in developing and reinforcing modernity as a construct is an important part of my analysis (Friedman 3). Rather, I use Marxist postcolonial methods to examine how specific political and economic structures

of capitalist imperialism shape individuals' lived experience and the conditions from which literature is produced. As Crystal Bartolovich writes, "The contest of cultures with which postcolonial studies has been so preoccupied . . . simply cannot be divorced from rigorous critique of the imbalances of global political economy" (12). The mid-twentieth-century is a crucial moment to understand twentieth-century global economic, political, and cultural circumstances; the fall of the British world-system and the rise of U.S. dominance saw "new mechanisms of foreign control [that] have replaced formal colonialism" (Scott 2). In *Combined and Uneven Development,* the members of the Warwick Collective define world-literature as something that can "be conceived precisely through its mediation by and registration of the modern world-system" (Deckard et al. 9). Literary radio mediated and registered not only the imperial and neo-imperial dynamics of the rise of English language postcolonial literature, but also political formulations of Commonwealth and the West Indies Federation that assumed British involvement in former colonial states was necessary for eventual democratic self-governance.

Contemporary scholars have traced how postcolonial studies and theories of world literature in the late twentieth-century arose within a period of increased globalization.[19] Though the historic situation differs, the decolonization era was also a period of increased travel, immigration, trade, and circulation of texts, particularly between former European colonies and European and U.S. metropolitan centers. Mid-century writers and critics asked similar questions as those raised by literary critics today about the relationship between literary texts and historical contexts and the relationship between literature and metropolitan cultural institutions. The radio programs I study raise these questions on air: what texts should become world literature that "circulate[s]

beyond their culture of origin," and who makes that determination (Damrosch 4)? Are literary themes and forms universal or specific to cultural or national histories?

In New Modernist studies' "transnational turn," critics have expanded modernist studies geographically and chronologically, called attention to previously unacknowledged connections between 'peripheral' writers and canonical modernists, and queried held definitions of modernist literature. (Mao and Walkowitz 738).[20] The writers studied in this dissertation had complex relationships with the people, texts, and institutions of Anglo-American interwar modernism. Take the exemplary high modernist T.S. Eliot's cameo appearances within this dissertation, for example: he is seen directly participating in the BBC's colonial broadcasts in the 1942 photo with Marson and Anand with which I open this introduction. In my final chapter, I discuss Lewis Nkosi's references to Eliot as an authority on the formal attributes of free verse on an *Africa Abroad* program from the early 1960s. Along with funding the Transcription Centre, the CIA funded an airdrop of a translation of Eliot's *Four Quartets* over the Russia as part of their broader association of modernist form with liberal democracy (Saunders 248).[21] I am not interested in Eliot's unexpected emergences within these archives as a way to establish Marson or Nkosi as modernist (with whatever attendant legitimacy that may be seen to bestow upon their literary work), but in what references to Eliot and other interwar modernists show us about how colonial and postcolonial writers saw themselves in relationship to the literary institutions and aesthetics of modernism in the mid-century. The literary pieces included in the following chapters draw from various formal traditions and represent multiple responses to the relationship between modernist aesthetics and politically engaged literature. Moreover, each of the writers I study wrote in multiple

registers, from Marson's romantic nature poetry and experimental blues poems, Anand's Joycean inspired *Untouchable* and realist *Village Trilogy*, to Selvon's Trinidadian anti-nature poetry and London-based vernacular fiction.

While this research developed in large part in conversation with critics of transnational modernism, I increasingly find the connotations of "transnational" misleading for this project. The term has been used to describe the practices and experiences of writers who traveled across national borders within intellectual, publishing, and organizational networks and who did not imagine their cultural and political to be limited to a single nation. *Trans*national can imply transcending the nation, and most of the writers I consider are more invested in the flow of people, ideas, and objects between nations (i.e. internationalism). Within contemporary theory, cosmopolitanism and transnationalism emerged within a trend of a decline of the national, but for many mid-century and early postcolonial writers, however, an investment in global or international relationships did not imply a lack of commitment to national development. As Pranav Jani demonstrates in respect to the pre-1980 Indian English novel, a commitment to cosmopolitanism in the mid-century existed that, "though not necessarily nationalist, was 'true to its salt' in imagining national and local spaces as sites for combating postcolonial inequalities" (20).[22] Trans*national* also suggests an anachronistic understanding of the British empire when used to describe writers like Marson who considered Jamaica part of the British empire and not a separate nation. The term's apparently value-free usage also elides the connotations of Lamming's "exile" as well as the political urgency of global pan-Africanist activism. "Transnational" is often applied broadly in ways that elide unequal power structures that shape the

circulation of people, texts, and social values. The method itself can reinforce existing canons, either in emphasizing connections to already recognized modernists or in prioritizing writers and texts deemed transnational over those considered local or nationalist. I am interested in examining how mid-century writers and policy makers conceptualized their experience, their politics, and their literature, seeing themselves as participating in cosmopolitan, internationalist, immigrant, and diasporic communities and debating the terms in which such communities should be described and understood.

The following chapters are organized geographically and are roughly chronological. This structure allows me to trace the continuities across different colonial locations, audiences, and institutions while also examining the particularities of specific historical moments and colonial histories. In each site, I bring together close reading of individual programs within a broader analysis of ongoing series and broadcasting history. As a whole, the dissertation tells a story of literary broadcasting from the beginning of Britain's colonial broadcasting through the decolonization era to broadcasting in the Commonwealth Era. I begin with the West Indies Service and then return to it in the third chapter because of the uniquely important role broadcasting played in the development of a literary tradition in the region.

The first chapter examines the ways the Jamaican poet Una Marson's programs on "Calling the West Indies" reveal her hope that radio would strengthen bonds between West Indians and Britons and between West Indians themselves. Her morale talks and poetry are both characterized by a commitment to cosmopolitanism that asserts the existence of ties between the West Indies and Britain in order to argue that both parties were responsible for working against economic and political inequities. These broadcasts

challenge perceived oppositions between Marson's "war propaganda" and "Caribbean cultural nationalism" on "Calling the West Indies" (Snaith 109). I analyze Marson's cosmopolitanism as expressed in her Jamaican little magazine, *The Cosmopolitan* (1929-31) before showing how these cosmopolitan ideals are reflected in her published nature poetry, focusing on *Tropic Reveries* (1930) and *The Moth and the Star* (1937). I then turn to her literary radio programs aired on the BBC from 1942-44. Her investment in romantically inspired literature as means to interpersonal connection and social change reveals not only the formally diverse aesthetic expressions in which writers engaged contemporary politics in the first half of the twentieth century, but also highlights the cosmopolitan potential imagined for both literature and radio within West Indian culture at the cusp of decolonization.

Chapter 2 turns to the BBC's South Asian broadcasting, which was started in 1940 to bolster support for the Allied War effort in the British colonies. The South Asian novelists Mulk Raj Anand's and Attia Hosain's broadcasts for the BBC's English Language Eastern Service reveal the importance of messages of friendship in the BBC's anti-fascist programming during World War II as well as its promotion of Britain's postcolonial Commonwealth influence in South Asia. For Anand, broadcasting during the Second World War, a focus on friendship was consistent with his humanist ideals of global change through interpersonal relationships and his hope for Marxist internationalism, also themes of his novel *Across the Black Waters* (1940) and non-fiction *Letters on India* (1942). Attia Hosain, who began working for the BBC after the end of the war and the Independence and Partition of India and Pakistan, found in broadcasting a way to envision an undivided India, the passing of which she mourned in

her novel *Sunlight on a Broken Column* and short story collection *Phoenix Fled*. Anand's and Hosain's broadcasts also disrupt the image BBC policy makers describe of cross-cultural individual or national friendship. Anand's programs celebrated friendship between English and Indian people against the common foe of fascism, while his published writings describe how many of the same fascist policies he warned about on air were being implemented by the British Government of India. For Hosain, references to the immigrant's experience of loneliness and racism, as well as neo-colonial British policy, call into question the BBC's use of a friendship discourse to characterize the relationship between Britain and the former colonies India and Pakistan at the beginning of the Commonwealth era.

Chapter 3 considers *Caribbean Voices*' contestatory possibilities and limitations within the institution of the BBC and geo-political structures of late colonialism. Unlike the Indian Section's programming and many of Marson's broadcasts, in *Caribbean Voices*, the BBC was not highlighting the cultural, affective, or political bonds between Britain and its West Indian colonies by broadcasting British literature. Rather, *Caribbean Voices* sought to develop West Indian literature and bonds between West Indian writers. *Caribbean Voices* emphasized its participatory, democratic, structure in an attempt to model a liberal public space for literary debate. In many respects, *Caribbean Voices* succeeded remarkably in representing and creating community, and provided West Indian authors with visibility that they most likely could not have accessed elsewhere. At the same time, the scripts reveal *Caribbean Voices'* investment in a mid-twentieth century neo-imperial project that attempted to incorporate and neutralize contesting voices. *Caribbean Voices* aired dissent and included literature of oppositional, anti-colonial

voices, but continued to operate within the constraints of the radio medium, which encouraged cohesive programs over individual voices. While the Irish producer, Henry Swanzy, sought to resist metropolitan power dynamics, and to some extent did so, performances of self-critique also reinforced a rhetoric of goodwill that created bonds between British and West Indian intellectuals and reified notions of the BBC's indispensability. Sam Selvon's and George Lamming's poetry and short fiction aired on *Caribbean Voices* in the late 1940s and early 1950s, including early versions of what later became Selvon's *Lonely Londoners* and Lamming's *The Emigrants*, represent these tensions between the individual writer and an emerging literary and immigrant community in London,

In Chapter 4, I move away from the BBC to examine *Africa Abroad* radio broadcasts produced by the Transcription Centre. The Transcription Centre as an institution underwent various crises of identity as it struggled to define its role and purpose in ways not unlike Britain itself in post-war geopolitics with U.S. rising global power. The Transcription Centre's common aims with the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF) are evident in the ways programs encouraged articulations of a pan-Africanist project that were less "self-centred" and potentially more open to ties with the United States ("Broadcasting in Africa" 22). While the CIA did not push specific propagandistic content through their indirect funding of the Transcription Centre, the CCF promoted general Cold war goals of American influence through positive publicity and through promoting certain ideas of culture and politics and discouraging others. The Transcription Centre's criticisms of Négritude can be seen as a move from ties of racial brotherhood to friendship as the ideal for the Commonwealth era.

Literary radio programs produced by the BBC and the Transcription Centre had real effects on literary development and cultural nationalism in the decolonization era. Studying these broadcasts raises key questions about media, culture, and interpersonal connection and the complex relationship between state power, cultural institutions, the writer, the literary text, and the audience. Mid-century radio institutions helped shape literary trends and developing canons, and authors' relationships with institutional power and national cultures remain relevant to understanding world literature and media today.

Introduction Endnotes

[1] The "Voice" photo (Image 2) is reprinted and analyzed by Melissa Dinsman, Delia Jarrett-Macauley; Peter Kalliney, Susheila Nasta, *Home Truths*; and James Procter; and features on the cover of Peter Kalliney's *Commonwealth of Letters* and the special issue of *Wasafiri, Writers at Bush House*.

[2] I do not have an exact date for this image, but it almost certainly was taken after Salkey arrived in London in 1952 (the other writers were already living in London at the time) and before Swanzy left *Caribbean Voices* in 1954.

[3] Also see Laurence Breiner, "Caribbean Voices on the Air," Glyn Griffith, "'This is London calling the West Indies,'" Marc Matero, *Black London,* Nasta, "Sealing a Friendship," Procter, "Una Marson at the BBC."

[4] See Debra Rae Cohen, Michael Coyle, and Jane Lewty, *Broadcasting Modernism*; Matthew Feldman, Henry Mead, and Erik Tonning, *Broadcasting in the Modernist Era;* Todd Avery, *Radio Modernism;* Keane, *Ireland and the Problem of Information*; Dinsman, *Modernism and the Microphone.*

[5] See Kalliney, "Modernism, African Literature, and the Cold War," Gerald Moore, "The Transcription Centre in the Sixties."

[6] This is why, for instance, I do not look at the work of the Kenyan-born Indian writer G.V. Desani, who joined the BBC's propaganda campaign earlier and more enthusiastically than Mulk Raj Anand. Desani broadcast several talks on behalf of the British Army at the Imperial Institute, openly urging fellow Indians to resist the advance of the Japanese and German armies (See Ruvani Ranasinha, "South Asian Broadcasters in Britain," 60 and Emma Bainbridge and Florian Stadtler, "Calling from London, Talking to India").

[7] Familial metaphors were not completely absent from colonial programming. Adrienne Munich analyzes Elizabeth II's references to "children of the empire" in broadcasting to Commonwealth Audiences in 1940 (217). Such rhetoric appears here, however, in a particular broadcast context: a program directed at children and spoken by the future queen.

[8] Benedict Anderson discusses radio briefly in *Imagined Communities* as a form of media performing a similar function to radio but able to extend the idea of the community "to illiterates and populations with different mother-tongues" (135). While the British government sought to use radio to fortify the bonds of empire in similar way that print consolidated nationalism, media theorists argue that acoustic space is experienced

differently than visual space (Lacey 6). While I want to avoid McLuhan's deterministic (and Orientalist, when writing of incompletely-alphabetic "Third World" cultures) conclusions, I am interested in radio's unique effects in the public sphere ("Visual and Acoustic Space" 68-69).

[9] This policy became part of the BBC's constitution in 1946 (Gillespie and Webb 5-6).

[10] See David Hendy, *Radio in the Global Age,* Jason Loviglio, *Radio's Intimate Public*.

[11] Also see John Mowitt's discussion of this passage (73-75).

[12] See Nasta, "Sealing a Friendship," George Lamming, *Pleasures of Exile* (65-68), and Kalliney, "Modernism, African Literature, and the Cold War" (334).

[13] As W.J. West recounts in *The War Broadcasts,* "Nothing like this had been done before on British radio. Desmond Hawkins recalls how very difficult it was before the war to get any live modern poetry on the air. . . Orwell must have been among the first to grasp what was possible, and to see the contrast between such a broadcast magazine and the old-fashioned literary review of the *Horizon* type. 'Voice' pointed the way to the sort of poetry programmes that finally reached the wider British public after the war on the Third Programme." (37)

[14] There is also, of course, a rich relationship between radio and visual culture, and radio and live music that I have not had the time or space to explore here.

[15] Conversely, as Adorno argues, the radio set itself can be perceived as possessing a voice (81).

[16] See, for example, Kate Lacey's analysis of radiogenic forms in Weimar Germany, Neil Verma's *Theatre of the Mind,* and Ian Whittington's "Archaeologies of Sound: Reconstructing Louis MacNeice's Wartime Radio Publics."

[17] These field descriptions are not exclusive, of course. Postcolonial studies has long examined writers' relationship to European interwar modernism and transnational modernist studies examines the complex relationship between periphery and metropole in colonial and postcolonial contexts (see Simon Gikandi, *Writing in Limbo* and Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*). World literature and transnational modernism are sometimes broadly described as emerging within disciplines positioned within the metropolitan center, the first developing within a European tradition of comparative literature and the second from modernist studies that had previously focused on European and U.S. inter-war modernists. Postcolonial studies is generally described as a reading practice that counters such Eurocentric practices by focusing on peripheral literature, although postcolonial theory is sometimes critiqued as insufficiently confrontational due to its

emergence within post-structuralist theory (See Crystal Bartolovich 10-11, Benita Parry, Pranav Jani, Aijaz Ahmad, Vivek Chibber)

[18] See Gaonkar, “On Alternative Modernities” and Laura Doyle, "Inter-imperiality and Literary Studies.”

[19] See Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory;* Neil Lazarus, *Postcolonial Unconscious.* Also see Emily Apter, 2-3.

[20] See, for example, Jessica Berman’s *Modernist Commitments*, Kristen Blumel’s *George Orwell and the Radical Eccentrics*, Mark Wollaeger and Matt Eatough’s *Oxford Handbook of Global Modernism*, and Jahan Ramazani’s *A Transnational Poetics*.

[21] The BBC also sought to use modern literature for propagandistic purposes to counter “the sterility of National Socialist art” during the Second World War (“A Plan and Basis for Propaganda" 10).

[22] Also see Benita Parry (11).

Chapter 1: Una Marson's Colonial Cosmopolitanism: Propaganda and Nature Poetry on "Calling the West Indies"

In "To Be a Poet" (*The Moth and the Star* [1937]), the Jamaican poet Una Marson writes of being inspired by the natural world to compose a message of peace "addressed to all men / And grave it on houses with iron pen" (25-26). The speaker then imagines broadcasting the poem "by wireless" so it could truly reach a global audience (29). If carving a poem on houses represents a concern with local setting and audience, the presence of a technologically expanded public sphere leads to a reimagined audience and a new sense of literary possibilities. "To Be a Poet" describes the cosmopolitan attitudes Marson idealized in the speaker's concern for "all men" and expectation that poetry can foster peaceful and just relations between others. Seven years after she published *The Moth and the Star* in Kingston, Jamaica, Marson did send her message "over the world" when, as a BBC employee, she recorded "To Be a Poet" under the new title "Wishing" for a program of her poetry on the BBC's "Calling West Africa" (29). The poem's message of peace took on new meaning when it was aired in 1944 after Marson's poems describing the London Blitz. With this radio program, Marson participated in the global intermedial process that "To Be a Poet" describes by recording poems first published in Jamaica in the BBC's London studios for a West African audience.

Marson has been recently 'rediscovered' as a quintessential transnational figure due, in large part, to how her biography and publishing history inform her later poetry. She was a black Jamaican woman who travelled throughout the West Indies, Europe, and the United States, visited Turkey and Israel, published several volumes of poetry and wrote plays which were performed in Kingston, London, and Nigeria, participated in numerous international organizations, and was integral in founding and producing programs for the BBC's West Indian Service. Much current research on Marson has been framed within studies of transnational modernism and has drawn well-deserved attention to her participation in pan-Africanist political and literary networks, her poems' mediation of the black West Indian woman's experience, and her work within the metropolitan institution of the BBC to promote West Indian literature.[23] The ways Marson's transnationalism has been framed, however, have meant that many connections between Marson's literary and journalistic writing in Jamaica and her BBC work have been ignored; most strikingly, her nature poetry's engagement with a politically motivated cosmopolitanism has been overlooked.

In recognizing the importance of what is often termed Marson's transnationalism (her travels within and outside of the British empire, her participation in international networks, and the circulation of her literary works), it is important to note that her own writings describe *cosmopolitan* ideals, which retain the Romantic connotations of the aesthetically inspired morally motivated "citizen of the world" while remaining committed to Jamaica's national development.[24] My aim in this chapter is not to argue that Marson must be exclusively categorized as either a transnational or a cosmopolitan figure; rather, I seek a historicized understanding of Marson's own writings on

cosmopolitanism to argue that her nature poems and programs of nature poetry on the BBC, usually considered distinct from or opposing the transnational project, are inextricable from this cosmopolitan vision. Describing Marson's experiences in London as transnational ones may also encourage anachronistic conceptions of Jamaica as a separate nation-state rather than a British colony. Marson asserted the West Indies' unique culture and need for self-determination, but she, with many other West Indians in the 1930s and 40s, emphasized her British identity: in a BBC talk in 1940, she claimed that "the West Indian islands regard themselves as counties of Great Britain" ("The World Goes By," emphasis in original).

Throughout the 1930s and 40s, Marson emphasized cultural and political connections between the West Indies and Britain even while becoming increasingly critical of current British colonial policy. As Marc Matera argues, many Africans and Afro-Caribbeans in inter-war London "sought a radical transcending of the empire, not a complete severing of ties with it" (3). This orientation made her a particularly good fit for the BBC's Overseas Service, which was founded to emphasize these shared ties during the Second World War. Discussions of Dominion status and Federation in the West Indies were also aired on the West Indian Service. Such content emerged both from liberal-leaning British BBC employees' investment in colonial reform or independence as well as strategic decisions to demonstrate the BBC's impartiality by broadcasting critiques of current British policy. Marson's on-air statements advocating Dominion status for the West Indian islands might simply reflect BBC policy, but her own writing suggests that she believed in transforming the colonial relationship in ways that worked

at the limits of the BBC's institutional aims of maintaining ties to keep the British empire together.

Marson shared with British BBC policy makers a conception of radio as a cosmopolitan institution that could use cultural broadcasting for global change. As "To Be a Poet" shows, even before she began working for the BBC, Marson suggests that radio's ability to transmit the voice across long distances has a cosmopolitan sublimity complementing her romantic understanding of poetry's "message sublime" (27). For Marson, the poet had a special role in developing cosmopolitan sensibilities, and radio's ability to cross national and colonial borders while maintaining an "intimate style" made the convergence of literature and the broadcast medium particularly compelling.[25] In 1944, she told her radio listeners, "I never cease to be amazed at the fact that I can sit at a table here in a studio in London, and you can sit in your drawing rooms, and on your verandahs, in Jamaica, or Trinidad, or in a thousand places on the globe and hear what I say" ("Calling the West Indies" [31/1.12/1.1944/1945, 2). Such expressions of wonder at wireless' ability to carry the voice into people's homes were common in the early twentieth-century, and people marveled not only at the technology that carried the signal across thousands of miles, but at the ability of the broadcast voice into listeners' private spaces.[26] Marson's list moves from the most private space of the drawing room outward to the semi-public verandah, then the nation, region, and the world. This celebration of the global connections radio makes possible emerges from the cosmopolitan ideals she expressed in the journal she founded in Kingston, *The Cosmopolitan* (1928-31) and her poetry of the 1930s.

Of all the writers I examine in this dissertation, Marson had perhaps the most in common ideologically with the BBC in her commitment to cosmopolitanism belief in the transformative power of individual relationships and literary culture. She also wielded extensive creative control, often serving as writer, director, and broadcaster on the same program. At the same time, Marson's story is a striking account of the BBC's failures as a cosmopolitan institution. As the BBC's first "coloured staff" member and as a Jamaican woman, she arguably faced the most blatant institutional and individual racism while working there ("Coloured Staff"). Recently opened BBC files confirm what Marson's biographer, Delia Jarrett-Macaulay, and various critics suspected, that she experienced not only incidents of racism while working at the BBC, but the BBC also possessed sometimes shocking control over Marson's personal as well as professional life.

COSMOPOLITANISM IN THE BRITISH EMPIRE

The title of Marson's literary magazine, *The Cosmopolitan*, indicates the centrality of cosmopolitanism in her theories of social commitment and artistic creation. When she founded the journal in Kingston in 1928, Marson became the first woman in Jamaica to be the editor-publisher of a periodical (Donnell, "Fractured Subjects" 354). The West Indian islands were sites of a developing literary magazine culture where later publications created what Raphael Dalleo terms an "uneasy alliance of the literary orientation and nationalist politics" (61). Marson regularly wrote editorials for the journal and contributed poems, essays, and a single short story. She published the journal through 1931, when it folded due to a lack of funds. It may seem odd to later readers that *The Cosmopolitan* was founded as a literary journal and "A monthly magazine for the

Business Youth of Jamaica and the Official Organ of the Stenographers' Association," but the disparate audiences and goals highlight Marson's belief in the inextricability of political change—here, feminist labor organizing—and the development of national literary culture (Jarrett-Macauley 32).[27]

Although *The Cosmopolitan's* audience and creators were "purely Jamaican", Marson's editorials reveal an "internationalist perspective" (Jarrett-Macauley 30, Emery 112):

> [W]e have endeavoured to foster a 'COSMOPOLITAN' spirit, a wider vision, a more charitable and tolerant attitude among all sections of our small society. We abhor narrowness, snobbishness and such things which do more to engender strife and unhappiness than all the other causes put together . . . we must build up a clean, thoughtful and artistic Island literature. ("The Third Year" [May 1930])

Marson's orientation toward the world was one fostered by literature and "culture" in which a heightened attention to beauty had global implications. As Marson's move from social attitudes to literary community and aesthetics indicates, she believed the development of Jamaican literature and improvements in the social order to be two facets of the same project. By the early twentieth century, the term cosmopolitanism carried a variety of associations within British and British colonial culture. A cosmopolitan person had traveled or was at least aware of other places and other cultures. Such awareness would lead to understanding between people of different nations, races, and cultures that would create a path to world peace. A cosmopolitan vision signified a refined sensibility and an interest in "culture," as opposed to provincialism in which a person focused on his

or her own locale and material interests. A cosmopolitan subject must occupy a relatively elite position in order to afford travel or the education and leisure time to read newspapers and books from across the world.

In a later issue, Marson elaborates on her conception of cosmopolitanism through a story of a stranger stopping to help fix her car:

> As in a vision came to us the world in which a moral duty and unwritten law stood for all in all. A world in which no man or woman found it possible to bear or see distress without assisting as far as it was possible . . . a world of men and women who lived each and for each other ("Unwritten Laws" [September 1930])

Marson imagines a not fully equal, but much less unequal, society in which interpersonal kindness is a catalyst for change. Her editorials ask her readers to think of themselves as part of a global community of women each needing to work to transform their own nation.

Marson entreated her readers to look beyond race and class divisions and unselfishly work together for their own rights and for those of others. The prejudices Marson attacks in her editorials reference discrimination in colonial Jamaica based upon both income and skin color. Skin color was an important factor in social class, status, and standards of female beauty. Jamaica's upper level administrators were white and British born, the upper and middle class Jamaicans were either white or of mixed racial background, and the working class and peasants were primarily black Jamaicans of African ancestry (Hart 14). Marson's middle-class family was primarily of African ancestry, and according to her biographer, Marson was conscious of her own dark skin

from an early age (Jarrett-Macauley 2, 8).[28]

An early discussion of cosmopolitanism in the journal came not from Marson herself but from an essay she published by the Reverend J. Leslie Webb in the sixth issue. In "On Being a Cosmopolitan," Webb traces the global market in which "[t]he world assembles at our breakfast table. We eat porridge made in Canada from plates made in England with spoons that have come from Germany. We drink Ceylon tea . . . Perhaps these things have been brought to us by a Dutch ship whose crew is of all nationalities and sold to us over a Chinaman's counter" (165 [October 1928]). From this initial description of global commerce and the availability of newspapers from all over the world, Webb describes a twentieth-century version of cosmopolitanism in which globalization has increased contact between peoples and will make possible a form of global governance:

> The true cosmopolitan . . . has the 'international' mind, which must be carefully distinguished from the merely nationalist and from the 'non-nationalist'. He does not ignore racial and national differences; he does not try to wash away these differences with a torrent of high-sounding words. Rather he seeks to bring them into harmonious relations such as obtains between the different members of the physical body. Diversity – yes? But diversity and conflict – no! He aims at diversity and unity, and the future is with him. . . The advances of science, the complications of trade, the idealisms of men illustrated in the League of Nations and Peace Pacts, herald the dawning of the day when humanity as a whole will be the highest social unit, when suspicious and contending nations and races will

> be merged into a world-commonwealth. Then every man and woman will be a cosmopolitan.

In what he describes as an increasingly connected world, Webb sees possibilities to transcend national borders and racial division, especially through internationalist political movements formed at the end of the First World War.[29] Such versions of cosmopolitanism drew from Enlightenment and liberal twentieth-century ideas that understanding between people of different nations, races, and cultures would lead to world peace. The English word "cosmopolite" emerged in the sixteenth century from the Greek "kosmopolitês," or "citizen of the world" without "national attachments or prejudices" and became increasingly contrasted with nationalist identification ("cosmopolite").

Webb's essay is a liberal celebration of globalization and world community in terms of imperial politics and economics. His reference to "a world-commonwealth" can be traced to Kant's vision of a world government outlined in *Perpetual Peace*, that would bring peace and universal, international justice through a "Federation of Free States" (115). Enlightenment cosmopolitanism was a political and interpersonal model of cross-cultural friendship that "celebrated international brotherhood between noble-minded individuals of different backgrounds" (Garrioch 188). In the twentieth-century, organizations such as *The League of Nations*, which Webb references, reveal the limits of such models of European cosmopolitanism. Article 22 of *The Covenant of the League of Nations* (1924) maintained the continuation of colonialism, and argued that colonized peoples needed the protection and mentorship of imperial nations. Moreover, dependency on the global markets that Webb describes in glowing terms, while fundamental to

capitalist imperialism, was a major factor in Jamaica's economic problems of the 1930s and would be a key impediment to Jamaican economic independence after Jamaica gained political independence in 1962 (Orde-Browne 84, Prashad 225).

While the rise of cosmopolitan theory in the late twentieth century predominantly occurred within a broader turn to anti-national positions (Brennan, *Wars of Position* 228), anti-colonial figures like Marson defined themselves as cosmopolitan but remained committed to national development and nationalism. Even Webb's article, though insensitive to the exploitative effects of globalized empire, provides more space for the nation than later theories of cosmopolitanism allow. For Marson as well, although she wrote that progress will begin "not with nations but with individuals," a cosmopolitan orientation was the means by which Jamaicans would invest in national development, not a position that took Jamaicans—physically or imaginatively—permanently away from their country ("Unwritten Laws").

More recent versions of cosmopolitanism sometimes shape interpretations of Marson's use of the term. Giovanna Covi's extensive archival research importantly establishes Marson's purposeful construction of a cosmopolitan philosophy. She argues, however, that Marson's cosmopolitanism is "a [prefiguration]" of "Spivak's planetary vision" in opposition to "budding national-liberation voices" (121). I arrive at the opposite conclusion, and argue that positing a cosmopolitan orientation and decolonization-era national liberation movements as mutually exclusive draws from later versions of cosmopolitan theory that reject the role of the nation altogether but does not necessarily reflect Marson's views. I argue that Marson's ideals of feminist, racial, and

class organizing form a dialectic in which national and international projects are mutually constitutive.

Marson also challenged visions of cosmopolitanism as a male prerogative. In the second issue of *The Cosmopolitan* (May 1928), she used Sappho's circle as a model for the literary organization and a community of women that she imagined for women in Kingston writing that "[Sappho's] club was a literary one – a kind of sacred sorority and the members were bound to each other by sacred ties and regulations" ("Sappho – The Lesbian Poetess"). For Marson, these Greek women represent the possibility of women's literary collaboration, and she does not seem to be writing of what would later be understood as lesbian sexuality. Marson's understanding of cosmopolitanism did not just include women in addition to men, she posited that women were uniquely able to engage in this cosmopolitan project.

Although Marson emphasizes the importance of ethical relationships between individuals, she consistently insisted on the need for collective organization to transform individual morality into social change. When Marson argued that the only way the workingwomen of Kingston were going to have their voices heard as to wages and working conditions was to organize, she called upon ideals of unselfishness when asking women to look beyond their individual and group self-interest. In the March 1929 issue of *The Cosmopolitan,* Marson writes with evident frustration:

> We hope that the working-women of Jamaica will fall in line with women in other parts of the world and work to raise the standard and conditions of labour. Women in Jamaica are not a whit behind those in other countries as far as general work goes, but if there is something lacking it is that

> public spiritedness which makes for progress. Our lack of that unselfishness which is necessary if the strong must help the weak." ("The Age of Woman" [March 1929]).[30]

A cosmopolitan attitude then, is one in which women in comparatively more powerful positions help those with less access to resources and influences. Marson's frustration with individual workers' insufficient "public spiritedness," ignores, I would argue, the larger impediments of organizing with a colonized country in which unionization was illegal (Jarrett-Macauley 32).[31]

Although Marson is not promoting tangible internationalist connections here, the passage indicates the ways awareness of the world can foster social change. Marson repeatedly used a narrative of belatedness to motivate Jamaican women. She referred to British and American social activists, feminists, and suffragettes such as Dorothea Dix or Harriet Beecher Stowe to inspire her readers ("Jamaican's Victory"). She also reminded her readers that gains by British feminists directly affected Jamaican women, as British colonial subjects, and she encouraged Jamaican women to begin taking such responsibility on themselves. After Marson met African students and activists in London in the 1930s and travelled to Turkey in 1935 to attend the 12th Annual Congress of the International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship, she also used examples from these locations in her writing on Jamaican feminism. In an article in *Public Opinion* in 1937, she celebrated the Turkish President Kermal Atatürk's policies and writes that he "gave the Turkish women their freedom" by giving women the vote and right to hold seats in Parliament ("Should Our Women Enter Politics?" [20 February 1937]). In her enthusiasm for women's political engagement, Marson apparently

remained unaware of ongoing economic inequality in Turkish society and the ways that Atatürk's sometimes forcible 'modernization' was seen by some women as an unwanted adoption of European secular cultural and social mores.

In all these examples, for Marson, cosmopolitan awareness provides examples of what other people have done individually and communally. At the same time, international collaboration cannot be imagined apart from the national organizations working within each country; international organizing was never seen as a substitute or a higher version of national action. In May 1943, as part of *The Women's Institute* series on the BBC's West Indian Service, she spoke about the need for West Indian women's organizations inspired by and informed by the experience of British feminists:

> I am convinced that the future progress of the West Indies is largely in the hands of women; though women can contribute a good deal to their country's welfare individually, it is through solid organization that they can be most useful. I know that you are working in your own way and it must be in your own way, but I am sure you will be interested to hear something of what the British women are doing. ("Outline of the Work of Women's Institutes" 5)

Marson emphasizes the equality and autonomy of the West Indian women, and her phrasing—"I know that you are working in your own way and it must be in your own way"—is likely an attempt to forestall resentment that a woman who had at this point lived in Britain for eight years is trying to impose a British way of doing things. This line was more than placatory rhetoric: throughout Marson's career she repeatedly emphasized the need for social organizations within Jamaica to be independent of foreign

interference. Marson wrote in *Public Opinion*: "We cannot expect people from abroad to be more interested in us than we are in ourselves . . . WE do not need an expert from abroad to tell us that we can collect money and appoint women in every part of the island to work among children" ("We Must Save the Children" [13 March 1937]). Marson argued that Jamaicans should learn from other countries' organizations, but this does not imply that they are not capable of independent organizing. Her phrasing— "*you* are working," "*your* own way"— distances her from the Jamaican women she addresses, but I read this less indicative of Marson's sense of distance from the Jamaican feminist struggle when in England and more due to her adoption of a carefully cultivated impersonal BBC voice.

Some Jamaican Marxist nationalists dismissed Marson on grounds that her feminist social vision was not sufficiently progressive. Richard Hart claims in an interview with Marson's biographer that "[Marson] was the one who was always pushing the woman question . . . [she] never had any constructive ideas other than the assertion that women must speak up . . . I don't think she was very much in tune with the positive ideas that were coming up, the idea that we should rule our own country and that sort of thing, the idea of promotion of culture" (qtd. in Jarrett-Macauley 115). I concur with Jarrett-Macauley that Hart's critiques are part of a tendency for male Marxist nationalists to dismiss feminist concerns in 1930s Jamaican politics (Jarrett-Macauley 115).[32] Hart does not seem to have valued the forms in which Marson promoted Jamaican and West Indian culture in *The Cosmopolitan*, at the BBC's West Indian Service after returning to England, or in her column for *Public Opinion*.

In the late 1920s and early 30s, Marson presented a vision of cosmopolitanism that emphasized individual morality and social justice. She entreated the readers of *The Cosmopolitan* to look beyond their class borders and unselfishly work together for their own rights and for those of others. She described this way of thinking as fostered by literature and "culture," and an awareness of the beautiful and the good on an international scale. Marson's commitment to "build up . . . Island literature" and the journal's extensive literary context indicates that her cosmopolitanism was fundamentally a literary one ("The Third Year"). Within her journal, literary works were not simply intended to entice readers so they would read the political content; rather, the cosmopolitan social vision was connected to what Leah Rosenberg terms Marson's "romantic vision of national literature" (161). Marson's poetry from this era, which initially appears divorced from the political aims of her journalism, in fact attempts to be consistent with her cosmopolitan vision of public life and cultural production.

READING MARSON'S NATURE POETRY

Marson's romantic nature poems are typically referenced as part of her earlier, immature, work. These poems, which include celebrations of Jamaica's beauty, more generalized depictions of the natural world, and reflections on the role of nature in poetic expression, are presumed to unreflectively mimic the British tradition.[33] However, Marson's adoption of the Wordsworthian Romantic tradition as a Jamaican colonial subject both challenges patriarchal Eurocentric definitions of "the poet" and intervenes in her colonial present, an intervention she then takes further by using radio to extend the cosmopolitan possibilities of the pastoral tradition. Marson's love poetry has been

recovered by feminist critics interested in representations of gender and sexuality, but her extensive output of nature poetry has typically been overlooked as the subject of criticism.[34] Relegating the nature poems to her early work obscures the fact that Marson continued to write them, publishing a large number of nature poems in her later volumes. As Alison Donnell points out when introducing her edited collection of Marson's poems, Marson's nature poems were selected for Jamaican and pan-African poetry anthologies during her lifetime. While Donnell argues that Marson's "relationship to the natural world would seem to provide the most immediate and inspiring material for her poetry," critics, including Donnell herself, have not chosen to analyze the nature poems in depth ("Introduction," 28).[35] Moreover, her nature poetry is not considered alongside her role as a *Cosmopolitan* editor or BBC radio producer.

"[H]ow simple her utterance": A Brief Reception History

Marson printed her own poetry in *The Cosmopolitan* and published three volumes of poetry in Kingston: *Tropic Reveries* (1930), *Heights and Depths* (1931), and *The Moth and the Star* (1937). Contemporary readers praised Marson's "simplicity," echoing early reviews of *Lyrical Ballads*, but in terms that questioned whether a black Jamaican woman could be a poet (Morrison, "Introduction," vii).[36] The emphasis on unstudied creation is due in part to the legacy of the Victorian period's focus on the poet's rapturous response to nature—Wordsworth's "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings"— over his corollary that "emotion must be recollected in tranquility" ("Preface" 98, 111). Marson herself cultivates an aspirational posture in her first volume that emphasizes this distance between herself and "the Poet" exemplified by white English or American men. She

quotes Longfellow in her preface to *Tropic Reveries* writing that she hopes her poems' "sincerity will . . . compensate for any of those faults which are so readily to be detected in the works of a new and humble aspirant to a place among the Singers 'whose songs gushed from their hearts'" (vi).[37] Marson then describes her poems as the "'heart-throbs' of one who from earliest childhood has worshipped at the shrine of the muses and dwelt among the open spaces and the silent hills where the cadences of Nature's voice tempt one to answering song" (v). This rhetoric paints her less as a Romantic poet than as Wordsworth's Lucy figure who possesses an essential connection to the natural world.

European female poets have long adopted self-effacing attitudes while asserting their poetic voice, but simplicity and sincerity were also interpreted as racial attributes and reflect ways in which the Romantic poetic ideal, like Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment ideals of liberty and equality, is frequently implicitly or explicitly bounded by race and gender. Marson produced a number of literary talks by the British writer and critic L.A.G. Strong on "Calling the West Indies"; he then wrote the preface to her only volume of poetry published in England, *Towards the Stars* (1945). Strong writes that though artlessness is a "doubtful compliment," nonetheless "there is a spontaneity, a joy of living, which when it is married to simple and musical words can give, now and then, something which only the greatest artists can achieve consciously" (3). He goes on to compare Marson to an unnamed character from the musical *Porgie and Bess*, the "negro in the courtyard of a tenement [who] began rhythmically to hammer a box" (3). This comparison links Marson to Wordsworth's labourer, the rustic figure with instinctual expression, rather than considering Marson a poet in the European tradition. Strong either did not recognize or think it appropriate to emphasize an aesthetic

philosophy informing Marson's work notwithstanding the fact that she had edited a literary magazine and produced programs of literary criticism for the BBC in addition to her creative work.

Later critics returned to ideas of simplicity to describe Marson's nature poetry, but as a critique rather than a compliment (backhanded or otherwise). Lloyd W. Brown derides the "standard nature verses" of *Tropic Reveries* and concludes that in *Heights and Depths* "[t]he obligatory landscape painting is as trite as usual" (32, 33). In praising her later poetry, Brown characterizes Marson's career as representative of the progression of West Indian poetry in general:

> Marson's work as a whole represents a movement from one era to the next. She moves from the clichés and stasis of the pastoral tradition to the innovative exploration of her experience; and she undertakes that exploration in terms that are sophisticated enough to integrate political protest into a fairly complex and committed art. (37-38)

Brown's developmental narrative draws from modernist proclamations of Romanticism's obsolescence as well as postcolonial rejections of literature deemed imitative of European traditions. When Honor Ford-Smith and Erica Smilowitz began publishing on Marson in the context of black feminist studies in the 1980s, they focused on her representations of the black woman's experience, and Ford-Smith maps a similar teleology to Marson's work. She writes approvingly that Marson eventually "moved beyond the creole ideal of artistic standards which imitated European forms" (28).[38] Marson's nature poems are not perceived to be interesting as poetry or as connected to her more "political" poetry, journalism, or organizing. Rather, they are presumed to assert apolitical universalist

values, or, because of their clear descent from British romanticism, to be politically conservative, embracing the canonical British tradition and reinforcing cultural ties between West Indians and Britain. Marson's adherence to cosmopolitanism, an ideal repudiated in large by twentieth-century anticolonial movements (Brennan, *At Home in the World* 4), also played a part in the characterization of her as a member of a conservative and imitative generation of Jamaican poets.

In the last decade, as scholars have turned to Marson as a hybrid, transnational, and modernist figure, they have focused on her poems that explicitly critique social constructions of race and gender, represent transnational experience, or use parody to rewrite canonical texts. Some critics have argued for Marson's inclusion as a modernist based on content and biography in addition to the formal innovation evident in *The Moth and the Star*.[39] Snaith argues that the appearance of the colonized subject in London in poems such as "Little Brown Girl," especially one racially identified as a Jamaican of African descent, constitutes a modernist moment and would have challenged the structures of metropolitan modernity. She writes, "If British modernity is defined, even if tacitly, in relation to the colonial other, then the appearance of the West Indian subject in the metropole stands for the crisis of faith in the dichotomy itself, a crisis that characterizes modernism" (94). Donnell argues, pace Snaith, that it is more important to "hold on to her as a figure who remains inassimilable to the modernist category, even if it is stretched beyond narrow periodization and forced to travel beyond America and Ireland" ("Fractured Subjects" 348). Modernist writers were interested in questions of the metropole and its others and formal features of modernist writing often represented this crisis through fractures, fragmentation, and breaks with established forms.[40] The

relationship between England and its colonies was a constitutive part of this modernist project as was literature by colonial writers. As I argue below, however, writers in the 1930s and 40s did not solely draw upon modernist aesthetics to work through such themes and histories, and Marson's ongoing commitment to romantic nature poetry and the prominence of such verses in her programs produced for the BBC deserves further examination.

"I would learn from the fields and the woods around": A Cosmopolitan Pastoral

Marson drew on Romantic forms and themes for the potential she saw in their representation of cosmopolitan ideals, accessed through nature, to transform society locally and internationally. Marson's intertextual engagement with British poets both reflects and challenges the British Victorian conception of the Romantics that shaped Jamaica's educational curriculum. The epigraphs to her publications and allusions in her poetry signal Marson's aspirations to imitate the British Romantics. She uses lines from Wordsworth's "Resolution and Independence" as an epigraph to *Heights and Depths*, and alludes to in these lines in the titular poem (*HD* vi). Marson also includes a line from Shelley's "To a Skylark" before "Sad Songs" in the same volume (71). Although the poems in *The Moth and the Star* exhibit much greater experimentation in meter and form from her previous works, this volume takes its title and opens with an epigraph from Shelley's "One Word is Too Often Profaned." "Spring in England" includes a direct address to Wordsworth (*Moth and the Star* 5). Marson also alludes to Blake's "Little Black Boy" in both "Little Brown Girl" and "Politeness" (*Moth and the Star* 11; *Toward the Stars* 44). Marson uses these citations of the Romantic poets for a variety of

purposes—she straightforwardly references Shelley to identify her project with his, the lines from Wordsworth inspire a love poem quite different than Wordsworth's meditations upon life, and she radically subverts the paternalist racism of "Little Black Boy" (deCaires Narain 17).

Marson especially lauded Wordsworth, describing him "enthused with the wonderful possibilities of the liberty, equality and fraternity to be the outcome of the French Revolution," and envisioning a poetic project in which reflections on nature led to socially engaged politics ("Jamaican's Victory"). As Marson recounted on "Talking it Over" for the BBC's Home Service in 1940, she learned to love the Romantic poets at the girls' high school Hampton. She named Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads* and the influential Victorian anthology *Palgrave's Treasury* as particular influences (7). In recounting her education in British history and poetry, she recites fragments of poems from Wordsworth, Lord Alfred Tennyson, Robert Browning, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Thomas Gray, and Thomas Campbell claiming that she "could go on indefinitely," not in order "to impress you with my memory" but to illustrate "that we children learnt these poems and loved them without any thought that they came from a land where people thought us a very different race" (5-6). Marson explains: "I cast in my lot with Wordsworth and agreed with him in advance that I would not have the world too much with me. I would not set out to be a good wage earner but enjoy plain living and high thinking and be one of nature's children . . ." (7-8). Her reference to the sonnet, "The World Is too much with us," recalls Wordsworth's association between the accumulation of goods with the inability to be moved by the "Sea" and the "winds"—evidence that one is "out of tune" with the natural world (5, 6, 8).

In the middle of her poem, "Spring in England," Marson devotes a stanza to Wordsworth and his "Daffodils" poem. The speaker, in England for the first time, asks:

> 'And what are daffodils, daffodils,
>
> Daffodils that Wordsworth praised?'
>
> [. . .]
>
> I waited for Spring, and lo they came,
>
> 'A host of shining daffodils
>
> Beside the lake beneath the trees' (49-50, 53-55)

The speaker then addresses Wordsworth himself,

> O sweet singer, fond lover of Nature
>
> [. . .]
>
> 'Twas heaven's gift of poesy
>
> Within thy soul that made thee
>
> Mark the Daffodil . . . (61, 64-66)

The speaker's question, "And what are daffodils . . ." is likely not a rhetorical question. The daffodil was the quintessential English flower brought through cultural transmission to the colonies through Wordsworth's poem, which was memorized by colonial children the world over. In *Lucy*, Kincaid's protagonist rages at having to read of this unknown English flower in school in Jamaica (deCaires Narain 14).[41] The daffodil becomes a symbol of cultural imperialism, of the British imposing values on Jamaican students and making them identify with cultural values foreign to their environment, learning to love what is English and despise what is black and West Indian. Marson's poem does not represent the daffodil thus; the speaker is excited to have the opportunity to see this

flower that she has read of in Wordsworth for herself, and it does not disappoint. I concur with deCaires Narain's reading that the poem "does not signal any cultural unease about inhabiting the land/wordscape of her beloved Wordsworth; rather, the excitement generated by his account of the daffodils is presented as *anticipating*, and, indeed, *shaping*, her own response" (14). While other poems in *The Moth and the Star* express disillusionment with British colonialism and the ideals of the British empire, many of Marson's poems affirm elements of British poetry, culture, and education.

The influence of Wordsworth's meditations upon the poet's role is especially clear in Marson's "vocation poems"—poems in which she reflects upon the qualities and social role of the poet. With the popular canonization of Wordsworth in the Victorian era, in her self-fashioning as a nature poet, Marson was contending not only with the poet as a universal ideal but also *Wordsworth*, the great man, the exemplary English poet. In the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth describes the poet's enhanced sensitivity to the world and to other people: "He is a man speaking to men: a man, it is true, endued with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common among mankind" (103). He later reiterates his belief that the poet's qualities are "nothing differing in kind from other men, but only in degree" (108). Marson quotes this line in "The Poet's Heart," published in *Tropic Reveries*, and offers her version of the Wordsworthian poet's common humanity and distinctive sensibility:

> Think not that those who spend their time
> In building up the lofty rhyme
> Are often of another clime

Than those who pass them by.

They differ not, but in degree:—
More deeply feel all that they see.
They hold to nature the great key,
And ope' the portals wide. (1-8)

Marson emphasizes, like Wordsworth, the poet's capacity for deep feeling as well as a discerning quality of attention to that which others might ignore. These qualities are not for the poet's edification alone; rather, the poets reveal what they observe to their readers.

Wordsworth was both celebrated and criticized for retreating to rural settings and themes; comparatively, the locality of Marson's nature poetry has been seen either as provincialism or, in her "Jamaica" poems, evidence of incipient nationalism. At the same time, Wordsworth's "Romantic excess of sympathy" has been interpreted as a version of cosmopolitanism in which the poet plays a central role in global human society (Hamilton 222). Wordsworth writes that the poet is "singing a song in which all human beings join with him," and Marson's poetry offers multiple versions of what this implicit cosmopolitanism might look like in the twentieth century ("Preface" 106). In "To Be a Poet," the speaker aspires to write upon a variety of subjects—religious devotion, the beauty of nature, moral edification, peace and romantic love—but assumes the centrality of the natural world in any act of composition. Nature and those close to nature literally sustain the poet who drinks water from the brook, eats fruit from the trees, and communes with shepherds and peasants. The poet will take the lessons gleaned from nature and write poems for all people:

I would learn from the fields and the woods around
The strength and beauty that there abound,
I would cheer the meek and the lowly of earth
And plead with the wealthy and high of birth,
I would play with the children and teach them to love
All beauty of earth and heaven above, (15-20)

Marson's "Invocation" similarly connects the natural world, moral vision, and social purpose. The poem begins with an address to the "God of the Daisied Meadows" who has "opened my eyes / To see the beauty in a blade of grass . . . And all the lovely things of earth" (1, 2-3, 17). The second stanza asks that this God again "Open my eyes," but here the request is that the speaker "may see / The beauty in each living soul" (20-21). Not only does Marson appeal to a deity of the natural world, she proposes that nature will teach the poet and the poet's audience to have compassion on others.

Marson's description of the poet as learning from the natural world recalls a specifically Victorian conception of Wordsworth, who, as Stephen Gill writes, was "a continuing resource for Victorian readers who wanted poetry that could teach and guide" (205). In Wordsworth's "The Tables Turned," the speaker urges his Friend to "Let Nature be your teacher" (16). Marson's "Invocation" expands its scope from the individual's appreciation of the natural world to an awareness of the beauty in other people that serves as a basis for peace between nations:

Shed abroad Thy great love
In the hearts of all men
And all Nations,

[. . .]

. . . Thy reign

Of love and peace and brotherhood

Be upon Thy glorious earth. (3-4, 70-72, 75-77)

The poem maps a trajectory from appreciating natural beauty, to appreciating the beauty of all people, to global peace and understanding.

Marson's allusions to the British Romantics emphasize these poets' political commitments that often were obscured in the Victorian era. Her use of the pastoral tradition was not evidence of "stasis"; the nature poetry mediates her experience as a woman, a black Jamaican, and a colonial subject committed to social change (Lloyd W. Brown 37). Marson's intertextual allusions incorporate the Wordsworthian poet who acutely perceives and attends to the natural world with her understanding of a cosmopolitanism in which appreciation of natural beauty was part of social and cultural development. What Donnell observes of the cosmopolitanism described in Marson's journal, I would argue is true of her nature poetry as well: Marson's cosmopolitanism "is related to the etymology (world citizen) and does not involve explicit internationalism so much as an encouragement towards a particular way of being in the world defined by a responsiveness and openness to others, to cultural transformation and innovation" ("Fractured Subjects 355). When Marson left Jamaica for London in 1932, lived experience of life in Britain, Europe, and Turkey joined her cosmopolitan orientation.

ANTICOLONIAL NETWORKS IN METROPOLITAN LONDON

With Marson's first visit to England from 1932 to 1936, her feminist cosmopolitanism expanded to include attention to racial politics and anticolonial nationalism through her experience of British racism and her "contact with a network of liberation movements congregated in Britain at this time" (Donnell, "Feminism" 122). On her return to Jamaica, these shifts in attitudes about race and empire are evident in her column in the leftist publication, *Public Opinion*, and the collection of "Poems Written in England" included in her 1937 volume of poetry, *The Moth and the Star*. In 1938, Marson returned to England, and her cosmopolitan and internationalist commitments again shifted focus with the beginning of the Second World War when she came to believe the fighting fascism, rather than pacifism, was the only way to ensure global peace and political independence for the West Indies.

Scholars have examined the rich implications of Marson's affiliations and activities in England, Geneva, and Turkey for understanding her literary production, colonial and feminist organizations in Europe between the wars.[42] In this chapter, my primary interest is in Marson's time at the BBC but I will briefly examine how her poetry engages her experiences in London and her awareness of diverse colonial politics. Marson described Jamaicans' purposeful decision to temporarily leave in order to be better prepared to serve their country. In "Home Thoughts" (*The Moth and the Star*), Marson infuses a paean to Jamaica's beauty with a nationalist purpose. The poem opens:

> June is drawing near
> And in my sun-kissed isle
> The Poinciana with its flaring blossom

Casts its spell o'er all the land. (1-4)

"Home Thoughts" then transitions from descriptions of June in Jamaica to descriptions of Jamaicans committed to social change:

So children of your tropic land

With broken hearts that bleed

In foreign lands afar

Strain every nerve to bring forth

Fruit that may enrich the race (47-51).

In order to serve both Jamaica and the broader African diaspora, the young people must leave their place of origin for a period.[43] It is a similar sentiment to that expressed by Dedalaus in James Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) who feels he must leave Ireland to "forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race" (276).

In a 1941 interview on the Home Service's "Empire Exchange," Marson suggests that the exiles' labor is uniquely possible in the multiracial cosmopolitan space of London where contact between people of different races can lead to greater understanding and reduced prejudice. She tells her interviewer that though she wants to return to Jamaica, "we of the Negro race have a mission . . . to convert the world to the truth that we are not innately inferior beings" (10). She describes the colonial visitor to London undertaking a global proselytizing project, thereby reversing a rhetoric of English missions.

In London, as in Jamaica, Marson built connections through social organizations and cultural projects. Marson participated in many British and international women's

organizations, including the Women's International League, the International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship, Women's Freedom League, Women's Peace Crusade, and the British Commonwealth League (Jarrett-Macauley 72). Marson also met African leaders including Jomo Kenyatta, the future president of Kenya, and she worked closely with the Gold Coast king Sir Nana Ofori Atta Omanhene in 1934 and the Abyssinian minister in London in 1935. Marson's poem, "To Joe and Ben" (1937) is an elegy that parenthetically explains that Joe and Ben were "Brutally murdered in April 1937 at Addis Abbaba by the Italians" (*The Moth and the Star* 81). Although the poem focuses on Italian imperialism, Britain's refusal to intervene in Mussolini's invasion of Abyssinia was pivotal in changing her view of British imperial policies. After the invasion of Abyssinia, Marson no longer believed that Britain prioritized colonial states' and people's best interests (Jarrett-Macauley 98, 103). She had an ongoing association with the League of Coloured Peoples and lived with the League's founder, Harold Moody, and his family when she first moved to England. She then volunteered as an assistant secretary for the League, and in 1934 began editing the League's journal, *The Keys* (Jarrett-Macauley 52-54).

Marson's poems of the experience of being a black woman in London reveal her changing views not only from conversations with pan-Africanist leaders, but also her experience of racism in London, a place many colonial subjects believed, while still in the colonies, to be governed by British ideals of equality. In "Nigger," published in the League of Coloured People's journal *The Keys* in 1933, Marson writes,

> They called me "Nigger,"
>
> Those little white urchins

[. . .]

What made me keep my fingers

From choking the words in their throats?

The last stanza is a prayer for Christian love and forgiveness, but the poem starkly describes the children's racism and the speaker's hurt and anger.

"People like me": Race, Gender, and Desire in "Little Brown Girl" and "The Stranger"

While "Home Thoughts" and "Nigger" speak to the experience of colonial men and women in England, "Little Brown Girl" and "The Stranger" mediate the intersections of race and sexuality for the black West Indian immigrant woman. Both poems narrate encounters between a West Indian woman and a white Briton, and in each poem only one party's account is recorded—the speaker of " Little Brown Girl" is a white Londoner, and the speaker of "The Stranger" is the West Indian woman. "Little Brown Girl" is one of Marson's most well-known and most frequently analyzed poems, and it describes how the immigrant woman's position as a non-white woman on London's streets create conditions of vulnerability and near-voicelessness. [44] In "The Stranger," the speaker of the poem, while gently exposing the racially one-sidedness in definitions of the "exotic," enjoys the frisson of attraction in racial difference and describes a meeting between approximate equals. Taken together, the poems suggest the complexity of the individual's immigration experience and the importance of interpersonal connection in Marson's understanding of cosmopolitanism. "Little Brown Girl" can be seen as a failure to connect due to the British speaker's provincialism, while "The Stranger" describes an

attraction founded on exoticization that leads to reciprocity as each person listens, in some fashion, to the other.

In "Little Brown Girl," the speaker, a native white Briton, interrogates a West Indian woman and asks why she is in London and what she is looking for.[45] The speaker of the poem is usually understood to be a British man striking up a conversation with a young woman. While there is no direct evidence that the speaker is male, it does seem to be the most likely interpretation. The events of the poem are also ambiguous: it can be read as an actual encounter between this man and the West Indian woman or as an internal monologue prompted when he caught sight of the "little brown girl" walking in London. In either case, the poem portrays the invasive combination of curiosity and ignorance of the white British native about the brown 'visitors' to London and the speaker's willingness to interpret the West Indian woman's experience by reading her body without hearing her perspective. In two stanzas, the reader seems to gain access to the woman's thoughts, but there is no indication that she speaks them aloud, as the speaker of the poem does not directly respond to them.

The speaker of the poem believes that the woman feels vulnerable through his readings of her body. He sees her "start and wince / When white folk stare" (6-7) and he attempts to imagine what she is seeking by reading "the look in your eyes" (115). If the poem represents an actual encounter, the West Indian woman's vulnerability is demonstrated by the fact that, because of her race, gender, and class, the speaker of the poem can approach her on the street and interrogate her about why she is in London. Of the speaker's twenty-one sentences, eighteen end with a question mark, although some contain an embedded statement within the question. Even if the encounter is only

imagined, the interrogation-like structure of the poem demonstrates that the white Londoner presupposes that a non-white person in London needs to justify or at least explain her presence. The speaker asks if she thinks white Londoners consider her to be out of place:

> Don't you think they wonder
> Why a little brown girl
> Should roam about their city
> Their white, white city? (8-11).

The speaker is not a necessarily reliable reader of the woman's experience, perceptions, and feelings, although the poem confirms his interpretation of her vulnerability through a glimpse into the woman's point of view and through the events of the poem. Marson's lines recall Claude McKay's "The White City" (1921) in which the poem's speaker walks through the city describing "life-long hate."[46] Though it is an ironic reversal that the lines belong to the British speaker, the allusion to McKay's famous poem implies resistance to the hegemony of white culture.

There are only two stanzas in which the readers are shown the woman's perspective. After the speaker asks "What are you seeking, / What would you have," the woman's thoughts continue with no transition or any indication that she is speaking aloud:

> In London town
> There are no laughing faces,
> [. . .]
> There's nothing picturesque

To be seen in the streets,

Nothing but people clad

In Coats, Coats, Coats,

[. . .]

And the folks are all white –

White, white, white,

And they all seem the same

As they say that Negroes seem.

No pretty copper coloured skins,

No black and bronze and brown

No chocolate and high brown girls (18-21, 25-28, 33-39)

If these lines are a direct response to "What are you seeking," than she is seeking aspects of her home island missing in London— laughter, the picturesque, variation of skin tone, "country folk," and market women (45). The speaker does not understand this; he subsequently offers to buy her an expensive coat after her lines state it clear that she hates London's ubiquitous coats.[47] Whereas the woman demonstrates in her stanza that there is a wide degree of differentiation by color, race, and class within a single city of a single island in the West Indies, the white speaker cannot initially determine whether this non-white person is from Africa, India, of the West Indies. In equating these locations, he demonstrates complete lack of knowledge about the geography and history of the different countries within the British Empire. His ignorance of cultural life in the colonies is further demonstrated by his question, "Have you theatres / In your country" (*MS* 75-76). Not only did the West Indies have theatres, the islands had a growing theatrical

community. When "Little Brown Girl" was published in *The Moth and the Star*, Marson's play *At What a Price* had been produced in both Kingston and London, and she had founded the Jamaican dramatic league.

The final stanza suggests that watching (and possibly talking to, or at) the West Indian woman has changed the way that the speaker views his city. He states, "You are exotic / And you make me wonder / All sorts of things" (107-09). These lines have erotic undertones suggesting that the woman's body, marked by racial difference, inspires sexual fantasy. As the stanza continues, however, it becomes clear that the speaker is also wondering about the way he views London. While in the beginning of the poem, he describes London as "the great city" (4), in the final stanza, it is "this dismal / City of ours" (113-14). It could be that he is asserting his place in the city as possessed by the native white British population, or he could be linking himself and the woman in a new "we." Regardless of the speaker's meaning, I argue that the reader has been shown that the "brown" woman is as much a part of London as the speaker and the multitude of white faces, even though her thoughts are of the West Indies that she has left behind.

"The Stranger" constructs an alternate representation of interpersonal cross-cultural contact. Probably because "The Stranger" stays on the individual level and seems to take place within a private or semi-private space and not the public street space of "Little Brown Girl," it has rarely been discussed in detail in criticism of Marson's work. It is an important counterpoint to "Little Brown Girl," however, as it complicates the notion that being seen as "exotic" is always presented negatively within Marson's poetry. While the poem appears to be simply about a gentle flirtation or beginning of a

friendship, it illustrates Marson's cosmopolitan ideals about the power of individual relationships within a universalist humanist framework.

The speaker in "The Stranger" is a "foreign girl," and the poem is addressed to a "Friend" who has told her that he or she enjoys talking to her, evidently because her racial difference is appealing:

> So you like talking to me
> Friend with the wistful smile,
> To foreign girls who are brown of skin
> And have black kinky hair
> And strange black eyes. (11, 1-5)

The poem expresses physical attraction, and the common trope of the white male intrigued by the exotic non-white woman may come first to mind, but there is no explicit indication in the poem that the stranger is male. Moreover, it is the presumably white friend that is watched, described and desired. The speaker is entranced by the friend's "wistful smile" and "The strange look in your eyes" and "the calm sweet tone of your voice" (2, 29-30) The speaker does not seem very interested in what the other person says, but only listens in order to watch his or her body, and hear "the calm sweet tone of your voice" (31).

"The Stranger," reverses expectations, first, by the speaker's taking the line, "You liked talking to people like me" as a "compliment" and not as a tasteless pick-up line or a racist generalization. Not only is the speaker flattered, or simply pleased that this attractive person is talking to her so "sweetly," she then "returned the compliment," making the stranger also realize that he or she is "people like," which reminds the

stranger that white is also a race and English is an ethnicity.[48] Marson's poems written in England examine racism through interpersonal connection; "Home Thoughts" and "The Stranger" also suggest the personal and political possibilities of visiting London.

Jamaican Uprising and British Response

When she returned to Jamaica in 1936, Marson's increasingly confrontational anticolonial politics were evident in her reporting for the Jamaica Standard and regular column for Norman Manley's *Public Opinion*, a newspaper where Jamaica's Socialist and Marxist anticolonialists worked together as part of a coalescing Jamaican independence movement (Jarrett-Macauley 112). In the late 1930s, Jamaica's unemployment and underemployment problems, which had been rife since emancipation, were exacerbated by the effects of the global economic collapse on Jamaica's sugar estates and reduced immigration options (Darwin 419). In late April and early May 1938, Jamaica's labor uprisings joined the uprisings that had been erupting across the West Indies throughout the decade. Workers and unemployed people seeking jobs at the new Frome sugar factory went on strike and attempted to take over the offices. They were attacked by police wielding bayonets. The dockworkers called a general strike beginning on May 21, 1938, and actions quickly spread throughout the city and the rest of the country (Holt 386). The government declared a state of emergency on May 25, 1938. Marson was at Frome on May 1 reporting for the *Jamaica Standard* and over the next few days was particularly interested in interviewing women who participated and were injured (Jarrett-Macauley 137-8).

The British government responded to the strikes and riots with the West Indies Royal Commission research visit to the West Indies in the summer of 1938. Marson returned to London to report on the commission for *The Jamaica Standard* as well as to raise money for the Jamaica Save the Children Association; she also testified before the commission itself. The League of Coloured Peoples publically critiqued the Moyne Commission's report as merely placatory and met with government officials to express their dissatisfaction (Holt 392-3). Hart cites a memorandum from the Secretary of State for the Colonies composed soon after the state of emergency was declared as evidence that the commission's goals were to assure West Indians and Britons that the government was taking action, while refusing to advocate for substantial change:

> An early announcement that a Royal Commission was to visit the Islands would have a good psychological effect in these Colonies. It would tend to reassure their people that we here *are* keenly interested in their affairs, and anxious to do what we can to help, and it would therefore tend to calm excited feelings there. (qtd. in Hart 98)

The Moyne Report, after analyzing the global and local causes of the West Indian labor uprisings, was in Holt's reading, "pessimistic" about the hope of policy changes changing the economic situation in the West Indies. It laid much of the fault of this on West Indian society, repeating well-worn stereotypes of the black West Indian as lazy and promiscuous (Holt 390).[49]

In England, Marson found unique opportunities to build connections with feminists and anticolonialists in England and across Europe. As I will discuss in the conclusion to the chapter, this characterization of cosmopolitan experience as generating

possibilities while also being a site of struggle and pain reflects what we know of Marson's experience at the BBC.

"This Closer Relationship": Message Parties and Nature Poetry on the BBC

Marson's time at the BBC offers a unique convergence of her experience as a West Indian woman in 1930s and 40s London, her participation in the diverse personal, literary, and media networks of the BBC's Empire Service, and her cosmopolitan cultural vision. In joining the BBC, Marson participated in an institution that asserted cosmopolitanism for the stated purpose of maintaining empire. The BBC valued the knowledge and authority Marson, as a black Jamaican, brought to her colonial audience.[50] Hiring Marson was a major step toward the BBC's transformation to a cosmopolitan enterprise that included colonial employees and audiences.

What the first director-general of the BBC, John Reith, termed radio's global "bands" of information and cultural influence were increasingly used for political purposes throughout Britain's colonial territories in the years leading up to the Second World War (Reith 219). West Indian programming, beginning in late 1940, was intended to encourage the troops and increase civilian support for the war effort (Newton 490). Marson's troop morale programs and poetry broadcasts to West Indian and British, as well as West African, audiences, reveal her commitment to the cosmopolitan possibilities of radio to connect listeners through the mediation of the literary object or through Marson herself. Her broadcasts also challenge oft-perceived oppositions between propaganda and cultural nationalism, as her morale talks and poetry are both

characterized by a commitment to cosmopolitanism that asserts the existence of ties between the West Indies and Britain not only to support the war effort but also to argue that both parties were responsible for working against economic and political inequities.

Marson met Cecil Madden, the producer of BBC Television's interview program *Picture Page*, during a televisation of the *Miss Jamaica* pageant in 1939. She eagerly accepted the opportunity to freelance for Madden on *Picture Page* and took on freelance work with BBC radio soon after. Marson was hired as an Empire Programme Assistant in March 1941 working under Cecil Madden but responsible for producing programs for the new "Calling the West Indies" programs. She was later put under the supervision of Grenfall Williams, the African Service Director and in April, 1942, Marson was promoted to producer (Jarrett-Macauley 144-153).

Marson's first programs were "Message Parties," variety programs on which West Indian servicemen and women broadcast messages home to their families and friends. These sometimes included newsletters in which she shared news of London in wartime and rallied her listeners to support the war. Marson identified as a pacifist until at least 1934, however, in the context of the later 1930s and 1940s, spreading a message of peace and supporting the war against fascism were not necessarily seen to be incompatible. Marson's role in the newly inaugurated West Indian programming shows the close relationship between the BBC and the British government, as the idea for her "Message Parties" originated from the Ministry of Information (Rush 175).[51] Marson's BBC broadcasts were intended to increase West Indian support for the war, and as such they focus extensively on the ties—historical, linguistic, and literary—between Britain and the West Indies. Given Marson's increasingly vocal critiques of British imperialism

throughout the late 1930s, it may seem surprising that she began working for the BBC at a time when institutional policy explicitly emphasized radio as a tool to maintain colonial loyalty to Britain. Marson and the BBC co-created an on-air image in which Marson displayed West Indian loyalty to Empire to both British and West Indian audiences. At the same time, Marson included in her broadcasts ideas of mutual responsibility for social and political change. Marson used West Indian participation in the war effort to show that West Indians felt common cause with Britain and to ask the British to repay this loyalty and material support by granting the West Indies increased self-determination and Dominion status after the conclusion of the war.

On air, Marson presented a cosmopolitan persona by describing the perspective gained by being in London, the metropolitan center. She tells her West Indian audience in 1940 that "here I can get a better idea of things as a whole better than I could from my little corner of the globe" ("The Empire at War" 1). Not many members of Marson's audience had this opportunity. Colonial subjects were legally allowed to visit and immigrate to England, but travelling was expensive and further restricted during the war. Marson attempted to extend the benefit of her broader perspective to listeners in the West Indies through the perceived intimacy of the radio broadcast in which West Indian listeners heard the voices of Marson and other West Indians in Britain.

While the bulk of Marson's broadcasts were for West Indian audiences, she also gave a number of talks on the BBC's Home Service, in which she informed a British audience about the cultural ties between Britain and the West Indies. In her first BBC talk as a freelancer in 1939, "Simple Facts - Jamaica," which was later reprinted in the BBC's journal *The Listener*, Marson imagines that her audience will ask, "Why does this medley

of people live in Jamaica? And how is it that in their strange lilting accents they all talk English?" (1). She describes Jamaica's colonial history and social composition and insists that her audience should care about Jamaica's desperate economic situation even though the country seems distant: "We Britishers in the West Indies are your poor relations. . . . But even if we embarrass you at times, the bonds fromed [sic] in prosperity should not be broken in adversity" (8). On a later broadcast about her love of British literature, she references a shared culture, telling her British audience that "A common language, a common tradition and even blood relationships are real enough bonds so perhaps I've some right to try and interest you in these bonds forged by you" ("Talking it Over," 2). On these programs for British audiences, Marson's identity as West Indian is stated and her race is often stated or implied. Her audience would likely note her West Indian accent and speech patterns, but the radio encounter lacked visual racial markers that might enlarge the perceived distance between Marson and her audience.

In broadcasts to Britain and the West Indies, Marson describes a relationship between British identity and independence politics. In "West Indians' Part in the War," Marson concludes:

> I believe that we shall emerge victoriously from this terrific ordeal. And when I say "we", I mean the British peoples from every corner of the earth. And when this is achieved, and we feel satisfied with our own part in it, every one of us, without exception, must demand a wider sympathy, a fuller understanding and a new meaning for our British solidarity. I am sure there will be a new order of things, and as we share wholeheartedly in the struggle now, so after victory we can claim the right to share in the

> healing of the world's wounds and those of our own particular race and people. (2).

This talk pivots between global and local concerns as West Indians' participation in a global war effort will demonstrate their right to increased political independence. Marson insists on the need to "demand" these changes, not wait for Britain to grant them. Anne Spry Rush argues that a transformation of British identity for decolonial causes was true for many middle-class West Indians:

> middle-class West Indians used their understanding of Britishness first to establish a place for themselves in the British imperial world, and then to negotiate the challenges of decolonization. In this period West Indians participated in a complex process of cultural transition — a struggle to re-define Britishness and their relationship to it — not only as Caribbean peoples but also as Britons. (1)

Through radio's power to reinforce bonds between peoples, Marson hopes to ensure that neither her British nor her West Indian listeners will forget the West Indian cause.

Marson expressed hopes of increased West Indian self-governance after the war to her West Indian audience as well. In April 1941, she offered this introduction to the expanded West Indian programming:

> I think it is very gratifying that this closer relationship between Britain and ourselves by radio should be cemented during a period of great crisis such as we are facing at the present time. . . .
>
> Such contact is bound [to] be of mutual benefit. The Empire department of the B.B.C. is working and planning so that even in the

> remotest parts of the Colonial Empire you will feel that the links of good will and understanding and a new spirit of mutual help are being strongly forged in the fires of war. ("Coming Programmes" 2).

Marson justifies supporting the war not only to defeat Axis powers but also as a means to West Indian political change. Marson explains that although "War is an evil thing and has nothing to commend it," she hopes that "when Britain has achieved victory she will not forget the part that you have played in the struggle" (2).[52] Such statements provide meaning to West Indian participation in the war that is quite different than simply supporting Empire.

Broadcasting a West Indian Pastoral

Notwithstanding the explicit propagandistic content of much of Marson's work for the BBC, her ongoing commitment to a pastoral project dovetails remarkably with her hopes for the cosmopolitan possibilities of radio. While some critics see Marson increasingly appropriating metropolitan radio technology over the course of her time at the BBC—leaving behind imperial ventriloquism for the project of broadcasting West Indian literature—Marson's "Calling the West Indies" programs challenge such characterizations of her broadcast career.[53] Marson began broadcasting West Indian literature in June 1942—the literary programs were not a later development even if the weekly *Caribbean Voices* did not air until the mid-1940s. At the same time, Marson consistently participated in the propagandistic "Message Parties" or "West Indian Parties" as long as she had a regular public presence on the BBC.[54] Literary programs encouraged increased West Indian self-determination but were also part of the British war

effort. At the same time, the morale boosting programs contained assertions of cultural and political nationalism that complicate neat divisions between Marson's cultural and propagandistic radio work. Even more striking, while some of Marson's broadcasts were strictly devoted to the war effort and others were exclusively devoted to reading literature or literary criticism, single programs often reveal overlapping and intersecting literary and political goals.

Marson developed a number of programs of poetry and music by West Indian artists in addition to talks by British critics and programs of British poetry. Marson founded *Caribbean Voices*, a literary program that has received increased attention in recent scholarship on Caribbean writing and radio, but many of the early *Caribbean Voices* scripts aired during the period in which Marson was travelling or ill.[55] It is therefore instructive to look at the earlier programs on West Indian literature in which she had clear control creating and executing the programs, as not only producer but often writer, compère (host), and/or reader. Marson wondered in a memo to Cecil Madden if "perhaps on short wave it's not so good for poetry," but she ultimately created literary programs consisting mostly of poetry (qtd in Jarrett-Macauley 159). Broadcasting nature poetry that at first appears to fit squarely within the received British tradition complements and expands Marson's sense of the cosmopolitan possibilities of the pastoral tradition. Marson imagines the radio listener participating in a moral and ethical transformation with social consequences, prefiguring Kate Lacey's challenge to the persistent "association of listening with passivity and with the private sphere" (3). For many modernist and postcolonial writers, romantic nature poetry was also considered a retreat from public life and denigrated as a feminine pastime; Marson's broadcasts make

the case that listening to nature poetry is urgently necessary for contemporary public life.

On June 14th 1942, Marson produced a poetry program for "Calling the West Indies." She described the broadcast's new format: "Tonight instead of our usual interview, we present to you, in a programme of poetry reading and music, the work of two West Indians – a composer of yesterday, Sir Francis Cowen of Jamaica, anda (sic) poet of today – Mr. Calvin Lambert of Trinidad" (1). The introduction emphasizes the men's shared West Indian identity but also implies differences greater than generational: Cowen was a white nineteenth and early-twentieth century composer who was born in Jamaica but moved to England with his family at the age of four. Lambert was a black West Indian who was born in Grenada and had lived in Trinidad; at the time of recording, he was a medical student in London. The chronology Marson establishes, which identifies Lambert as the "poet of today" suggests a narrative of wider social and political transitions as black West Indians gained political, economic, and cultural capital in the early twentieth century.[56]

Lambert's first three poems—"La Trinidad," "The Isle of Spice" (a common epithet for Grenada), and "Caribbean Sea"— celebrate the beauty of the West Indies in elevated diction and ode-like address. These nature poems recall universalist ideas about a shared experience of beauty. They also recall the region's colonial history: in "La Trinidad," Lambert writes that "Christopher in sacred vow / First named thee Holy Trinity"; "Caribbean Sea" describes "The sea on which great Cortez gazed" (2,3). Within the poems, this imperial naming and gaze is not criticized, but the celebration of the islands suggests an incipient regional identity. The sense of regionalism is even more pronounced in the script edits. In an earlier version, Marson states that Lambert

"describes *his own* beautiful islands," reflecting his personal connection to both Trinidad and Grenada (2, emphasis added). "His own" was changed to "our" in the version broadcast.

West Indian identification is intensified in Lambert's "A Request to the West" which exhorts the "brothers of the Western Isles" to write literature "to mould the destiny" of the world and to bring "peace and solace" to a Europe at war (3). The poem calls on (male) West Indians to write and develop a regional literature with international import. Lambert's request for these writers to "soothe the heart in Europe and the world" might be expected to be fulfilled by such poems as he read himself on the program describing the West Indies' unique natural beauty (3). While Lambert does not explicitly connect the nature poems with this reflection on the poet's vocation, the program Marson produced progresses from describing and celebrating the beauty of nature to the power of poetry in a precisely defined contemporary moment. The radio program thus echoes the trajectory of her own "Invocation" and "To Be a Poet."

The program ends, however, not with nature poems that might bring solace but with "War Planes," written after Lambert experienced "the heavy air raids of 1940 and early 1941" (3). The poem describes the "lethal instruments of war" and calls upon the West Indian listener to realize a common cause with Britain:

> This world-catastrophe is spread
>
> To native man, in native lands.
>
> What will remain to speak of Europe's Art?
>
> Who will survive to write the page of time? (3)

Lambert's poem contains, as a counterpoint to the destruction-of-civilization themes

common to European poetry of the previous Great War, this question of who and what will survive the war. Will the "native man" be destroyed as well? Or will world war inaugurate a new era for the formerly colonized?

In 1940, Marson told her West Indian listeners that she believed the war represented "the old struggle as to whether tyranny or liberty shall survive in our world. . . . I cannot find any personal or racial consideration large enough to cloud this issue" ("The Empire at War," 2). Marson and Lambert both participate in the propagandistic purpose of "Calling the West Indies" in arguing that the war is not only a European war, but one in which the colonies are necessarily involved. They also insist, however, that in the post-war era the West Indian will participate more equally in culture and politics.

In the summer of 1944, Marson broadcast her own poetry to the West Indies and West Africa. "Spring in England" and "To Be a Poet"/"Wishing" show Marson's ongoing investment in the intersecting themes of cosmopolitanism and the natural world in a time of modern world war. Marson not only celebrates the fact that her poems are reaching an expanded audience, she suggests that the sublime aspects of aerial transmission enhance the transformative potential of poetry for her imagined listeners.

"Spring in England" inserts the black subject into the Romantic tradition and into twentieth-century London through the implied speaker and natural imagery. The poem describes someone seeing an English spring for the first time, like Marson herself as a West Indian immigrant, though the speakers' identity is never specified. The opening stanza in both the print and broadcast versions describes trees budding in springtime in London parks:

Trees with trunks turned black

With London's soot and grime

Have robed themselves anew

In daintiest shades of green

That ever eye could see ;

And like little black children

In flimsy summer frocks

Dance on the green and laugh and shout. (1-8)

The rest of the poem lists attributes of English springtime that the poet observes (I believe we can assume all these features are in London as the poem opens in London and the speaker's apartment seems to be there). By describing spring within London, rather than in Wordsworth's Lake District, Marson's poem subverts and collapses the binary between the metropolis and the English countryside.[57] For the British Romantics, nature poetry often represents a retreat from the city, industrialization, and empire. The proverbial center of Empire, London was the entry point to England for West Indian and other immigrants. Marson's nature poems challenge the idea that Empire can be ignored, but she also harnesses Romantic ideas of nature's transformative power through rejuvenative images of leaves blooming over trunks stained by London soot. By comparing London's trees to black children dancing, Marson creolizes her portrayal of London even as West Indian immigrants like herself were increasingly populating London's streets. As in "Little Brown Girl," London is transformed, not only because her outsider perspective allows her to see and write about it differently, but through her and other immigrants' presence in the city.

When "Spring in England" was read on "Calling the West Indies" in May 1944 along with a segment of "Listeners' Requests" from West Indians at home and in Britain, the broadcast context called attention to the presence of black immigrants in England.[58] After the poetry selections, Marson read music requests from West Indians in the British military and recounted her conversation with the Guyanese "Aircraftwoman Lucille James . . . who came over to join the Waafs a month or two ago" ("Calling the West Indies" 2). Through Marson sharing her experience talking to West Indians in Britain, the listeners participate, albeit at a remove, in this immigrant community, a community defined in part by solidarity with Britain in the Allied war effort. Marson reinforced her physical location when introducing her poem: "Spring this year is more wonderful than ever in the rich beauty of her blossoms, and here is a tribute to 'Spring in England' – a tribute from me, read by Rita Vale" (2). Marson's introduction enhances the poem's autobiographical resonance: listeners would likely assume the rooms filled with flowers described in the poem are Marson's own. At the same time, the poem was read by English BBC reader Rita Vale, not Marson herself; the mediated poetic voice divorces the poem from a single subjectivity and universalizes further the account of natural beauty.[59] The presence of these two voices broadcast alternately also embodies the West Indian and British cosmopolitan collaboration that Marson envisions for future aesthetic production and social transformation.

"Spring in England" does not mention radio, but lines describing "gentle breezes that whisper . . . of Spring" recall the way radio transmission allows the air to carry voices speaking of the English spring from London to Jamaica (12-13). In Romantic poetry, Michael O'Neill writes, air, in its association with wind and breath, "[retains] a

capacity to house the sublime, the limitless, to hint . . . at traces of dispelled presence" (19). The voice or the sound of musical instruments are themselves traces of physical bodies, and Marson meditated on this compelling marriage of radio and cultural production in a "Calling the West Indies" talk on the "miracle of radio":

> As I sat by the fire in my flat late at night typing this, the room was filled with the sound of soft music. It soothed and stimulated my mind – I was reminded all the time of beautiful miracles. Unless a ~~V2~~ [bomb] exploded uncomfortably near to me then, I was not concerned with the ugly miracles such as those that make it [such evil things] possible. For that hour at least – and any hour in which my spirit is refreshed and delighted with beautiful things which seem to be snatched out of the air, I live in the presence of miracles, and am eternally grateful. (31/1.12/1.1944/1945 5, 2)

For Marson, writing in wartime like the British Romantics themselves, listeners actively participate in constructing beauty and goodness in their present moment and are not simply retreating from contemporary events. The twentieth-century poet can engage Wordsworth's proposition that, if scientific discovery leads to a "material revolution, direct or indirect, in our condition, and in the impressions which we habitually receive" the Poet may "[carry] sensation into the midst of the objects of the Science itself" ("Preface" 107). The poet brings feeling, sensibility, and appreciation of beauty during a time in which scientific technologies change the way people experience the world both for good and ill. It is the poet's task to help create such "beautiful miracles"—what Marson described in the preface to *Tropic Reveries* as an "answering song" in response to

nature's "cadences"—to counter the mechanized death Marson and Lambert describe in their Blitz poems (v).

Reading a selection of her work on "Calling West Africa" in July 1944, Marson is clearly no longer a provincial writer: her poetry is considered to be of interest to not only Jamaican but also African audiences. In earlier poems on the program, Marson described the London Blitz, suggesting that living in England during the war broadened her understanding of war, and, therefore, the need for peace. Marson introduced "Wishing," re-titled but essentially identical to *The Moth and the Star's* "To Be a Poet," as "a poem of wishing and dreaming – a very pleasant pastime in these disturbing days" ("Poetry Reading" 5). The poem shows that this pleasing occupation is not diversionary or escapist but the necessary function of poetry. Marson read:

> I would write a poem addressed to all men
> And grave it on houses with iron pen,
> For it would be the message sublime
> That Peace must reign in the world for all time;
> I would send it by wireless over the world
> That the banner of peace might be unfurled, (5)

In the shift from visual engraving to aural transmission, radio carries the sonic presence across geographic boundaries and allows the communication of language, voice, and a mediated self. The speaker of "Wishing"/"To Be a Poet" hopes to "stir the world's heart" to "beauty and love" as Marson had described her own heart being stirred by both the natural world and by listening to the radio. The poem, and the broadcast, ends: "But I'm just a fledgling too weak to alight, / God of the Poets, hasten my flight!" (5). It is not just

Marson who is ascending to poetic heights, her poems are taking to the airwaves. Like the trees of "Spring in England" that appear to dance, her poems of nature transcend a single location while also insisting on the importance of materiality. The poem that Marson describes in "To Be a Poet" is also forcefully recorded on the physical walls of houses.[60] This aerial transcendence through sound creates an interplay between global communication and local community that is also one between sound and vision: the poems predominantly describe nature's visual beauties but are told through poems described as aural songs. In "The Metropolis and Mental Life" (1903), Georg Simmel describes a city becoming "the seat of cosmopolitanism" by "transcending [the] visible expanse (qtd. in Brennan *Wars of Position* 213). While Simmel is describing cosmopolitanism within "a kind of law of colonial expansion," the language echoes Marson's association of the local with the visual and the cosmopolitan with the aural (Brenann 213).

For Marson, Romantic nature poetry continues to help people connect to beauty and to others in the "modern" age. Her radio broadcasts assert the power of poetry and technology to teach and delight the listener, whether in England, the West Indies, or West Africa. While Marson resisted imperialist versions of universalist cosmopolitanism, her vision of the poet was of a figure who, as Wordsworth writes, "binds together by passion and knowledge the vast empire of human society" ("Preface," 106-07). Marson called upon the cultural and political possibilities of the British Empire as sites in which cosmopolitan possibilities could be realized, necessitating a transformation and ultimate dismantling of existing imperial structures. Her investment in the romantic tradition is also a reminder of the formally diverse aesthetic expressions in which writers engaged

contemporary politics in the first half of the twentieth century. Romantic nature poetry need not be necessarily interpreted as a withdrawal from contemporary events; rather, Marson's radio programs reveal the cosmopolitan possibilities of romantic nature poetry to connect colonial and metropolitan listeners in shared projects of equality and beauty.

FAILURES OF COSMOPOLITANISM

If Marson's on-air persona celebrates the ability of radio programming to educate and bring together diverse peoples, her day-to-day experiences at the BBC reveal a more complicated story. As James Procter shows, while Marson's bosses at the BBC often "took her side" when racially-motivated critiques emerged from both within and outside the organization, institutional and individual racism at the BBC negatively affected Marson's emotional, psychological, financial, and creative well-being (23). From the very beginning of Marson's association with the BBC, doubt existed about the wisdom or even legality of hiring an employee of African descent: "In the weeks leading up to her interview, circulating internal memos began to ask 'whether there is any ban on the Corporation employing coloured staff'" (Procter 7).[61] The Director of the Overseas Service, R.A. Rendall, later wrote that he was "a little nervous about the production of plays with Negro actors. . . . Care must be taken to see that the interests of the White West Indians are not neglected" (qtd. in Snaith, "Little Brown Girl" 114, fn 55).

The BBC did receive complaints about Marson's programming, especially from the White planter-run West Indies Committee that she included "an undue proportion of coloured West Indians in our programmes'" and displayed her "colour prejudices"

(Procter 14, 61). Marson's disagreement with the Guyanese musician Rudolph Dunbar resulted in the British BBC employee Joan Gilbert to write to Grenfall Williams,

> since Una Marson joined the staff she seems to have got an exaggerated idea of her own position and her own authority, and cannot control herself, consequently at the slightest opposition she becomes extremely rude. Quite frankly, I wouldn't let anybody speak to me in the way Una does, and certainly not a coloured woman" (1 May 1941).

Procter argues that these types of repeated racist incidents in which Marson was challenged and second-guessed because she was a black Jamaican woman contributed to her eventual mental and emotional break-down in the mid-1940s. Through personnel records released by the BBC in 2006, Procter recreates the final months of Marson's time at the BBC. She began missing work, and friends worried that she was not caring for herself. Finally,

> on 15 January 1946, Doulton [the assistant to the Overseas Establishment officer], and Miss Thwaites, Marson's secretary (the BBC staff primarily responsible for overseeing Marson's care at this stage), persuaded [Marson] to sign for voluntary admission at London's Maudsley Hospital. Once installed, numerous attempts were made by the medical team to persuade Marson to undergo convulsive treatment, but all of them failed. Six weeks later, by 28 February, the doctor's opinion was that Marson would need to be certified: she could not be forced to undergo treatment as a voluntary patient. Following high-level discussions at the BBC, it was

> eventually decided that Doulton should sign the certification application. (20).

BBC staff members then organized Marson's return to the West Indies, something that she vehemently opposed, fearing, correctly, that this would mean the end of her broadcasting career. Doulton's account describes Marson refusing to pack, sabotaging the car that was to bring her to the boat, and finally bringing Marson to the ship in harbor by pilot boat and with "further difficulty in getting Miss Marson on board. . . . by means of a rope ladder" (qtd. in Procter 22).

In Jamaica and, for a short time, the U.S., Marson continued to write, participate in social organizations, and work in publishing, particularly with the Pioneer Press, but her broadcasting career was over. Marson's impact on the BBC's Overseas Service was considerable. She was instrumental in creating "Calling the West Indies," pioneered the broadcast of West Indian literature, and founded *Caribbean Voices,* which, as I discuss in chapter three, would become wildly influential in the next decade. Through these programs, she made long-lasting interventions in the development of West Indian literature and its relationship to radio in the mid-century. As the BBC's first non-white employee, Marson's history with the BBC introduces some of the major dynamics of colonial writers producing London-based literary radio programming. She received qualified institutional support but was also subject to sometimes subtle and sometimes overt racism. She shared with the BBC a commitment to cosmopolitanism that sometimes glossed over the inequalities of the institutional relationships but also created connections that challenged the inequalities of those very systems.

[23] "Transnational" is sometimes used to refer to Marson's experience as a Jamaican woman in Britain (Covi, Donnell, "Trans/national Dis/connections," Umoren) while elsewhere the term refers to Marson's connections with people and literatures from outside of Britain and Jamaica (Donnell, "Una Marson: Feminism, Anti-colonialism and a Forgotten Fight for Freedom" and Winkiel).

[24] See Dirk Baltzly and Nick Eliopoulos, "The Classical Ideals of Friendship."

[25] See Neil Verma's discussion of "intimate style." Marson's radio talks are a different genre than the dramas Verma analyzes, and produced for different audiences, but she also uses techniques that encourage the listener to identify with her broadcast persona.

[26] W.H. Worrell wrote in a radio journal in the 1920s, that radio was "apparently supernatural . . . affording a change from the regularity of nature and of average human experience" (qtd. in Cohen et. al 4). Also see passages in Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* (1928) on modern technology and magic: "how it's done, I can't even begin to wonder. So my belief in magic returns" (qtd. in Beer 154).

[27] Despite this initial link between *The Cosmopolitan* and the Stenographer's Association, the Stenographer's association folded by 1929, whereas the journal continued until 1931.

[28] Marson did not often emphasize her Irish descent through her great-grandfather.

[29] Webb also briefly mentions wireless in his essay, "Cables and wireless are reducing the earth's size still more. We can send a message round the world more quickly than a tramcar will take us from King Street to Constant Spring. We can sit in a drawing room, turn two little wheels and hear Big Ben strike the hour" (165).

[30] Again two months later, she asks, "Do the women of Jamaica to-day form a strong body with a voice that can be distinctly heard from the platforms where service, progress, improvement and advancement are being preached?" and calls for "A big rally of women workers" ("Jamaica's Victory" [June 1929]).

[31] According to Hart, artisan unions first formed in Jamaica in 1898, and printer and cigar maker unions were added in 1907, but these unions disappeared before WWI. In 1916, another cigar maker's union formed, and after WWI the waterfront workers, railway workers, and hotel workers unionized. These unions all disappeared in the 1920s (Hart 16).

[32] Also see Honor Ford-Smith on the attitudes of male nationalist leaders towards women and feminists (22, 33) and Helen Scott on ways "national liberation is not infrequently positioned in opposition to women's liberation" in the Caribbean (9).

[33] I define "nature poems" as any of Marson's poems in which nature is a major theme, not exclusively those included in her "Poems of Nature" sections. The romanticism of her "rustic" figures also deserves further attention.

[34] Alison Donnell argues, using Marson's parody poems as examples, that Marson's imitation and use of conventional British poetic forms was sometimes undertaken with subversive effect ("Sentimental Subversions" 115; c.f. Emery 113). Donnell's counter point that resistance should not be seen as "the only interesting or worthwhile articulation of a woman or (post)colonial poet" is equally valid for the nature poems which show evidence of sincerely valuing the romantic poets and their legacy (124).

[35] Donnell briefly discusses Marson's "Edenic vision" of Jamaica but her primary interest in Marson's early work is her interaction with "patriarchal versions of female subjectivity" in the love poems (*Twentieth-century Caribbean Literature* 56, 157). Denise deCaires Narain calls attention to many otherwise ignored poems (including "To Be a Poet," "Invocation," and "Spring in England"), but her mapping of the influence of Marson's "many 'masters', and cultural centres" does not focus on her use of nature (29).

[36] Philip Sherlock also remarks, "how simple her utterance" in his introduction to *The Moth and the Star* (x). William Morrison and Sherlock were both prominent white Jamaicans. Early reviews of *Lyrical Ballads* both praised and criticized the poem's simplicity, but the Victorians largely appreciated this aspect of Romantic poetry (Gamer and Porter 24, 151-2, 407).

[37] The quote is from Longfellow's "The Day is Done": "Read from some humbler poet, / Whose songs gushed from his heart" (ll. 25-26).

[38] Also see Erica Smilowitz, 'Weary of Life and All My Heart's Dull Pain.'

[39] Only about half of the poems in *The Moth and the Star* use formal rhyme schemes as compared to almost all of her previous poems. Marson uses short lines, employs frequent repetition of words and lines, imitates the blues form, and experimentally arranges poems on the page for visual effect. Much of this experimentation seems indebted to her reading of Harlem Renaissance poets.

[40] See Fredric Jameson, *Singular Modernity,* Paul Gilroy, *Black Atlantic*, Jed Esty, *Unseasonable Youth*.

[41] For other ambivalent West Indian responses to Wordsworth's daffodils see Derek Walcott's "The Muse of History," and Vicki Bertram's *Kicking Daffodils*, particularly her discussion of Grace Nichols' "Spring" (1-2).

[42] See Donnell, Delia Jarrett-Macauley, Marc Matera, Imaobong Umoren.

[43] A version of "Home Thoughts" is published in *Toward the Stars* (1945) as "Home Thoughts in June." While the new title seems to emphasize the poem as a nature poem by bringing the subject, "June," to the fore, in the 1945 version the speaker's experience of exile is foregrounded because the first two full stanzas that describe the Poinciana trees are deleted.

[44] The poem is often briefly cited to indicate an autobiographical statement of Marson's experience (Sandhu 138, Ford-Smith 25). As Donnell notes about readings of Marson's work more generally, "the blurring of poet and poetic persona in analysis of Marson's poetry leads to spurious and simplistic readings and seems to license scant attention to the specific formal and linguistic dynamics of the poetry itself" ("Contradictory (W)omens?" 46).

[45] The speaker says that he/she is one of many who go to Jamaica as tourists to tan "So we may look healthy" (17).

[46] See Lloyd W. Brown for a more general comparison between Marson and McKay through their experience of "exile": "in so far as exile to a predominantly white society sharpens her ethnic perception. In this regard their experiences anticipate a major aspect of West Indian literature in general, especially since the Second World War: exile from the West Indies inspires and heightens racial perception and cultural consciousness; from the distance of cold, bleak England the memories of the West Indies intensify feelings of (black) racial solidarity and a West Indian consciousness" (34).

[47] This homesickness and subsequent description of Jamaica creates an idealized description of class difference. Marson's differing presentations of Jamaica in such "homesick" poems and poems celebrating the common folk (in the Wordsworthian tradition) often contain idealizations and caricatures of the peasant class. See "Going to Market" (*Moth and the Star*) and "The Singing Pilgrim" (*Tropic Reveries*).

[48] Lloyd W. Brown notes this ironic reversal of the racial gaze and stereotypes in "The Stranger" as well as several other of Marson's poems, including the way the West Indian in "Little Brown Girl" perceives all white Britons as "the same" (35). Also see deCaires Narain for a brief reading of the ways the "I" of "The Stranger" "manipulat[es] the expectations of the 'friend' about her 'strangeness'" (22).

[49] The final recommendations blame West Indians' character for the economic situation: "This leads us to one final point of vital importance . . . One of the strongest and most discouraging impressions carried away by the investigator in the West Indies is that of a prevailing absence of a spirit of independence and self help, the lack of a tradition of craftsmanship and pride and good work, and a tendency on all matters to appeal to government for assistance with little or no attempt to explore what can be done by individual self help . . . the material betterment of the West Indies must be accompanied,

and is to a large extent conditional, on a moral resurgence among the peoples themselves" (qtd. in Holt 390).

[50] As James Procter notes, when Marson joined the BBC as one of their first non-white employees, there were approximately total 5000 staff members at the BBC (2).

[51] Rush points out that Marson and the Guyanese musician Rudolph Dunbar, working with the MOI, were responsible for launching the BBC's West Indian programming (175). Although Dunbar and Marson might be seen as exploiting British security interest in the region for cultural ends, as Rush demonstrates, the radio programming did not function independently of governmental goals.

[52] The script shows that an earlier draft described "the poor and neglected parts of the Colonial Empire" which highlights Britain's exploitation of the West Indies, but in the broadcast version this phrase was crossed out and replaced with "you."

[53] Anna Snaith writes, "those radio waves which had been a vehicle for the dissemination of imperial ideology and British patriotism became in her hands conveyors of Caribbean cultural nationalism" ("Little Brown Girl" 109).

[54] Marson compered her last "West Indian Party" in May 1945 before her trip back to the West Indies in the summer of 1945. (1/2 May 1945).

[55] The launch-date of *Caribbean Voices* remains unclear: Marson references "our 'Caribbean Voices' programme, which we hope to start soon again" in a "West Indian Party" on 16/17 January 1945, which necessitates a start date in 1944 or earlier (4). It seems possible that the 1944 "Listeners' Requests" which also ask for contributions were early prototypes of *Caribbean Voices*. See Procter, who dates the first episode of *Caribbean Voices* to 1 October 1944 (24).

[56] For the changing usage of "West Indian" from indigenous inhabitants of the Caribbean islands to white British settlers, to Afro-Caribbean West Indians, see Catherine Hall, "What is a West Indian?"

[57] This is not a complete binary in Romantic poetry. In Wordsworth, for example, see "Composed Upon Westminster Bridge," "St. Pauls," and Book VII of *The Prelude*, for poems set in London that merge the natural and built worlds, but the contrast between the pastoral and the urban hardened in Victorian readings of the Romantics.

[58] The broadcast version omits two stanzas, probably due to time constraints, including one devoted to Wordsworth's "I wandered lonely as a cloud." The broadcast poem is more tightly focused on "Spring's delights" rather than the poet.

[59] Rita Vale was not identified as English on air, but West Indian audiences were attuned to differences of accent, so it seems likely that listeners would have recognized readers' ethnicities (Griffith, "This is London calling the West Indies" 204-05).

[60] The phrase "iron pen" could be a biblical reference (Job 19:24; Jeremiah 17:1); Frances Burney's protagonist in the popular *Camilla* (1796) writes forcefully with an iron pen but produces no text in a passage that is suggestive for Marson as a female writer (Epstein 124), but I have not found evidence of Marson's familiarity with the novel; Longfellow's, "The Iron Pen" is addressed to a pen constructed with iron from the Swiss Protestant martyr Bonnivard's shackles, which could inject some Romantic revolutionary subtext into the poem.

[61] James Procter writes that "The memo goes on to note, 'it has been suggested to us that the Ministry of Information … made it known to a candidate for employment that he could not be engaged because it was the Ministry's policy not to take on coloured staff'. It closes by registering both the novelty and delicacy of the situation: '[w]e should perhaps not quote this information [whether or not 'coloured' staff are permitted], but it evidently shows the question is one which requires consideration.'" (7)

Chapter 2: "Making Friends": Relationships and Geopolitics in the BBC's Eastern Services

In 1942, the Indian novelist Mulk Raj Anand produced a BBC radio series for broadcast to colonial India entitled "Meet My Friend," stating that he hoped "to present to India some of my English friends, so that Englishmen . . . appear as human beings" ("Meet My Friend – No. 1" 1) Two years after the independence of India and Pakistan, the writer Attia Hosain recorded a talk for the BBC's Eastern Services about "one of the friends she has made" in England ("Making Friends" 1). Anand and Hosain both wrote and broadcast extensively for the Eastern Service: Anand worked in the Indian Section during World War II (1942-45), and Hosain broadcast on the Indian, Pakistani, and Sinhalese Services from 1948 through the mid-1960s.[62] Their programs frequently describe and model friendships between English and South Asian individuals to illustrate bonds between members of the empire and Commonwealth, so it may be surprising that at different points both Anand and Hosain strongly disagreed with the BBC's advancement of British government policy. In March 1941, Anand declined the BBC's initial job offer. He explained in a letter to the Indian Section's Editor "how difficult it is for me to associate myself with the work of the Indian broadcasting section in any way" because of the British Government's policies on India (Letter to Darling [22 March 1941]). Over two decades later, Hosain left her position as a regular BBC freelancer in

1965, apparently in response to the BBC's changes to the Indian and Pakistani Services during the Indo-Pakistani war. When the BBC began airing Urdu broadcasts only to Pakistan this cultural division along geopolitical lines created an "untenable position" for Hosain (Habibullah 14). Additionally, some Pakistani officials accused her of "talking against Pakistan" and not maintaining the impartiality desired of BBC contributors (Hosain, "Interview").

As Una Marson's broadcasting career demonstrates, colonial BBC employees in the 1940s experienced racism and the contradictions of working within an institution that provided significant access to audiences but was also committed to shoring up Empire. The tensions of such conflicting goals were intensified for South Asian writers associated with the BBC's Eastern Service because of the struggle between the British Government and the Indian Independence Movement, India's strategic value to Britain during World War II, and India and Pakistan's role in the British Commonwealth.[63] Friendship rhetoric, which had a long-established history in British colonial governance in India, was used to gloss over these contradictions and tensions in attempts to reach an elite English speaking South Asian audience.[64]

South Asian writers at the BBC were not simply mouthpieces for the imperial and neoimperial state, however. Reading Anand's and Hosain's broadcasts alongside their fiction and non-fiction published during or close to their time at the BBC reveals a striking continuity between their "friendship broadcasts," BBC personas, and the views expressed in their literature. For Anand, a focus on friendship was consistent with his humanist ideals of global change through interpersonal relationships and cultural exchange. Hosain was attracted to the idea of a cosmopolitan Britain after Partition

divided geographical territory and communities in South Asia. Anand's and Hosain's broadcasts are also marked by ironic contrasts with their other published writing, and their broadcasts have the potential to disrupt the image BBC policy makers describe of cross-cultural individual or national friendship. Anand's programs celebrated friendship between English and Indian people against the common foe of fascism, while he regularly wrote that the British Government of India implemented these very fascist policies. For Hosain, references to the immigrant's experience of loneliness and racism, as well as her dissent from neo-colonial British policy in South Asia, call into question the BBC's use of a friendship discourse to characterize the relationship between Britain and the former colonies India and Pakistan at the beginning of the Commonwealth era.

Although the Eastern Services' producers were well aware that their overall project was propagandistic, they also described their project as a humanistic one. The director of the Indian Section, the North Indian Z.A. Bokhari, who came to the BBC from All India Radio, described radio's political and interpersonal aims:

> A far flung empire needs every bond, not only of sympathy, but also of knowledge, to secure its cohesion . . . into this gap can be flung two exceedingly positive factors—films and radio programmes. By means of these two mediums, it is possible to build real lines of communication in thought and understanding, and the process should be reciprocal—England to India, India to England. (qtd. in Thiranagama 42)

These assertions of media's ability to foster "real lines of communication" even when operating within imperial structures focus on the desire to create "*reciprocal*" communication between peoples and nations. This emphasis on reciprocity is later

emphasized on conversation programs in which Anand and Hosain each share and learn from their British interlocutors. But radio, especially colonial radio, had long struggled to create or feign two-way communication when the unidirectional wireless signals originated in metropolitan London. Programs attempting to show authentic communication and personal connection were also carefully crafted and, during the Second World War, thoroughly pre-written and censored.

The BBC focused primarily on maintaining friendly relations between South Asian countries and Britain but also portrayed British influence as key to controlling hostility between communal interests in South Asia. Before India and Pakistan's independence, the BBC was invested in the narrative that the British colonial government was necessary to prevent communal conflict between Hindus and Muslims (see Thiranagama 49). After Partition, the BBC re-configured their institutional structure to broadcast to the separate, newly independent, states of Pakistan and India but the archives reveal ongoing attempts to resist reinforcing "parochial" communal divisions both within the institution and in the content, language, and transmission of the broadcasts. BBC employees imagined the institution itself as a cosmopolitan space transcending communal divides. I argue that Hosain was in part attracted to broadcasting for the Eastern Services as a way to refuse to accept a divided India based on communal difference. Radio, which had since its inception promised possibilities of reconciliation and communication because of its ability to transcend national borders, allowed Hosain to temporarily envision and speak to an undivided India that no longer existed.

ANAND, THE INDIAN LEFT, AND INDIAN NATIONALISM IN THE GLOBAL ARENA

George Orwell, as Indian Section Talks Producer, described one of Anand's series, "New Weapons of War," as "a bit of anti-Fascist propaganda" (Letter to Anand [27 February 1942]). In each broadcast, Anand gave the history and "exact meanings" of specific words used in war reporting ("Fifth Column" 1). The program demonstrates the ways propaganda of the Eastern Service in 1942 was more explicit and urgent than Marson's morale programming on "Calling the West Indies" in the same period. At the same time the writer was imagined as uniquely able to promote, with the BBC, Britain's commitment to free speech versus fascist suppression of dissent. In his introduction to the series, Anand emphasizes that he was approaching these topics both because of his opposition to fascism and because "As a writer, I am interested in the correct use of words. ("Fifth Column" 1).[65] In the first program, for instance, Anand argues that the choice of "allies" over "fifth column" to describe individuals in fascist countries matters because using the correct word ("ally") demonstrates "our bias in favour of reason, humanity and progress as against treachery and betrayal. This may sound self-righteous. But if we have the integrity to believe in our way of life, provided we are also couscious (sic) of our short-comings and limitations, then we have to take sides in all sincerity" ("Fifth Column" 4). As a writer and leftist nationalist, Anand was aware that the language of progress can hide self-interested or imperial motives, but he insists that the anti-fascist struggle is a case in which one must defend the "correct" language and ideology. His reference to taking "sides" also recalls well-known debates between writers in the 1930s about neutrality or political commitment in respect to the civil war, particularly the

pamphlet *Authors Take Sides on the Spanish Civil War* to which Anand contributed a statement in support of the Spanish Republican government (see below, note 79).

How did a writer who was jailed in India for participating in the 1921 Civil Disobedience Campaign and whose books were banned by the British Indian government because of their anti-colonial nationalism come to promote policies by a British government that continued to rule India by military force?[66] Anand represents international experience in the twentieth century as a place of radicalization and effective national struggle even as imperial structures dominated global movement and the exchange of ideas. Anand's participation in the cosmopolitan community of Bloomsbury modernists in London and the international origins of the All-India Progressive Writer's Association have been examined in critical treatments of his work, but his affiliation with the BBC in the early 1940s has received less attention, perhaps because this work has been largely considered to be straightforward propaganda.[67] When Anand joined the Indian Section, his broadcasts repeatedly appealed to ideals of friendship between Indians and the English and presented British policy and individuals in ways intended to facilitate understanding. Literary programs implied that the educated Indian audience shared British cultural values, explicitly political programs argued that it was in India's best interest to be friendly with Britain, and other series portrayed individual friendships between Indians and English subjects. While Anand sometimes bristled at British liberals who did not share his urgency about Indian independence, he also shared their belief in the power of transnational personal connection to effect political change.

Although the All-India Progressive Writer's Association, or PWA, was based in India and sought to develop progressive literature for a mass Indian audience, at its

founding in London in 1935, Anand and the Communist intellectual Sajjad Zaheer were inspired by international literary organizations of the 1930s such as PEN and the International Association of Writers for the Defence of Culture Congress.[68] Although the PWA's critics portrayed it as a front for the Communist Party, its writers came from a variety of political positions and represented a diversity of views (Gopal 17). They organized around a shared commitment to national independence and opposition to "reactionary" attitudes in Indian society "on questions like family, religion, sex, war and society" ("Amended Manifesto [1938]" 20). For communists like Zaheer, such allegiances reflect the strategy of the Popular Front to ally with different parties who shared common goals. Anand was never a member of the Communist Party, but his commitment to international organizations such as PEN, his relationships with a politically diverse array of British intellectuals, and his tenure with the BBC reflect an analogous openness to connections across party and ideological lines.[69]

Along with Raja Rao, G.V. Desani, and Aubrey Menen, Anand is considered a founder of the modern Indian novel in English. As Leela Gandhi argues, Indian fiction in English "of the 1930s and '40s is dominated by the voice of Mulk Raj Anand" (175). Anand came to England in 1925 as a 20-year-old student working towards a PhD in English philosophy at University College London. As Anand began to establish himself as a writer and critic, his personal relationships with Bloomsbury writers shaped his literature and provided publishing opportunities. He worked with Eliot at the *Criterion* and with the Woolfs at the Hogarth Press, and knew a large number of other prominent British writers and literary personalities.[70] E. M. Forster wrote the preface to his first novel, *Untouchable* (1935), and helped him place it with Wishart after it had been

rejected by nineteen other publishers. Over time, however, Anand found many British modernists insufficiently knowledgeable about India or committed to Indian independence, or, indeed, class politics in Britain.[71]

In his efforts to find the appropriate aesthetic expression for his nationalist and socially progressive politics, Anand engaged in what many 1930s writers saw as the withdrawal from politics of the high modernists and the desire to make writing a "mode of action" (Hynes 13).[72] Even in the case of *Untouchable*, which Anand said was inspired by reading Joyce, he recounts a conversation with Gandhi in which Gandhi advised him to "cut down . . . those passages in which Bakha seemed to be thinking and dreaming and brooding like a Bloomsbury intellectual" and to "[delete] . . . those clever tricks which had made the experience of the concrete into a deliberate effort at style" (Anand, "On the Genesis" 95). Throughout the 1930s, Anand sought to develop what he termed a "poetic realism" that was materially grounded in a specific place and history. This form would, Anand argued, allow for "the introduction into creative narrative of whole new peoples who have seldom entered the realms of literature in India. And the whole becomes an attempt at poetry even though the result is a somewhat ragged rhythm. . . . the flight of winged facts" (*Apology* 79*).* This conception of "winged facts" differentiates Anand's poetic realism from socialist realism in that it seeks to prioritize realistically portraying lived experience while also using modernist techniques to present individual subjectivity and the fragmented nature of modern experience (c.f. Spender's new realism).

Recent readings of modernism have argued that this opposition between modernist aesthetics and political content is not necessarily as self-evident as it appeared to some 1930s writers or to later critics and writers who institutionalized and canonized

"modernism." Indeed, Jessica Berman, in *Modernist Commitments*, uses Anand as a central example in her project to "challenge the distinction usually drawn between politically engaged writing and self-consciously aesthetic or experimental modernism" (9). At the same time, even in Anand's "realist" fiction, a focus on humanistic interpersonal connections is sometimes seen as incompatible with a political project.[73] Although these debates often center on *Untouchable*, in which Anand's interaction with Bloomsbury modernism is most clear textually and in its publishing history, a similar dynamic is at play in critical readings of *Across the Black Waters*, which some scholars find impossible to read both as a horrors-of-war novel and a statement on British imperialism.

Humanism and Imperialist Wars

Across the Black Waters describes the development of revolutionary politics through international experience even when organized through imperial structures, specifically the British army. *Across the Black Waters* is the second novel of a trilogy that begins with *The Village* (1939) and ends with *The Sword and the Sickle* (1942). The Village trilogy is a tripartite bildungsroman that narrates the political awakening of the Indian peasant Lal Singh (Lalu) who leaves the small Punjab village of Nandpur to fight in the 69th Indian Regiment in World War I and returns to become a leader in the north Indian peasant uprisings of the early 1920s. As an adolescent, Lalu rebels against cultural and religious traditions and exploitative village structures.[74] He joins the army, where he experiences racism and injustice that undermine his former desire to emulate the British "sahibs." In *Across the Black Waters*, Lalu's regiment is shipped to France to fight in

World War I. When Lalu returns to India in *The Sword and the Sickle,* he receives no land and no pay for his military service because he was taken as a prisoner of war; at this point his conversion to the nationalist cause is complete.

Across the Black Waters has not received the critical attention of Anand's earlier *Untouchable* or *Coolie*, but it is noted for its "cross-cultural" content and because it is the first Indian novel of WWI (Figuera 41, Leela Gandhi 177).[75] Anand's novel shares many characteristics with classic European World War I novels in its portrayal of trench warfare, meaningless violence, and its critiques of the older generation who extols the glory of war. One by one, each of Lalu's closest friends are killed, and the novel ends with Lalu himself wounded and captured by the Germans. British Great War novels proliferated in the 1930s, Valentine Cunningham argues, as veterans became ready to tell their accounts and as the younger generation who "missed" the war matured (40-49). *Across the Black Waters* differs from these novels, however, because while its protagonist and his fellow soldiers fight for England's war "they could not stare at one of the myriad faces of their French and English comrades with the impunity of human beings" (227). The British leaders publicly celebrate the Indian soldier's loyalty but instead of granting the sepoys respect and equality, the British army leaders exploit racial stereotypes and play upon the Germans' fear of Indians "savagery" (159).[76] As Graham Parry argues, the narrative of the sepoys "suggests . . . that the whole venture is an outright exploitation of the Indian people" (33). Paradoxically, its anti-imperialism results in a more optimistic novel: Lalu is on a trajectory towards action and resistance rather than helplessly observing the horrors of modern warfare and the collapse of Western civilization.[77]

Anand's narrative of anticolonial organizing before and after the First World War speaks to the intensifying of the Indian nationalist cause during the second. The Village Trilogy argues that Britain's imperial wars increase anticolonial resistance by making colonial exploitation and racism more obvious, exposing soldiers to new ideas and experiences, and weakening the imperial state financially and politically. The novel asks its European audience, just entering into another global conflict, to consider these lessons of the First World War. The endnote to *Across the Black Waters* states that the novel was written during the Spanish Civil War and revised during the months in which Britain declared war on Germany and "asked" India to join the war. The endnote reinforces the relationship between Anand's Great War narrative and the events of the Spanish Civil War and World War II.[78]

> This book was sketched out in a
> rough draft in Barcelona—Madrid
> during January and April, 1937, and
> entirely rewritten in Chinnor, Oxon,
> between July and December, 1939.

Anand does not equate the Spanish Civil War with World War I: the novel portrays World War I as an imperialist war and Anand supported the anti-fascist cause in Spain.[79] Rather, the novel suggests a shared fight against fascism—Franco in Spain and the British Raj in India. With many anti-imperialists of the 1930s, Anand strongly asserted that imperialism was simply a form of fascism: "it was British Imperialism which perfected the method of the concentration camp, torture and bombing for police purposes

which Hitler and Mussolini and the Japanese militarists have used so effectively later on" (Anand, “On the Progressive Writers Movement” 17).

The novel describes the radicalizing potential of transnational experience—not only for elite subjects such as Anand himself—but also for the peasant.[80] Though members of the French working class first seem to Lalu to “be coolies only during their work hours, and then sahibs in their own right,” he soon realizes entrenched class divisions within French society challenge the idea of European modernity as a place of improved social equality (37). He is surprised that the French peasants were not “free” after the French Revolution and his friend Kirpu describes a common bond between peasants around the world: “The people who give you small holdings take them back . . . It is the same in the Kangra district as in Franceville and in China . . .” (83). In *Letters on India*, Anand writes that “The war of 1914-18 was really a great turning-point in the life of the Indian peasant . . . The mental horizon of the troops expanded greatly through participation in the war in far-off countries. The suffering they endured made them more politically conscious than they had ever been before” (59).

Lalu’s growing awareness of racism and class difference is part of a larger anti-colonial critique centered on the irony of Indian soldiers fighting to protect liberty in Europe when liberty did not exist in India. The novel includes a representation of the historical visit of the former Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army, General Fredrick Roberts in November 1914. In the novel, the sepoys can neither hear nor see him clearly:

> [the General] stood to make a speech in the broken Sahibs’ Hindustani, of which Lalu could hear meaningless snatches:

> '. . . so many campaigns . . . feared that the strange surroundings . . . duty to fight . . . duty as soldiers . . . your commanding officer . . . filled me with emotion . . . suffering much, but . . . loyalty to your Empire and King . . . from your homes . . . shattered villages around us . . . Law, liberty be destroyed in Europe . . . in India . . . oong . . . Do not think that . . . enemy . . . defeated . . . Empire and Allies . Let every man do his utmost duty until the enemy is defeated . . . your duty . . . Empire . . . the glory of your deed . . . India, etc.' (262-63, ellipses in original)

The General is their commanding officer but Roberts, the historical figure he is based on, was also the man who led the British army against Indian uprisings and used the Indian army to fight Britain's imperial battles in South Asia and Asia. The sepoys confusion about the goals, purposes, and events of war goes beyond that of the common soldier in European World War I novels not only because of the General's faulty Hindustani but because the relationship between Britain and India as nations and between individual soldiers is deliberately undefined and even absurd. The speech's conclusion, "India, etc," highlights the incompleteness of the General's statement on India, and neither the sepoys nor the reader can decipher a single full sentence in the speech. The passage highlights the irony that the sepoys are fighting for European freedom when "Law and liberty" has already been destroyed in India under colonialism. It also reduces the General, a representative of British military control of India, to an incomprehensible and ineffective old man.[81]

Critics disagree whether Anand uses the novel to make a political statement about Britain's ongoing colonial rule in India. Even Cowasjee, who argues that the trilogy as a

whole is about anti-colonial organization and action, sees *Across the Black Waters* as disconnected from the other two novels and concludes that "[o]ne could reasonably argue that Lalu's war experiences have no strong bearing on his career as a revolutionary in *The Sword and the Sickle*" (*So Many Freedoms* 112). Parry, though noting the novel's publication "by a man hostile to the British occupation of India. . . . at a low point for English morale," argues that the novel emphasizes a humanist response to the suffering of war *rather than* "an incitement to Indians and anti-imperialists" (32, 33). Similarly, Jagdish Shivpuri reads the novel as a statement on "the unity of all mankind" (127). Such readings see the humanist project of inter-cultural connection and the representation of the individual sepoy's suffering as separate from or even incompatible with a political anti-imperial project.

In my reading, *Across the Black Waters* does not support a dichotomy between universal humanism and a historically specific message of political engagement. Rather, the novel frames a specific call for action to a specific audience through humanist attention to the soldiers' individual experience and interpersonal relationships. As Bleumel argues, "Anand wants our participation in this protracted misery to lead to real social and geopolitical change; 'our,' in this case, being the British and Indian novel-reading public who might be motivated to press for Indian independence" ("Casualty" 308).

Humanism and politics were not incompatible projects for Anand, or for many 1930s and 40s writers. In *Apology for Heroism* (1946), Anand claims that the writer,

> will stand as an interpreter of one human soul to another, and by his peculiar talent for revealing the unity in diversity of human nature, create

> real bonds of sympathy between nation and nation, one people and another, and in fact between every genuine layer of life seeking to understand another. (86-87)

Anand argues that interpersonal understanding is a model and foundation to international relationships.

In *Letters on India* (1942), Anand presents a materialist account of continuing British exploitation of India from the sixteenth to the twentieth century and connects the histories of peasants and workers to the histories of nations. The book is presented as an exchange of letters between Anand and a British union leader, Tom Brown, which further demonstrates his faith in making individual connections and conversations public in order to teach others.[82] The letters' informal tone portrays a comradely relationship between Anand and Brown even though the men were not personal friends. Anand presents their relationship as reciprocal: Anand urges Brown "and the other ordinary men" to join in support for India's national independence, and Brown's letters assert that the British workers not only need to learn about Indian situation in order to help Indians but also because India's anti-imperialist struggle can teach British workers "many necessary lessons" (158, 92).

While consistently attacking fascism, in *Letters*, Anand equates Britain, Japan, and Germany by naming them all as empires preventing or threatening Indian freedom:

> We do not want to be part of any Empire, British, Japanese or German. We do not desire an international share-out of colonies, as we do not want to be shared out ourselves. We want to be free to develop democracy and

> freedom in order to relieve the grinding poverty of our peoples and to increase their wellbeing. (157)

Anand's letters seek to create solidarity between British workers and Indian subjects by showing how the "British ruling class" and the Indian elite exploited British workers and Indian subjects throughout the parallel developments of capitalism and imperialism. Anand presents a Marxist understanding of global revolution arguing that the future of the English working class is linked to those of the peasant and worker in India and that the struggle for class equality must necessarily also be an anti-imperialist struggle.

The text reveals the complexities of Anand's position as an anti-colonial writer working within metropolitan literary institutions in which publishers and prominent British intellectuals are responsible for both disseminating and framing Anand's message. The publisher, the Labour Book Service, asked Leonard Woolf, a supporter of Indian independence, to introduce the text. Woolf argues that Anand's book represents "the extreme Congress case. . . . and, as with all one-sided cases, there is a lot of nonsense in it" (vii). This "one-sided" account is, Woolf claims "not fair to the British" in general or to the Cripps mission in particular (x). Woolf's fundamental difference with Anand is found in Woolf's belief that nationalism of any sort is dangerous and that in India, it leads to dealing incorrectly with the "problem of the Muslim minority" (ix). In using the introduction as a space to warn readers against the dangerous "nonsense" in the text, Woolf makes what Anna Snaith argues is a "gesture . . . of cultural imperialism: Woolf the rationalist acting to correct the bias of colonial extremism. The text cannot be self-sufficient . . ." ("The Hogarth Press" 116). Woolf writes, "Dear Anand . . . The object of this introduction is to explain why people who disagree with a good deal of what you say

in your book nevertheless consider that it should be published." (vii). Woolf asserts the liberal tolerance of the institution of British publishing while critiquing Anand's arguments. Anand's defense is published immediately following Woolf's introduction.[83]

While Woolf's introduction attempts to control the audiences' reception of Anand's text, *Letters on India* itself is an unevenly weighted dialogue. Short excerpts from Brown's letters appear at the beginning of each of Anand's well-structured and organized chapters.[84] Brown's questions asking Anand to clarify the messages that the English workers are receiving about imperialism simply set up Anand's ideas rather than presenting independent opinions or new material. Anand responds to questions that he assumes Brown might ask as he develops his argument: "'And what now?' you might ask me" (14) "You may well ask . . ." (152). Anand's approach to explaining a materialist history of India through letters to Tom Brown accords with his desire to establish international solidarity, but *Letters on India* ventriloquizes the British working class.

Even with the failures of reciprocity embedded in *Letters on India*, the text reiterates Anand's investment in conversation and communication and suggests that Anand would find himself drawn to the possibilities of radio as a means to connect with diverse listeners. At the same time, his public critiques of the British government put him in direct opposition to the BBC's aims in India.

The Indian Section's Propaganda Campaign

The Indian Section's news, literary, and cultural programing was designed to encourage the educated Indian elite—whom Orwell later termed a "small and hostile audience"—to side with the British cause during the war (*Collected Essays* v. 2 329). The

Hindustani Service began airing on 11 May 1940 and, as the Indian Section, expanded during the early 1940s at a point in the war in which the Allied outcome was quite unclear, and there was a real fear that Britain might lose to Germany.[85] Not only was the Indian Section formed with specific policy goals in regards to Britain's war effort and to maintain British control of India, its initial leadership showed the section's close relationship with both the British government and the Government of India. Malcolm, the first Section Editor, was the former Vice-Chancellor of the University of the Punjab and a civil servant in India; the Viceroy of India recommended him for the BBC position. Rushbrook Williams, the chairman of the Eastern Service Committee, who was responsible "for ensuring that the output in all sections of Eastern Services accords appropriately with Government policy" moved to the BBC from the Ministry of Information (Briggs 504-06; also see Gillespie et al. 9).

The Indian Section's primary goal was to counter Subhas Chandra Bose's broadcasts from Berlin. Bose, a militant Indian nationalist and former member of the Indian National Congress, encouraged Indians to continue to fight imperialism and to refuse to support the Allied cause.[86] Bose's anti-British broadcasts were perceived to be much more effective than either the BBC's current programming or the India-based All India Radio (AIR) (Briggs 509).

Notwithstanding some public denials that the Overseas Service would ever participate in something as underhanded as propaganda, it is clear that the BBC was developing a propaganda strategy that hinged on presenting an objective account of news and cultural programming that contrasted British way of life and culture with the fascist

one.[87] In an internal report titled "A Plan and Basis for Propaganda," European Service news editor, Noel Newsome outlines how the arts fit into a general propaganda plan:

> Against the timid and placid acceptance of a ready made and apparently attainable state of self-satisfaction, which in reality contains only the promise of speedy decay and misery, we can offer a perpetual progress and striving towards improvement, which, however incomplete and unsatisfactory its successive stages and achievements may seem, at least achieves something and promises something better round the corner. In getting this across, poetry, music and literature, which are never static and self-satisfied but always creating new forms and pressing forward, have a part to play (cf. the sterility of National Socialist art). ("Overseas General Propaganda Research" 10)

As Anand's broadcast, "Propaganda," indicates, Indian Section writers and producers openly labeled their work as propagandistic; while they may have felt some discomfort with the implications of this, the word propaganda did not necessarily mean manipulation or false information (Weigold 1-2). Rather, Anand argues that is possible to evaluate the "truth of [an individual's] propaganda" ("Propaganda" 2). Orwell famously incorporated his work at the BBC into *Nineteen Eighty-Four* by modeling the novel's Ministry of Truth on the Ministry of Information, which supervised BBC broadcasts, but he hoped that his presence at the BBC helped keep the broadcasts more honest than they might have otherwise been (Kerr, "In the Picture" 47). In a personal letter to the anarchist George Woodcock in December 1942, Orwell wrote that "working inside an institution like the BBC, one can perhaps deodorize it to some small extent . . . I have kept [. . .]

propaganda slightly less disgusting than it otherwise might have been. [. . .] I have kept our little corner of it fairly clean" (*Complete Works* XI: 214).

In the past decade, South Asian and modernist critics have begun to look more closely at the BBC's Indian Section in relation to literary production, the BBC's political aims, and anti-colonialism. Ruvani Ranasinha traces a history of South Asian broadcasters at the BBC, and Kristen Bluemel and Susheila Nasta have each studied the relationship between Anand and Orwell at the BBC during the 1940s. However, there has not yet been a sustained analysis of the content of Anand's programming during the 1940s and its relationship with his published writing from the era.[88]

"[T]orn between conflicting loyalties": Anand's Initial Refusal to Join the BBC

Anand was "torn" when Malcolm Darling, the first Editor of the BBC's Indian Section, approached him with a BBC job offer in 1941. Anand wrote to Darling in reply:

> the position of Indians in this war has become very invidious. Particularly is this so with regard to the Indians in England at the moment. Because, even those who have the most distant affiliations with the Congress, are bound to feel a certain sense of national humiliation if, with full awareness of the internment of hundreds of their compatriots and the savage sentence on Pandit Nehru, they do anything to help the war effort. My own connections with the Congress are rather more intimate. The one question that has been taxing my mind all these months is how to reconcile that affiliation with my belief that fascism would destroy all I stand for. I am afraid the British Government has done nothing which may help to solve

> the dilemma which faces some of us: It has declared neither its war aims nor its peace aims—and India seems to be its one blind spot. This enforces on us a kind of vague neutrality, the strain of which can be very harrowing for the more timid individual, who is torn between conflicting loyalties. I, for instance, have friends in this country with whom I have worked in the anti-fascist struggle for some years. . . . I don't want to bore you with these personal and ideological difficulties, but I hope, from what I have said, that you will see how difficult it is for me to associate myself with the work of the Indian broadcasting section in any way. (22 March 1941)

With many other leftist Indian nationalists, Anand publicly opposed India's participation in "this war of rival Imperialisms" throughout the 1930s and early 1940s (Anand, "Book Reviews" 175). Along with loyalty to the Indian nation and ideological opposition to both the British government and German and Japanese fascism, Anand cites personal relationships—his "intimate" relationship with Congress and his anti-fascist "friends" in England. Ultimately, Anand concluded that he must refuse to join the BBC in light of the British response to the Indian independence movement.

When Britain declared war on Germany in September 1939, the Viceroy of India declared that India would take part, but, because of opposition to the war within India, India was termed a "belligerent state." Indian nationalists were divided about whether India should fight with Britain and France in the war—initially Gandhi supported Britain and France, and the Leftists opposed all participation in the war and wanted to take advantage of Britain's distraction in Europe to push more aggressively for Indian national independence (Gupta 24).[89] In the first official response from the Congress Working

Committee, Nehru's position won out, and the Committee spoke out in their rejection of fascism but also declined participating in the war under the current imperial system. Positions hardened, and Britain refused to entertain any talk of immediate steps to Indian independence and the Government of India began enforcing "The Defence of India Act" in Bengal and Punjab by arresting members of Congress and revoking the right of assembly. The British response unified Indian nationalists, including Gandhi, in opposing Indian participation in the war, although there was much debate over how aggressively Indian nationalists should push for independence while Britain was at war. In October 1940, a little more than a year after Britain declared war on Germany, Congress launched a limited civil disobedience campaign. The Government responded by arresting ministers, secretaries, and Congress members, including Nehru, and by June of that year, the government convicted nearly 20,000 members of the Indian National Congress (Gupta 127).

At the 17th International PEN Conference in London in September 1941, Anand made an appeal to political solidarity with the Indian Independence movement.

> Will the P.E.N. Club give a call, now, which can move opinion all over the world for the recognition of those elementary rights for India without which I am convinced there can be no peaceful new order in the world, without which there certainly can be no dignity in the human relationship of Indians and Englishmen" ("The Place of India" 131).

Anand connects internationalism and nationalism through appeals to world-wide working class support for the Indian cause and an argument that India's sovereignty is the necessary prerequisite for global transformation. He appeals to the value of human

relationships based on equality both as the goal but also, as his participation in PEN shows, the path to political change.

Although the Government of India released Nehru and other Congress leaders in December, 1941, the British Government did not substantially change its policy towards Indian independence over the next eleven months. Therefore it may seem strange, given the objections to British policy that Anand states in his letter to Darling, that in February 1942 he began regularly planning, writing, and broadcasting talks on the Indian Section (West 177). He remained a BBC freelancer even as the Indian Congress launched the "Quit India" resolution in August 1942 and the Government of India instituted harsh reprisals, re-arresting Nehru and others. Anand's change of heart coincides with the CPI's official pronouncement of World War II as a People's War. In 1941, Germany attacked the Soviet Union in June, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor in December, and a Japanese invasion of India became a real threat. While the Indian Congress continued to oppose Britain's participation in the war, the Communist party in India shifted from viewing WWII as an Imperialist War to a "People's War" that the Indian people, while still committed to independence, should support (Gupta 156).[90]

Anand both shared the overall leftist shift in support of the British war effort while also continuing to both critique British imperialism with fervor and defend the Indian Congress' critiques and positions. The Indian Section had also undergone internal changes; as the appointment of Orwell, a well-known critic of British colonialism in India, to the position of Talks Assistant and then Talks Producer demonstrates, the Indian Section had become less tied to the Government of India. Orwell and Anand were personal friends, and Orwell sought out Indian nationalists like Anand hoping that their

perspective would be more persuasive to their nationalist Indian target audience (Ranasinha, *South Asian Writers* 11).

Anand's Literary and Political Personas

"Voice"

The most well-known program that Anand participated in at the Indian section was the literary magazine "Voice" which aired in Autumn of 1942. Anand wrote scripts, proposed speakers, and participated in the on-air broadcasts of five of the six episodes.[91] "Voice" is the best-known program to come out of the Indian section under Orwell's tenure because it presented not only canonical but also contemporary literature (primarily British poetry except for the "American" and "Eastern" programs).[92] Many well-known British poets and critics participated in the program including T.S. Eliot, William Empson, Stevie Smith, and Stephen Spender, along with colonial writers and BBC employees Anand, Marson, Venu Chitale, J.M. Tambimuttu, and Narayana Menon.

The *radio* magazine transforms the often (though not always) solitary experience of reading text into a shared listening experience in which the audience hears individual voices reading literature and then engaging in a critical discussion about the pieces read. In "Voice," the dialogue is scripted to appear spontaneous—the participants suggest literary pieces to read and offer their commentary upon the pieces—but all scripts were written, rehearsed, and recorded in advance for security clearance and timing. The content was almost entirely literary; in the introduction to the first program Orwell justifies the focus on literature during times of national crisis. After this, most programs make no direct references to the war. West concludes that "Voice" is an example of

Orwell's developing belief "that political propaganda was virtually powerless whereas literature could reach the heart of an audience" (35).

While Anand was extensively involved in planning and writing the "Voice" broadcasts, the surviving scripts show that he was not very prominent on air: he introduces and makes a few comments about specific poems and trends, but the conversation is dominated by the British authors and critics who make more substantial critical statements. Orwell introduces Anand as "an Indian novelist, who writes in English [who] ought not to need much introduction to the listeners on this service" but the discussions do not emphasize his role as an expert on literature or as a prominent literary figure (West 81). The second episode of "Voice," on war poetry, is the only episode that directly connects the program's literary content to contemporary politics, and it is this episode in which Anand has the most airtime and makes critical and evaluative statements about the poems. Spoken lines cannot be fully attributed to an individual, as Anand and Orwell collaboratively prepared the scripts, but it appears to be a strategic decision that Anand, as the only Indian contributor to this episode, directly speaks to possible necessity of war. In the final section, an unidentified speaker asks whether there is poetry "in *favour* of war" (West 86). Anand replies, "Not as an end in itself. But there is such a thing as recognising that war may be necessary, just as a surgical operation may be necessary. Even an operation which may leave you mutilated for life" (West 86-87). Anand's statement reinforces the BBC's propagandistic goals for justifying participation in World War II to the Indian audience. Orwell then also asserts that the cause of "national liberation" can evoke "an actual enthusiasm for war" (87), which is also consistent with the British message that resisting Japanese invasion was necessary for

future Indian independence. Although Anand's and Orwell's statements about war being sometimes necessary align with BBC and British government policy, their lines also show how anti-fascist statements that emphasize the need to fight for national freedom are inescapably ironic in broadcasts to an audience living under colonial rule. Such ironies are frequently repeated in Anand's broadcasts on the Indian Section.

Most of Anand's other work was much more clearly propagandistic. The BBC wanted Anand, as a known opponent of British colonialism, to make explicitly political, anti-fascist statements. When Orwell originally proposed that Anand write "Letter to a Chinese Guerilla" in 1942, Anand made the case for incorporating the literary into the political discussion. He wrote to Orwell: "I feel that if I can address the note to a Chinese Guerilla, who also happens to be a writer, I could fit the bill more competently" (Letter to Orwell [29 June 1942]). Anand suggests writing to his former friend Shelley Wang, a Chinese writer who fought Japanese occupation, "because then all the political, social and cultural problems we shared together may gain point from his sacrifice." Orwell did not appear to have any problem with Anand making this change, as the final broadcast was addressed to Shelley Wang's wife and focused on Wang's role as a writer resisting fascism.

While purely "political" programming would have been acceptable to Orwell, he steered Anand away from presenting solely literary content. After receiving the first draft of Anand's script on *War and Peace*, Orwell writes to Anand,

> I am sending back your script on War [And] Peace because I wish you would re-write [the] later part . . . I think it is quite true that Tolstoy marked the beginning of a new attitude towards the novel, but that in itself

> is not big enough to justify the title "Books That Changed the World". What I wanted was a talk on War and Peace as exemplifying the new attitude towards war. If not the first, it is certainly one of the first books that tried to describe war realistically and many modern currents of thought, probably including pacifism, derive from it to some extent. I do not of course want pacifist propaganda, but I think we might make valuable use of a comparison between Tolstoy's description of the battle of Oesterlitz and for instance Tennyson's [Charge] of the Light Brigade. (Letter to Anand [7 October 1942])

Anand's original draft, though not preserved in the archives, clearly seems to have focused on the novel's formal features and its place in literary history. Orwell pushed him to make connections to contemporary world events and social questions.[93] This is essentially the opposite advice that he gave the British writer and cartoonist J.F. Horrabin earlier that year to whom he write that even though "Of course, one must mention the war at every turn," he "would like the talks to be a little more definitely about geography, with less direct reference to the war situation" (West 27-28). While these examples only demonstrate programming decisions about a few individual programs and do not prove a larger policy, Anand's Indian Section scripts consistently make clear connections to Britain's war aims and the BBC's propaganda campaign. More subtle propaganda may have been appropriate on "Voice" but Anand's own programs could never "just" discuss literature on air without connecting it to the war.

Double-edged Propaganda

In the final program in "New Weapons of War," Anand discussed "Propaganda." He contrasts his own broadcast, and by association, BBC programming in general, with fascist media directed to an Indian audience, while acknowledging the propagandistic intent of Indian Service programming:

> Even as I am speaking to you now, you might be asking yourself what my motives are in talking to you and whether there is any foundation in what I say. Such questions are perfectly natural and reasonable. And, since I, for one, have no reason to tell you lies, or anything which I do not believe, I would like to encourage you to go on asking such questions.
>
> For, although almost everything anyone says is propaganda for his or her particular point of view, we all have the right to say our say as long as we know the facts of a case, and so long as we are not being deliberately dishonest. The sincerity, the integrity of an individual, and the reality of the facts, are the final tests of the truth of his propaganda. (1-2)

Anand describes fascist use of language as deceitful and manipulative, and contrasts this with his presentation of a "point of view" and the assumption that his audience can evaluate his claims and decide what to believe. Moreover, Anand's appeal to ethos in emphasizing the "integrity of an individual," indicates a general faith in the power of interpersonal communication and the BBC's specific interest in individuals like Anand who might be found credible by their Indian audience.

Although "New Weapons of War" focuses on word choices and right thinking, Anand concludes the final broadcast by describing the political and material actions that must be taken to resist propaganda:

> But we can't counter either the open lie or the half lie by merely saying to ourselves – It's not true. We ought to remove the causes which lead to its success. We must remove the irrational dread of all kinds of bogies. We ought to create the conditions in which the persecuted and the oppressed, who are amenable to fraudulent propaganda, find a healthy outlet for their energy. We should set men free to fight against reactionary social values. In short we should seek to build up a constructive world order in which the moral and mental equality of men is taken for granted and there is no cause for persecution-mania. (6)

The focus on "energy" and "fight[ing]" reflects the BBC's policy to emphasize Britain as the purveyor of progress and liberty and to encourage active resistance to fascism. However, as in "Voice," such anti-fascist statements cannot escape the irony of anti-colonial application. While never stating explicitly what conditions create successful audiences for propaganda, Anand argues that propaganda is successful in environments in which people are "persecuted and . . . oppressed" and "the moral and mental equality of men" is *not* "taken for granted" (6). This implicates the colonial state and recalls Anand's argument in *Letters on India* (published that same year) that "India [be] liberated for the struggle against fascism" (*Letters on India* 159). Anand's indictment of "reactionary social values" is not only directed at German or Japanese fascism but also recalls the PWA's critiques of Indian society. While "New Weapons of War" focused on changing

the way his listeners *think* about the words discussed and the importance of precise and correct language, it ends on a progressive and implicitly anti-colonial statement emphasizing the importance of material realities and argues that radio broadcasts such as his own are ineffective without political and economic transformation.

As Sharika Thiranagama documents, BBC policy makers were aware of the ironies of championing freedom to a colonized India.[94] Bokhari wrote in a memo:

> … statements about freedom and democracy, even from the highest quarters are apt to be greeted skeptically in India as long as Germany is constantly emphasizing the fact that freedom is not given to India and so long as Indians are conscious of it . . . [the BBC should] avoid scrupulously the mention of British Freedom or personal liberty in the British Empire. Rightly or wrongly, Indians think that they do not enjoy this political freedom or personal liberty' (qtd. in Thiranagama 51).

Anand censors the German and Japanese strategy of limiting free speech, repressing intellectuals, and suppressing literature because of "[d]angerous thoughts" ("New Order" 2). At the same time, three of his own novels were banned by the Government of India, which would soon also ban *Letters on India*, written and published in Britain during his most productive year at the BBC Indian Section.[95] This irony is evident in "Open Letter to a Chinese Guerrilla," which is often read as simply anti-Japanese propaganda and was clearly considered a success by the BBC as it was published in both the BBC's journal *The Listener* (June 8, 1942) and in Orwell's collection of Indian Section broadcasts (1943) (Bluemel, *Radical Eccentrics* 213 n. 45).

In the open letter, Anand addresses the wife of the deceased Chinese poet and guerrilla Shelley Wang. Anand knew Wang from the PEN Writers' conference and the Brussels Peace Conference, and his letter describes the common fight against fascism in China, Russia, and India. The open letter format again shows Anand's and the BBC's interest in representing ideas expressed on air as communication between individuals, between friends, and Anand emphasizes his personal friendship with both Shelley Wang and his wife throughout.

Anand argues that he can "understand" Chinese resistance because of his parallel experience in India:

> For we too, have <u>believed</u> in creating a new India; we, too, have been part of a vast cultural awakening which witnessed not only the blinding spectacle of a great renaissance of the spirit, but the education of the people through mass literary campaigns, the training of men in the art of physical defense against oppression and aggression. When, for instance, the Indian writers recently resolved to form themselves into Anti-Japanese propaganda squads to tell the peoples by word of mouth or through the newspaper, of Japan's intentions with regard to India, they were evidencing to the same heroic spirit as possessed you and our brother writers in China. ("Open Letter to a Chinese Guerilla," 4)

Anand clearly states that Indian organization and resistance is against Japanese fascists, in line with the BBC and the British government's primary focus in 1942. Ironically, much of what Anand is referring to in celebrating Indian subjects' resistance of fascism recalls not only organization against Japanese invasion, but also the Indian independence

movement's mass organization against British colonialism. In this "Open Letter," Anand echoes the PWA's that literature could promote a widespread independence movement. In 1939, Anand describes the way the PWA could develop a culture of readers by "opening book shops, small libraries in the Mofassil and by taking part in the literary campaign started by the Indian National Congress and the student movement" ("On the Progressive Writers Movement" 19). West argues that Orwell "must have realised" that his talk on sabotage "could also act as an incitement to sabotage [Britain's war effort in India]" (25).

Anand's broadcasts not only rally the Indian listeners against fascism, they also expose the irony and downright contradiction of these messages being distributed by government that enacts the same military and cultural strategies—suppression, censorship, propaganda—as the fascists they opposed. The presence of these messages delivered by a writer with Anand's interests and reputation as a founding member of the PWA creates a strong subtext in these broadcasts directed towards Indians with similar educational backgrounds, intellectual interests, and nationalist investment. That Anand continued to broadcast for the BBC while disavowing British policy in his published work shows both the BBC's willingness to use Anand strategically while not allowing anything too sensitive to be broadcast, and Anand's willingness to make what he saw as necessary compromises for the sake of certain endgoals.[96]

"Meet My Friend"

The BBC's Indian Section used literary programs such as "Voice" to affirm the cultural relationship between the Indian audience and Britain by portraying an Indian

representative, Anand, in conversation with British public intellectuals. In out-right propaganda programs such as "New Weapons of War" and "Open Letter," Anand uses reasoned arguments to explain why it is in India's best interest to support the British cause. In the series "Meet My Friend," the friendship trope is explicitly personal and individualistic. Working under the supervision of Orwell, Anand selected guests, wrote scripts, and conducted interviews with British men, and one woman (Inez Holden), from different classes and occupations.[97] Recalling both Bokhari's hope that radio could "build real lines of communication" and Anand's claim in *Apology for Heroism* regarding his interpretive role as an Indian writer writing in English, Anand states that now he will be doing the reverse in presenting "Englishmen" to an Indian audience:

> I have stood between Europe and Asia now for some years as a kind of interpreter. I have tried to tell the English people something about life in India, specially about the life of the people I know at home: I have tried to reveal them as the human beings who live in the lanes and alleys of Hindustan, just like any other human beings, with their strengths and weaknesses, theyr (sic) joys and sorrows, and their hopes and fears. . . .
>
> Now I want to present to India some of my English friends, so that Englishmen do not remain the collective "they" of the "great British Nation" of Anglo-Indian controversy, but appear as human beings. You know, "they" are quite human! Believe me they are. One person is different from the other, . . . When I was in India, and even when I first came here, I used to think of the English as a rather fearsome, reticent, strange, haughty people. . . .

> I propose to bring some of my English friends to the microphone in this series, so that they can give you their views on life and so that you can get to know them as individuals. as the kind of me[n] who compose the various classes of the English nation . . . (Meet My Friend – No 1 1-2)

For Anand, his role as a writer is important to how he imagines this role because a writer can perceive and skillfully represent the individual. He argues that an Indian cannot understand the individual Englishman if they only approach individuals through the lens of national political "controversy." The radio voice was thought to provide the "illusion of closeness"; in an interview, it is not that the broadcast voice speaks to the listener but that the listener eavesdrops on a conversation or participates, through the proxy of Anand in the conversation (Havighurst, qtd. in Adorno 81).

The political controversy cannot be completely ignored, however, as British-Indian conflict provides the very reason for the existence of the BBC's Indian Section. The extant script of the first episode in "Meet My Friend" indicates that Anand had initially planned on saying much more about the dynamic between individual relationships and political circumstances. Following his statement that he previously viewed the English as a ". . . haughty people," an earlier draft went on to claim "But then I found that they appeared like that in India because of the peculiar British-Indian relationship" (2). In the further cut section, Anand claims that that the English can be seen as human individuals in England as they cannot be in India. It is unclear whether these lines was cut for policy or for time, as the script appears to have been edited for both, but the deleted lines highlight the irony of the entire project of the series. The mild critique of the "peculiar British-Indian relationship" of colonialism indicates a lack of

confidence that friendship between Indian and English individuals, at least in India, will succeed as long as British rule continues. The BBC broadcasts from Britain asserting British-Indian equality would appear to be a weaker influence than the lived experience of the colonial relationship.[98] Conversely, individuals meeting on equal footing can lead to transformation of relations between nations as individuals develop sympathy and understanding of individuals from other nations. In this dynamic, friendship has the possibility of unsettling the very British-Indian political relationship that the BBC was, at that time, committed to maintaining. The broadcast as aired lack these references to the colonial relationship but it is implied throughout.

In each episode of "Meet My Friend," Anand asks the guests about their background and work and highlights their diverse class positions and experience. Each of Anand's "friends" portrays an energetic anti-fascism, what Newsome described as "impressions of [invincible] strength founded upon justice and righteousness, or, to put it more in the vernacular, guts combined with decency" (8). In the first program, Anand asks the actor and civil servant George Bishop, "You remember, as you were leaning over the book case in my room the other day, you asked me whether I had any trouble with my conscience" (4). Such a "real-life" connection between Anand and his interviewees is often explicitly established, especially in the early programs in the series. A conversation outside the studio shows that these men—one English and one Indian—interact in daily life in intimate settings and can converse of personal, even potentially sensitive matters of conscience. Such remarks attempt to challenge the default state of radio as a state of "being disembodied and apparently context-free" (Kerr, "Orwell's BBC Broadcasts" 480). By emphasizing the intimate contact between Anand and his

English "friends" conversing in the same studio, the broadcasts attempt to create feelings of friendship in the Indian listeners to the British public through listening through broadcasts.

The intimacy portrayed is limited by gender. While the series included one interview with a woman, the author Inez Holden, this episode did not include any references to conversations between her and Anand outside the studio. While the discussions of such outside contact decreased after the first episodes, the omission in Holden's case is striking because she and Anand were, in fact, friends outside of the BBC (Bluemel *Radical Eccentrics* 14). In emphasizing homosocial friendship, the BBC could be attempting to replicate their interpretation of South Asian social practices discouraging intimate relationships between men and women who were neither married nor related.

The representation of inter-personal connection in "Meet My Friend" is particularly relevant because the series began in May 1942, which was a period when British-Indian political were particularly weak. In March-April 1942, Sir Stafford Cripps, an anti-imperialist member of the Labour Party and leader of the House of Commons, brought a draft declaration to the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League. The Cripps Mission was a turning point for relations between the British government and Indian nationalists, as it was the last negotiation on independence during the war. The declaration offered India independence at the end of the war and stated that states or provinces would have the option of not joining the new Indian state (see Metcalf and Metcalf 205).

Cripps' public statements and confidential BBC policy documents show that friendship was a key component of the public discourse around this diplomatic mission.

At the outset, the Cripps mission mobilized ideas of interpersonal and national friendship. Cripps had a personal relationship with Nehru: they corresponded throughout the 1930s and early 40s and met in 1939 (Weigold 42-43). The BBC's "Notes on Background Material for Sir Stafford Cripps" direct the Eastern Service to emphasize Cripp's authentic emotional investment in India to the "Anti-British element": "we should stress his simplicity, sincerity and the fact that he volunteered to go to India, a step he would never have taken had he not believed that it was in the interests of India, a country for which he has a real affection and sympathy" (1). Cripps himself asks the Indian audience to accept Britain's friendship in his 30 March New Delhi broadcast explaining the British government's proposals:

> There will still be difficulties perhaps—the result of the distrust which has grown up between us in past years, but I ask you to turn your back upon that past, to accept my hand, our hand of friendship and trust and to allow us to join with you for the time being in working to establish and complete your freedom and your self-government. This as you may know has long been a cause dear to my heart and it is with the greatest hopes that I look to the events of the next few days which may if wisely handled seal for ever your freedom and our friendship. (qtd. in Mansergh 570)

Cripps refers to his position as a representative of the British government and the relationship between the individual and the state in his appeal to the Indian audience to "accept *my* hand, *our* hand of friendship." Britain's friendship is contrasted with Japan, the "cruel aggressor" (570), and Cripps then states again the call "to forge a long-lasting and free friendship between our two peoples" (571). The language of friendship cannot

obscure the fact that the relationship between India and Britain existed as it did only because of colonization. Cripps' acknowledgement of his audience's desire for freedom and self-government emphasizes the lack thereof under colonial rule, and the assertion that friendship with Britain will continue after India receives freedom sounds less like an offer of help and affective connection and more like a threat of neo-imperial control.

Assertions of friendship were soon belied by the breakdown of talks at the beginning of April. The mission's failure led directly to the Indian National Congress' Quit India Resolution, a non-cooperative movement to which the British responded by jailing Nehru, Gandhi, and other Congress leaders. The British line was to blame the Indian National Congress, which allowed British policy makers and propagandists, including those at the BBC's Indian Section, to emphasize that Britain remained friends with the Indian people and argue that it was Congress that was not truly the friend of the Indian people or the freedom-loving world.

Anand was "too unhappy for words" about the failure of the Cripps mission (Letter to Orwell [n.d.]) and took a position identical to Congress in blaming Britain for refusing to negotiate on the states' and provinces' ability to opt out of the Indian state and the timing of independence (*Letters on India* 9). There is no indication, however, in his BBC correspondence with Orwell that the events of the spring of 1942 led him to question his decision to work at the BBC. The timing of "Meet My Friend" suggests that Anand's, Orwell's, and the BBC's presentation of individual relationships as existing apart from the "Anglo-Indian controversy" is a turn to the personal in light of the public political failure of the Cripps Mission ("Meet My Friend - No. 1," 1).

Like all of Anand's Indian Section broadcasts, "Meet My Friend" was clearly intended to be propagandistic, and as Anand's candid remarks on "Propaganda" indicate, he expected his audience to be aware of this. It is impossible to evaluate "sincerity" in Indian Section broadcasts, as individual authorship, collaboration and oversight from senior employees, institutional policy, and official censorship all shape the final content of the scripts. Nonetheless, I do not think that Anand's appeal to friendship or the use of friendship more widely in BBC policy is simply cynical. Anand's work as a whole indicates that he found the themes of friendship, interpersonal connection, and a humanist belief in the universal value of the individual valuable in combatting fascism in all its forms, and I read in his scripts hope that his talks could transcend the BBC's limited imperial goals. At the same time, formal structures, institutional constraints, material realities, and the broadcast medium itself often foreclose such connections.

THE INDIAN SECTION IN THE COMMONWEALTH

In 1942, Anand discussed India's political future in an interview with a British politician sympathetic to Indian nationalism, Labour MP Haden Guest. Anand challenged Guest to elaborate on his commitment to Indian independence: "Indians are inclined to look upon this issue in very concrete terms. To what extent to you envisage a world order which is a break from the past?" (6). Guest replied that he imagined "a time when everything that is great in the British Commonwealth will have been handed on as part of the future of a world commonwealth" (6). This question of whether the end of colonial rule meant a "break" from existing structures or a transforming of imperial structures to purportedly less exploitative ones that still connected people through trade and culture

was an important one for the BBC after the independence of India and Pakistan in 1947. Attia Hosain's broadcasting career, which began the next year in 1948, shows how the BBC continued to employ cultural and literary programming after decolonization and how Britain, through the Commonwealth, attempted to rearrange spheres of power in the international community. In the years directly after the Partition of India and Pakistan, the BBC imagined it could occupy the position of "privileged outsider, transcendent and above regional politics and religious antagonism" and transcend religious, national, and linguistic differences between the newly created nation-states (Thiranagama 53). Writers also found in the BBC's postcolonial broadcasting new opportunities to create cultural programming for audiences within newly formed South Asian states and diasporic communities within Britain.

Attia Hosain was born in Lucknow in 1913 and grew up in a Taluqdar (land-owning) family in the north Indian province of Oudh. Her father and brother encouraged her education, and she attended La Martiniere School for Girls, where most of the other students were British or Anglo-Indian, and Isabella Thoburn College and she become the first Taluqdar woman to graduate from college. She married her cousin Ali Bahadur Habibullah in 1933 and continued to be active in the Indian literary scene of the 1930s. Hosain had many friends and relatives involved in the Communist Party, Socialist Congress organizations, and the PWA, including the Urdu writer Rashid Jehan and Sajeed Zaheer, a family friend who introduced her to Mulk Raj Anand.

Hosain was in London with her family in 1947 because her husband was working on the war repatriation effort. When her husband and much of her family moved to Pakistan, she stayed in London with her two young children; she later explained that

"[f]or personal reasons, and to avoid going against my conviction that there should not have been a Partition, I chose to stay with my children in England" (*Distant Traveller* 10). Such conjunctions of the personal with the political continued to shape Hosain's writing and BBC broadcasts. Hosain published a short story collection, *Phoenix Fled* (1953), and novel, *Sunlight on a Broken Column* (1961), in Britain. Both these books were republished in the 1970s, and her fiction is relatively well-known, read, and taught in Britain. She is frequently anthologized in collections of partition literature and criticism focuses on her narration of the Muslim Indian women's experience of purdah and partition violence.

The BBC's Eastern Service Post-Independence

As India and Pakistan became independent and the BBC re-configured its Eastern Service to Dominion broadcasting, friendship rhetoric became even more pervasive in BBC policy statements and broadcasts. While the Eastern Services increasingly developed programs in South Asian languages other than English, policy makers continued to see in English programs unique opportunities for reaching an elite audience. A report from the summer or fall of 1948 describes the objectives of the English language broadcasts to South Asia:[99]

> The object of these English broadcasts for India, Pakistan and Ceylon is to maintain the position of the English language in the new Dominions, and the cultural ties between the countries based on the English language and literature. As the audience listens to news bulletins, talks, plays and music in BBC transmissions directed to English-speaking listeners overseas in

> the G.O.S. it is felt that the special English programme for these listeners should be predominantly cultural. Educated Indians are serious people with a high regard for artistic integrity, and we therefore try to keep them in touch with literary and artistic developments in this country. We also describe our progress in scientific achievements and social welfare schemes, and try to prove a source of information for Western humanist and scientific development generally. This seems a favourable opportunity for us. Now that Britain no longer rules India or Pakistan, there is a pleasanter atmosphere for cultural, commercial and even political cooperation between the four peoples than ever before. ("English In The Eastern Service" 8-9)

The report acknowledges that this audience includes many nationalists who were antagonistic to British rule, but maintains that relationships with English individuals and culture will remain important to an elite audience and a useful tool for the BBC in attempting to influence this group. The Eastern Service's cultural programming focused on critical talks and discussions about art, literature, and science, as opposed to presenting art directly (plays, music, literature). The report observes that the end of direct rule is "a favourable opportunity" for British media, while the insistence on encouraging the English language as a tool of soft power for economic and political influence shows the shift to neoimperial structures. As Thiranagama argues in an analysis of listener correspondence, there was a belief that "in a newly postcolonial world, that Indians and English share a common humanity which the radio can communicate between, rather than a common empire which is intrinsically asymmetric" (47). Neo-imperial

relationships, however, ensured that the "postcolonial world" was not one of complete reciprocity. In later years, this confidence that South Asian elites will remain invested in English language and culture begins to erode, and BBC personnel shift their focus from English language broadcasts to Hindi, Urdu, and other South Asian languages.

The changed relationship is named explicitly as friendship later in the report on other language programming in South Asia. In the section on Hindustani programs, the report states, "Our main objective, therefore, is to convince the people of the Indian sub-continent that we *remain their friends* more than ever now that we are no longer their rulers" (10, emphasis added). About Bengali programming, the report states, "Again, the objective is to maintain the almost personal friendship which Bengalis feel towards us, and here political circumstances are favourable" (13). Finally, in the discussion on Tamil programming, the report states, "we like to maintain our friendship with them in the same way as with other inhabitants of India" (14).

The report is clear that the BBC was invested in fostering continued feelings of friendship between their South Asian listeners and Britain for Britain's political and economic benefit. The report also differentiates the strategic value of friendship within various language groups. The English audience is portrayed as containing the politically influential members that have "become the ruling class on which the future administration will largely depend" (8). The section on Marathi broadcast objectives notes that "Their centre, Bombay, and their position in the cotton trade in particular draws them even closer to Britain." Trade alone does not create the circumstances for a strong relationship between this group and Britain: "The main objectives are to maintain their cultural and trade relations with this country" (12). The report also situates the

BBC's Eastern Services programming within an early Cold War context, and states that the BBC was competing with Moscow's English and Hindi language broadcasts to South Asia.

The BBC was not only invested in maintaining ties between India and Britain but also in countering communal tension in South Asia by, as Thiranagama argues, "standing above religious difference" (49). The BBC's Eastern Service broadcasting attempted to surpass new national borders and function as a regional broadcast service while also remaining knowledgeable about governmental and audience responses from Pakistan and India. Programming debates centered on language. The BBC initially tried to continue broadcasting in Hindustani, but this became untenable. The Head of the Eastern Service stated in May 1948 that "The evidence seems to be that our own attempt to hold a balance [Hindustani] between the two [Urdu and Hindi] has become unreal and is offensive to listeners on both sides of the frontiers." He concluded elsewhere:

> It is perfectly true that at the moment basic Hindustani, whilst still possibly the best medium for broadcasting to the unbiased Indian listener in India, is becoming something of an anomaly. Pakistan is speaking Urdu and India Hindi . . . Unless Pakistan and India rapidly and amicably reunite, which seems improbable, Urdu and Hindi are likely more and more to develop away from a common habit and goal. (qtd. in Pinkterton 153)

Faced with the "unreal[ity]" of this position on the ground and the fact that they were offending both sides, the BBC Eastern Services formed the Indian and Pakistani Services.

The BBC sought, however, to downplay the transition. In a memo from July 1948, Joanna Spicer, the Overseas Programme Planner described the proposed logistical changes and stated that "It is desired to give as little publicity as possible to the change." Hughes, the Head of Eastern Service writes:

> A point about the new Services is the affiliations of contributors. As I understand it, we are in no way intending to set up programmes addressing themselves to either of our audiences in high Hindi or high Urdu. This is clear I am sure to I.P.O. and P.P.O. but it is evident that the whole policy should be explained to staff, who otherwise might obviously tend to take parochial views. I mention this because Mohammed Ally Khan, who has been to see me, appears to be of the impression that he is expected to represent himself as an ardent Pakistani or Indian if he is to continue broadcasting regularly. ("Programmes to India & Pakistan" [14 January 1949])

Hugues wanted to be clear that the communal and national partitions of the Indian subcontinent would not be replicated in small scale at the BBC broadcasting offices, or, as much as possible, in the broadcasts themselves. The BBC's policy was obviously shifting, as this memo refers to multiple "audiences" differentiated by national affiliation and language.

The BBC tried to avoid the classical versions of Urdu and Hindi broadcast on Radio Pakistan and All India Radio in favor of "simple language . . . News bulletins, for instance, would be virtually the same" ("Programmes to India & Pakistan," 21 May 1949). They also measured their success at neutrality by drawing equal complaints from Indian and Pakistani officials and listeners: "For the BBC such criticisms – drawn in

roughly equal measure from both India and Pakistan – served as vindication of the 'balanced' approach it had sought to achieve in its regional coverage" (Pinkerton, "The BBC in South Asia" 144). In the long run, minimizing Partition within the BBC offices and broadcasts proved to be impossible.

"Making Friends" and Coffee-dates: Hosain on the Immigrant Woman's Experience

In comparison to Anand's "Meet My Friend" series, Hosain's broadcasts are much more about her personal experience with less of a focused propagandistic purpose. However, as the titles "Making Friends" (1949) and "Passport to Friendship" (1965) as well as her account of making friends in Britain in "Points of View" (1952) indicate, Hosain was brought to the air to talk about friendship at a time when BBC policy documents explicitly name friendship as a goal of its South Asian broadcasting. Hosain's accounts of the difficulties of cross-cultural friendship point to the fractures in individual and national relationships that the BBC's broadcasts might be trying to gloss over with their emphasis on shared cultural values with its South Asian audience, but her on-air presence, especially in conversations with the British writer Rosemary Clifford, also enacts the type of friendship the BBC sought to foster. The critiques of Britain that Hosain raises also indicate the BBC's willingness and comfort with more complex messages in this era, with a relaxing of censorship after the war and a desire to appear credible to what it identified as its well-read, sophisticated, and knowledgeable English speaking audience who might be suspicious of simplistic narratives.

One of Hosain's early broadcasts on the Eastern Service is titled "Making Friends" and Hosain, using her married name, Habibullah, is presented by the announcer,

Rose-Mary Clifford, as someone "visiting this country" to talk about "one of the friends she has made" (1). Hosain tells the story of "Gran" a special friend of her children who helps her get settled right after she moves to England and listens to her talk about home. She describes Gran as "tiny old lady with grey curls and deep set blue eyes that smiled with friendliness" (1), and the program focuses on the guest-friendship the elderly neighbor extends to the stranger and the temporary bond created between them.

Hosain also indicates the existence of earlier racial tensions in England:

> My husband, who had spent years in England, at school and the university was very surprised by this spontaneously friendly approach. In the Royal Borough of Kensington too, the very Mecca of middle class respectability!
>
> "It couldn't have happened in England before the war," he commented. Later on someone tried to explain this departure from traditional reserve by the fact that 'Gran' was partly Irish, and had lived many years in France, where she had a villa. But my own experience of general goodwill makes me think it was the war that broke down many barriers. (2)

The reference to the English person's "traditional reserve" is repeatedly cited in Hosain's (and others') broadcasts on friendship as a major difference between English and South Asian culture. The English are not seen to naturally possess the virtue of extending hospitality toward guests. It seems to be a race-neutral way of explaining lack of welcome towards immigrants in London—the British are cold towards everyone, even other English people, so their "reserve" is not racially motivated. In "Making Friends," the war is seen to have softened Britishers' distrust of strangers. Four years later, in

another discussion with Clifford on the Eastern Service program "Points of View" Hosain notes that the ending of British rule in India brought "tremendous changes in attitude" from the "psychological feeling of being rulers, that make one resent them" before independence (7). These statements about improved relationships are optimistic about post-war relationships between Britain and South Asian individuals, echoing the "pleasanter atmosphere for . . . cooperation" in the Eastern Services' Report. These programs describe an optimistic narrative that the end of colonial rule in India and the experience of coming through World War II, suffering but victorious, created the possibility for friendly relations between immigrants and native British subjects. The acknowledgement of a less friendly past emphasizes the lack of equality within British colonial rule and challenges the BBC's claims of personal and national friendship in Anand's programs.

Hosain's later programs also describe the ongoing difficulties of making friends and the difficulties of immigration. In 1952, in an unscripted discussion with the British author Rose-Mary Clifford, Hosain, still going by her married name Habibullah, remarks that while "everybody was so extremely kind and nice to me. . . as (sic) the same time, living in London, perhaps because it's a big city, or perhaps because the English are reserved, I found it very difficult to make friends" (7). A few years later, in "Conversations on Homesickness" (1956), Hosain describes feeling "odd" and the difference between her experience and that of American and Russian immigrants: "you don't expect that when they're walking down the street or going anywhere, anybody will say, automatically, 'Where do you come from?'" (5). Hosain as a South Asian immigrant

may receive overtures of friendship but she is always assumed to be a visitor, even when she has been in the country for years.

In her broadcast with Clifford, Hosain spends a lot of time talking about the difficulties of friendship in London, but the conversation enacts, as Anand's broadcasts did a decade earlier, an exhibition of friendship between the two individuals. The conversation presents them as two women who don't know each other very well who discover what they have in common. They are both working-women with children, and they discuss the challenges of balancing work and family. They also discuss the difficulties of caring for older family members. The discussion ends with the English woman offering a coffee-date. Clifford says that Londoners seem reserved even to English people who come, like her, from the countryside, but that India as a culture is more open and that people there will welcome visitors into their homes. Clifford states in conclusion to the broadcast, "Oh that is of course, that's what you'll always hear as being an oriental philosophy or hospitality which is wonderful. We will both go and have a coffee when we've finished this" (9). As in Anand's "Meet My Friend" the indication that these friendships continue outside of the broadcast studio reinforces the representation of authentic interpersonal connection that can overcome cultural differences.

Even this conversation based on shared experience and open discussion of different backgrounds shows the challenges of "cross-cultural" conversation and friendship. Clifford idealizes the "large family community" of Hosain's childhood, and Hosain responds that this family structure is "very nice sometimes" but that "it seems as if everybody's interfering with one's individuality" (5). Clifford responds that "On the

other hand" it solves practical problems of childcare. The conversation is very polite, but Clifford's assumptions about Indian culture lead her to insist, even against Hosain's protests, on the benefits of the large family structure while Hosain also describes "certain disadvantages" and historicizes South Asian society, describing changes "with modern economic and social development." The preconceptions that Clifford has about South Asia lead her to dismiss alternative perspectives that Hosain raises.

The women face similar awkwardness in critiquing British society. Hosain turns the conversation to the care of the old in England; Clifford says it is not all together satisfactory, and speaks of a governess who had to go to a home, idealizing the Indian structure again. Then Hosain talks about the good "old people's club" that she saw and Clifford replies "Oh, I think we look after the old wonderfully" which contradicts her earlier distress about her abandoned governess (6). Hosain then seems to switch allegiances and remarks, "Yes, but it's not quite the same as having them in the family," which suggests that something is lost without the large family structure. The conversation on what to do with the elderly ends when Hosain says "I was just thinking one has to grow old oneself and it would be nice to feel there is a place somewhere" and Clifford replies "I know" and then changes the conversation topic (7).

The women carefully avoid giving offence as they make observations on their own and the other's culture but seem to leave the conversation with their own cultural values intact. Clifford's assumptions about Indian culture lead her to insist, against Hosain's protests, on the benefits of the large family structure, but she then recants her critiques of British social systems. Hosain begins by critiquing South Asian customs but concludes defending these customs in comparison to British norms. The conversation doesn't

propose solutions to the problems faced by "a woman who works," nor does it seem intended to (1). On the question of outside childcare, for example, Hosain states that "this problem will keep on continuing until one finds a way out of the economic necessity to work" rather than questioning the assumption that women are exclusively responsible for the care of the children (5). Ultimately, the important thing is that these two women are discussing the issues, and that there is the possibility for post-broadcast coffee.

Partition and England as Third Space

"Making Friends" and the conversation with Clifford are about relationships between the South Asian immigrant and British society, themes Hosain never explored in her published writing in her lifetime.[100] In her presence at the BBC broadcasting to Pakistan, India, and Sri Lanka, however, there is a kind of refusal to acknowledge Partition and the creation of Pakistan. Britain provided a space where Hosain could refuse the post-Independence versions of nationalism in South Asia. By taking British citizenship, Hosain was able to visit both India and Pakistan, something that would not have been possible as a citizen of either country.

In Hosain's published writing, Partition also appears as a gap or an absence, a frequent formal attribute of Partition novels.[101] In *Sunlight on a Broken Column*, the first three books describe the events leading to Partition. The third book ends with the discovery of the relationship between the protagonist Laila and her lover Ameer. Laila is terrified of what will happen next and Ameer tells her to "enjoy ourselves tonight?" and that "Tomorrow will soon be another yesterday" (266). The fear and promise of the romantic relationship and marriage of Laila and Ameer, the narrative of their marriage

and his death in World War II is not narrated; neither is Partition. Part four begins fourteen years later with Laila returning to her family's house, which has been divided between

> a doctor, a dentist, a lawyer with names that originated from the far north that was no longer their homeland . . . There were strangers living in the rooms once so private and guarded, strangers who were names in Government files balancing Salem's name against theirs—he labeled 'evacuee', they 'refugees'. Their presence here, and Saleem's in their erstwhile homeland, was part of a statistical calculation in the bargaining of bureaucrats and politicians . . . (271-72).

The house serves as "a living symbol" of land, nation, and community in the novel (273). Antoinette Burton argues that "Hosain . . . cast her historical encounter with partition as the *biography* of a *house* because it enabled her to revisit a world that was lost" (117). *Sunlight on a Broken Column* prefigures, in some sense, the "imaginary homelands" of Salman Rushdie and other postcolonial Indian writing that "exudes a nostalgia for India that is distinctly modernist and mournful" (Jani 4).

If the BBC's Eastern Service was another place in which Hosain could imaginatively return to a lost home, this came to an end in the mid-1960s. In an interview, Hosain explains that politics of the Indo-Pakistani war entered the BBC and led to her departure from the institution: "I had to leave that work, because in the Pakistan High Commission there was an interval when amongst my friends, nobody was the High Commissioner and they said that I was amongst those who was talking against

Pakistan" ("Interview"). Her daughter provides an alternative narrative that Hosain left over the partition of the BBC itself:

> my mother had to make a difficult personal decision. The BBC Eastern Service which had been the fulcrum for the whole subcontinent was, around 1965, divided into language sections, and Urdu was designated to be for Pakistanis only. This was obviously an untenable position for my mother. (It was, she stated, the *British* Broadcasting Service . . . she left her livelihood in broadcasting (Foreword, *Distant Traveller* 14).

The Eastern Service was now "divided" like South Asia, and the BBC, where Hosain and her colleagues "would sit in the canteen and discuss" South Asian politics was no longer a welcoming cosmopolitan space.

Anand's and Hosain's freelancing careers within the Eastern Service show the BBC using literary figures in attempts to shape as well as to respond to geopolitical events in the decolonization era. Policy and strategy shifted after the independence of India and Pakistan, but the BBC's goals of using radio as a tool of British soft power continued. The writers' mirror-image refusals, Anand's preceding his time working for the BBC and Hosain's at the end of her broadcasting career, appear in some ways to be the institutional version of Benjamin's assertion that listeners' only recourse to a radio message he or she disagrees with is to turn off the dial, an action that makes no meaningful challenge to the message itself. Apart from the way their refusals do live on in recorded interviews and institutional archives, their broadcasts for the BBC also highlight the difficulties of friendship in both the colonial and Commonwealth contexts that are described so optimistically in the BBC's own policy documents.

Chapter 2 Endnotes

[62] Anand broadcast in both English and Hindustani and Hosain broadcast in English, Urdu, and Hindi. I will be focusing on Anand's and Hosain's English language broadcasts which had a small elite Indian audience and did not reach large mass audiences. This focus on English broadcasting allows for an examination of the relatively extensive and little-studied original English-language broadcasts. Moreover, the BBC destroyed all copies of Eastern Language scripts in the 1960s, leaving little record of the content of these broadcasts.

[63] The typical terminology is the "Indian Section of the BBC's Eastern Service" (West, *The Lost Writings* 13). Historians and broadcast scholars sometimes refer to the "Indian Service," but this, along with the "Pakistani Service" appears to have become the official designation after World War II with the reorganization of the Eastern Service (Briggs, *War of Words* 505; Pinkerton 141).

[64] See, for example, Ashis Nandy's study of culture and identity in colonial India in *Intimate Enemies* and Leela Gandhi's analysis of the disruptive possibilities of friendships between Europeans and South Asians in *Affective Communities: Anticolonial Thought, Fin-de-Siècle Radicalism, and the Politics of Friendship*

[65] Anand's insistence on countering the way words are used in popular media "vaguely, loosely or cleverly, without any attempt on the part of the people to see their exact meanings" recalls Orwell's diatribes against "the slovenliness of our language" in "Politics and the English Language" (1946) ("Fifth Column?" 1).

[66] Anand was born into a high-caste *kshatriya* family in Peshawar in 1905 (what was then British India's North-West Frontier Province). As a student, he was beaten by police for, by his account, "innocently breaking curfew" after the 1919 Jallianwala Bagh Massacre (Cowasjee*, So Many Freedoms* 9); in later accounts he writes that the violent British response to Gandhi's movement was deeply formative for his political development. Anand spent time in jail after participating in the 1921 Civil Disobedience Campaign and then attempted what he termed violent "terroristic" means that he later described "as ludicrous as they were abortive" (Anand, *Apology* 17). In England, he participated in the India League, the student branch of the Congress Party, and frequently published articles and essays in support of Indian Independence.

[67] See Melissa Dinsman's *Modernism and the Microphone* that counters simplistic readings of radio propaganda (6).

[68] An organization of progressive Indian writers was first discussed in conversations in Zaheer's Bloomsbury apartments in late 1934 and early 1935, and Anand and Zaheer attended the International Association of Writers for the Defence of Culture Congress in

Paris in 1935. The first PWA meeting was in London at the Nanking restaurant in 1935, and the PWA was formally launched at the Lucknow Conference in April 1936 with Premchand, the prominent Hindi novelist, speaking and serving as the first president. Anand reported on the PWA to the International Association of Writers for the Defence of Culture (London 19-23 June 1936). He also was invited to represent India on the platform at the World Congress of Writers against Fascism in Madrid in 1935.

[69] Unlike Sajaad Zaheer, Anand was not a member of the Communist Party (*Apology for Heroism*, 2nd edition, "Postscript," p. 129; see Cowasjee, *So Many Freedoms* 13). According to his own account, Anand's political involvement in India, his philosophical studies, his observations of the British class system, and reading Marx and Engel's "Letters on India" (1853) all led to his becoming a Marxist while in London (*Apology* 67-68). He supported the working class movement in Britain and spent three months in Spain as a journalist with the International Brigade in 1937.

[70] Cowasjee catalogues a long list of Anand's contacts in the 1930s: "There is no doubt that his circle of friends and acquaintances included the following writers: E.M. Forster, Herbert Read, Bonamy Dobree, T.S. Eliot, Laurence Binyon, Aldous Huxley, Middleton Murry, Sir Francis Younghusband, Stephen Spender, V.S. Pritchett, Victor Gollancz, Louis MacNeice, John Strachey, Leonard and Virginia Woolf, George Orwell, Cyril Connolly, Edward Thompson, Maurice Brown, Walter Allen, John Cornford, C. Day Lewis, Ralph Fox, Dylan Thomas, Naomi Mitchison, Lowes Dickinson, Lawrence Durrell, Edgell Rickford, Andre Malraux, Ernst Toller, Henry Miller, Dorothy Richardson, Jack Lindsay and H.G. Wells" (*So Many Freedoms* 27). While *Conversations with Bloomsbury* (1981) provides a fascinating look at how the older Anand viewed his years in England, it is not considered by many critics to be a reliable historical account, especially as it was written so many years after the events recounted (Bluemel *Radical Eccentrics* 189 n. 1; Fisher "*Apology for Heroism*" 199).

[71] In *Apology for Heroism,* Anand writes of British writers' "acquiescence (conscious or unconscious . . .) by most British writers I knew at that time, with the status quo and with the arguments used even by the most obtuse of publicists against the advancement of the under-privileged both in Britain and the Empire" (83). With the reservations noted above, also see *Conversations in Bloomsbury* where Anand recounts being at a party with D.H. Lawrence, Aldous Huxley, T.S. Eliot, Edith Sitwell, and other writers soon after arriving in London: "I felt that they did not know very much about my country, and what they knew was through Kipling, or through superficial impression, except for Leonard Woolf, who had lived and worked in Ceylon . . . And Aldous Huxley felt differently from others . . . All the others seemed to believe, more or less, in the 'Empire on which the sun never sets" (29).

[72] In *Apology for Heroism* (1946), Anand describes participating in the 1930s scene, even as he positions himself with what he sees as new changes and developments in literature: "Aesthetically, the period of the thirties, now called the 'pink decade', was a failure, for

there was less heroism but many more heroic gestures. And yet because the significant poets and novelists of that period sincerely sought to understand the causes of spiritual decay as well as the potential sources of poetry in the emerging mass feelings, they foreshowed the approach of a new era when writers could integrate and reorganize their cohorts (84). The title, *Apology for Heroism*, although written in the early 1940s and published in 1946, also shows Anand's identification with the British 1930s writers for whom "revolutionary politics seemed to made heroism once again possible" (187).

[73] Kristen Bluemel, for example, describes a dichotomy between modernist aesthetics and Marxist anti-imperial politics in juxtaposing Anand's literary and non-fiction work:

> Two nonfictional texts of the 1940s, *Apology for Heroism* and *Letters on India*, illustrate better than his fictional texts of the 1930s the importance of literary form for analyses of authors' social positioning and their fiction's ideological effects.
>
> Anand's nonfiction presents more thoroughly, consistently radical heroes than his fiction, in part because his autobiographical narratives are freed from the constraints of modernism. Instead of emerging from the tradition of the stream-of-consciousness novel, with its debt to the alienated, romantic hero of bourgeois realism, Anand's nonfiction heroes are, ironically, empowered and enlivened by the more prosaic generic claims of their narratives. (*Radical Eccentrics* 93)

[74] Though I will be focusing on the anticolonialism of the novel, the novels contain strong critiques of Indian society, as did those of many PWA writers. These social critiques resulted in *The Village* and *Across the Black Waters* being banned in the Punjab in the 1970s (Cowasjee, *So Many Freedoms* 34).

[75] Saros Cowasjee reports that it was received favorably at the time with *The Times* (London) giving the only unfavourable review (though he argues that "The good notices it received on its publication were largely due to sentimentality") (*So Many Freedoms* 108). The novel was not reprinted until 1980. For critical analyses of the novel, see Bluemel, "Casualty" and Graham Parry, "Anand, Orwell and the War," as well as Saros Cowasjee *So Many Freedoms*, Dorothy Figuera, "*Across the Black Waters,*" Jonathan Highfield, "Finding the Voice of the Peasant," and Jagdish Shivpuri, *"Across the Black Waters*." In related research, see David Omissi's history of the Indian Army, *The Sepoy and the Raj*, and Santanu Das' discussion of Kipling's short stories, *The Eyes of Asia* (1917) about Indian soldiers in World War I that he describes as the only British writer's attempt to narrate the "inner world of the sepoy." Das argues that while the stories are "regularly dismissed as just jingoistic and propagandist" (38), they are also faithful to recreating accounts from sepoys' letters home.

[76] Santanu Das characterizes Indian response to call for support World War I as characterized by elite support, especially from the middle classes, who saw the war as a chance to advance equality and eventual independence and subaltern protest. Das also provides archival evidence of British views of racial stereotypes of the non-white troops, including Indian sepoys, in World War I (32-37).

[77] The Village Trilogy's narrative of anticolonial activism offers a counterpoint to Esty's account of the failed colonial bildungsroman. This optimism may also have much to do with it being a late-30s novel as well as an anticolonial one.

[78] The endnote also establishes Anand as someone who has been to Europe and has first-hand experience with war, lending credibility to his ability to write a war novel, even though he did not serve in World War I. The book is dedicated to Anand's father, who was a sepoy in the Indian army: "To My Father Subedar Lall Chand Anand, M.S.M. (Late 2/17th Dogras)." Das states that Anand's father may not have been sent overseas, and that Anand also had friends who fought in WWI (42).)

[79] Anand joined the International Brigade in 1936, fighting first in the trenches for two weeks and then, when the Communist Party removed Anand and other writers from combat, as a journalist for three months (Cowasjee, *So Many Freedoms* 20). To W.H. Auden, Nancy Cunard, and Stephen Spender's questionnaire, published as *Authors Take Sides On the Spanish Civil War* (1937), Anand replied

> All the truth of my being, all the intensity of passion of which I am capable urges me to tell you that I stand for the People of Republican Spain against Franco and Fascism; that I feel that in this tragic hour of Spain's destiny, in the moment of her utmost suffering, it is the duty of all of us to look into our consciences and inquire whether we can sit still and see the flour of Spain's manhood sacrificed before the greed of a few who dream of power and feed their insatiable lust for glory and wealth on the blood of men, women and children.

[80] Anand developed the comparison between the Spanish and Indian peasants in articles in detail in articles for the *Congress Socialist* in 1937 (Cowasjee, *So Many Freedoms* 20-1).

[81] Graham Parry argues that Anand chose General Rogers, who died soon after speaking to the sepoys, as a symbol of demise of colonial rule (37).

[82] It appears that the letters were addressed to the union activist Tom Brown, who published *The British General Strike* (1926) and *Trade Unionism or Syndicalism* (1942). Anand gave lectures throughout the late 1930s and early 1940s through the London County Council Adult Educational School, and the Workers' Educational Association (Cowasjee, *So Many Freedoms* 23). This was likely how Anand and Brown met, as the first letter from Brown states that Anand visited his region recently.

[83] This debate carried over in letters to the *Tribune* the following year (see Ranasinha, *South Asian Writers*). Anand didn't directly respond to Woolf's dismissal of nationalism, but he spoke more directly about the question of liberatory versus exploitative nationalisms the year before at the PEN Conference in London: "there is nationalism and nationalism. There is the aggressive, predatory nationalism of the Fascist State. . . Our

nationalism is rather the urge to be free, the aspiration to live as part of the human family . . ." ("The Place of India" 129-30). It is this latter version of nationalism that he promotes in *Letters on India*, a nationalism characterized by economic and political freedom from both British imperialism and German or Japanese occupation.

[84] Apart from the first letter published in *The Fortnightly* in June 1942, I am not aware of outside confirmation that Brown wrote all the letters Anand credited to him.

[85] The Indian Section was conceived of as a "university of the air" for Punjab and other Indian students (West 13).

[86] Bose escaped India for Berlin in 1941. He sought to disrupt the British war effort as much as possible, believing that Indian independence could be achieved by weakening Britain through Indian uprising. A transcription of Bose's May 1942 broadcast is reprinted in Orwell's *Talking to India* (157-161). His talks also demonstrate the ways literary and cultural works were mobilized throughout World War II as he quoted English novels that critiqued British rule in India, including E.M. Forster's *Passage to India.* Orwell commented on Bose's references to anti-colonial English texts, "so far as I know they didn't even have to resort to dishonest quotation" (qtd. in West 14).

[87] T.O. Beachcroft, in a history of the Empire Services, denied that Empire Services programming was propagandistic at all, but rather that it "could allow a common feeling, a common culture, to express itself gradually and without self-conscious forcing" (32). Newsome began his report by noting that "The British are not naturally propagandists" but explains why they must increase their efforts.

[88] Cowasjee, in "Mulk Raj Anand and the BBC," provides an early and comprehensive overview of the programs Anand produced at the BBC but does not analyze individual programs in depth.

[89] See D.N. Gupta, *Communism and Nationalism in Colonial India, 1939-45,* for the history of Indian Nationalism, the Communist Party of India, and World War II.

[90] The CPI officially "changed its line" to support the Allied cause throughout November and December of 1941 and officially opposed the Congress Quit India resolution passed in August 1942 (Gupta 193). As Gupta shows, the history and the rationale for the CPI shifts remain controversial; some critics of the CPI assert that the CPI was too compliant with international Communist organizations or working with the British for its own interests, as the CPI was legalized in July 1942 (18-19).

[91] W.J. West records that "Orwell evolved the details with Anand. Anand also contacted likely contributors, whom Orwell then chased up" (37). The Talks Booking Requisition for Voice, No. 1 describes Anand's contribution as "Helping with production of the programme and taking part in discussion of about 10 minutes duration." Anand states in a

letter to Orwell that he includes "a tentative draft of three numbers of Voice" which suggests his substantial role in the scriptwriting.

Anand appeared on five "Voice" episodes (the full transcripts are published in West, Unfortunately, the script of the fifth episode on Eastern Literature has not been found.

1. Introduction to the idea of a radio magazine, discussion of English poetry and prose (Herbert Read, Inez Holden, Dylan Thomas, Henry Treece, William Wordsworth) (11 August)
2. War Poetry (W.H. Auden, G.S. Fraser, T.E. Lawrence, Wilfred Owen, Byron) (8 September)
3. Literature about childhood. (Blake, Herbert Read, Tagore, D.H. Lawrence, W. H. Davies, Stevie Smith, Dickens, Stephen Spender) (6 October)
4. American literature. (Archibald McLeish, T.S. Eliot, Una Marson, Herman Melville, Bret Harte, Walt Whitman, Edgar Lee Masters) (3 November)
5. Eastern Literature, script lost (December)

[92] Airing contemporary poetry was not only innovative for the Indian Section, but for the BBC more broadly. West writes that "Desmond Hawkins recalls how very difficult it was before the war to get any live modern poetry on the air. It seemed at times as though the BBC regarded the phrase 'living poet' as a contradiction in terms" (37).

[93] The script as broadcast shows the incorporation of Orwell's required revisions (though the reference to Tennyson seems perfunctory) but Anand also distances himself from Orwell's position by citing Orwell directly: "My friend George Orwell has suggested more pertinaciously that its chief value is in exemplifying a new attitude to war" (7).

[94] Sharika Thiranagama also recounts that the BBC was concerned that their Home Services programming would be greeted with similar skepticism, but the British listeners surveyed were apparently unconcerned:

> That the BBC chose to accept this as a necessary contradiction is illustrated in its own 1941 questionnaire to the British public (443 responses) to gauge public opinion on India. One question was on 'British Policy in India and Freedom' where two statements were presented for agreement or disagreement. The first suggested 'There is no inconsistency between our policy in India and our fight for freedom in Europe, because conditions are so different. The alternative was 'Our fight for freedom in Europe seems hypocritical in view of our policy in India'. Of those surveyed, 'more than half' agreed with the first statement and 'relatively few' with the second. (51-52)

[95] Anand's *Untouchable*, *Coolie*, and *Two Leaves and a Bud* were banned by the British Government of India, as was Orwell's *Burmese Days* (West 23).

[96] In at least one case, one of Anand's entire scripts was deemed too sensitive by the censors and destroyed, a talk on the Spanish Civil War.

[97] For “Meet My Friend,” Anand succeeded at gathering a class-diverse group of interviewees including an actor/civil-servant, chimney sweep, journalist, Holden the upper class writer turned factory worker, army sergeant, MP, self-taught working class painter, Oxford educated scientist, and an actor-producer.

[98] This recalls the conclusion to Forster’s *A Passage to India* in which Aziz’s and Fielding’s horses veer apart. For Anand, friendship is a matter of state and individual survival. For more on Forster and the BBC see Daniel Morse, "Only Connecting?"

[99] Date inferred from place in file and because data in the report dates from May 1948.

[100] Hosain’s unfinished manuscript about immigrant life in Britain, *No New Lands, No New Seas*, was recently published in *Distant Traveller*.

[101] See Louise Harrington, “‘Fragmentary Evidence’ and Ritu Menon, *No Woman’s Land*.

Chapter 3: Imagining a Literary Community:
Henry Swanzy's *Caribbean Voices* (1946-54)

Henry Swanzy, the producer of the BBC's *Caribbean Voices*, gave a talk in February 1952 reviewing the last six months of broadcasts. He began, not by discussing the recent literary pieces aired on the radio program, but by recollecting a gathering of West Indian writers whose work he had broadcast and listing their recent performances, publications, and critical acclaim:

> The other day I went into the Dressing Room of the little theatre at Hans Crescent House, the centre of overseas student life in London. It was immediately after the performance of Derek Walcott's verse play, Henri Christophe, brilliantly produced by Erroll Hill, staged by Carlyle Change, and acted magnificently by Erroll John, Vic Patterson, Frank Pilgrim, and Erroll Hill himself among others. In the dressing room among the actors . . . moved the minister for Haiti who had attended the performance. By the door stood George Lamming, who wrote and delivered the prologue, with the eloquence and precision that has won for him a place in an anthology of poetry which is being prepared for P.E.N. Further into the room Samuel Selvon was assisting with some of the props; and I was able to congratulate him on the achievement of his novel, A Brighter Sun, whose merit is even

> greater than a recommendation of the Book Society suggests. It was perhaps the single moment of the last six years of the West Indian literary rebirth, that I would like to remember as an old man. Indeed, I feel it a very deep privilege to be associated with this movement, even though I have always the uneasy feeling, that the work should have a Caribbean setting, and should not be drained away to a capital in another continent. ("The Last Six Months" [10.2.52] 1)

For Swanzy, these writers' successes prove that *Caribbean Voices* was facilitating collaboration between the artists and providing access to metropolitan institutions. Swanzy's *Caribbean Voices* was a vast technological, interpersonal, economic, and textual network that was also part of other mid-century global networks. It was also a successful and influential literary magazine program with on-air features that echoed these material networks. In Swanzy's account of the gathering of West Indian writers in the Hans Crescent House's dressing room, it is as if those networks materialized as an embodied community, something that had always been Swanzy's goal. For him, this success was only marred by the fact that the community is in metropolitan London rather than the West Indies.

This chapter asks how *Caribbean Voices*' broadcasts described and represented various networks and communities on air and considers the program's contestatory possibilities and limitations within the institution of the BBC and geo-political structures of late colonialism. One of the most striking features of *Caribbean Voices* broadcasts is the diversity of perspectives represented, both in the literary pieces and in its meta-analysis of the program's role in developing of West Indian literature. *Caribbean Voices*

emphasized its participatory, democratic, structure in an attempt to model a liberal public space for literary debate. Swanzy and other British critics were aware of the imperial power dynamics at work in these broadcasts, and it can be tempting to read this awareness as evidence that they could subvert such structures. However, the community they imagined into being could sometimes be limiting for the West Indian writers whose work was aired on *Caribbean Voices*.

Recent research on *Caribbean Voices* has described the ways the radio program functioned within complex networks integral to creating a West Indian literary community. The voluminous collection of literary texts included in nearly a decade of *Caribbean Voices* broadcasts has received comparatively little attention, however, with the notable exceptions of Rhonda Cobham's early overview of content and critical standards, Hyacinth Simpson's analysis of orality in the short fiction, and Alison Donnell's analysis of women's writing. The scripts reveal that while *Caribbean Voices*' British creators sought to resist metropolitan power dynamics, and to some extent did so, performances of self-critique and democratic airing of difference often incorporated dissent and reified notions of the BBC's indispensability. After describing the ways in which *Caribbean Voices* functioned as an intellectual network in the 1940s and 50s, I will briefly examine Swanzy's and the British critic Arthur Calder-Marshall's talks to analyze the type of intellectual community they imagined and the role that literary criticism played. I will then turn to the ways dissenting voices were represented on air in Swanzy's talks and a "Symposium" of West Indian Writers. Here, I can only begin to bring *Caribbean Voices'* unexamined literary pieces to light, but in the final section of the chapter I will discuss the broadcast prose and poetry of two of the most well known

Caribbean Voices contributors—Samuel Selvon and George Lamming. While Selvon and Lamming (with V.S. Naipaul and Andrew Salkey) are often cited as paradigmatic examples of the relationship between *Caribbean Voices* and the developing West Indian novel, their individual broadcasts have seldom been analyzed. Selvon's and Lamming's poems and short stories explore the role of the artist within emerging mid-century literary and immigrant communities. The scripts reveal the ways Swanzy both emphasized these artists' individuality while also insisting upon the importance of a cohesive and recognizable literary community.

Caribbean Voices has been justifiably celebrated for its "formative role in developing a sense of a community for the writers involved" (Campbell 490). To those unfamiliar with the phenomenon of *Caribbean Voices,* this may be surprising as London was "so incredibly remote" from the British West Indies ("The Last Six Months" [21.8.49] 4).[102] Moreover, radio tends to facilitate an exchange of disembodied ideas. Nonetheless, as has been told in many accounts, the program's greatest legacy is the relationships it fostered—between West Indian writers living in London, between West Indian writers and the gatekeepers of the British literary world, between writers listening together in the West Indies, and between the writers, readers, and their West Indian audiences (Kalliney 117, Birat 15-16, Figueroa 73). Laurence Breiner writes that *Caribbean Voices* created both a "real" London community and "[a]t home in the West Indies . . . what must be called an *imaginary* community" (97). The central question of this chapter is how the broadcasts themselves embody and represent community as well as multiple social, textual, and economic networks.

In his six-month review in February 1952, Swanzy asserts that *Caribbean Voices* was responsible for helping create "a higher general standard than ever before" ("The Last Six Months" [10.2.52] 1). Naturally, writers and scholars have asked what standard was being applied to the literature—British or West Indian. The years when *Caribbean Voices* was most influential in the creation of a West Indian literary community overlap with the ascendency of the idea of West Indian federation uniting the West Indian islands in a political unit. In these years before the decolonization of the West Indian colonies, developing a national and/or regional literature was for many political project in which "[t]he coincidence of cultural and political federation had long been an ideal" (Breiner 94). West Indian listeners and British critics alike (including the Irish Swanzy) questioned whether British "outsiders" should, or could, judge West Indian literature.

Caribbean Voices' listeners and contributors also criticized Swanzy's selection criteria and the readers' accents (both for deviating from standard British English and for not accurately representing dialects from individual West Indian islands).[103] These controversies appear in correspondence between Swanzy and Gladys Lindo (*Caribbean Voices*' representative in Jamaica) and between Swanzy and individual authors, but such dissent was not kept behind the scenes. In broadcasts, Swanzy and Calder-Marshall acknowledged audience critiques, responded to specific criticism, and expressed their own dissatisfactions with the current programming. Swanzy also aired literary pieces critiquing the British Empire, racism, and economic inequality within the colonial West Indies. John Figueroa, a *Caribbean Voices* contributor, reader, and anthologizer, asserts that the program's structure was fundamentally democratic, and the way the broadcasts represent debates and disagreement can also be seen as a liberal modeling of democratic

principles (72). This is particularly significant as, in the 1950s, Britain desired to guide the West Indies through the process of federation and increased self-governance. *Caribbean Voices* modeled a community that prioritized West Indian voices, but also insisted on the importance of metropolitan standards and the market-based publishing industry. British policy asserted the increasing autonomy of the West Indian colonies but also insisted that Britain continued to play an important role in the process; likewise, Swanzy described the BBC as, perhaps regrettably, indispensible in developing an independent West Indian literature.

As Swanzy's account of the group assembled in the dressing room after the performance of *Henri Christophe* reveals, the community of writers in London was overwhelmingly male. *Caribbean Voices* aired many pieces written by women, employed women readers, and had a large female audience, but it was West Indian men whose novels were picked up by British publishers.[104] This reflects the gendered reality of the Windrush generation—a large proportion of West Indian immigrants in Britain were men and the women who immigrated included few writers—but it also results from cultural assumptions about women's writing.[105] Allison Donnell shows that for most of the women whose work was broadcast on *Caribbean Voices*, "their professional destiny remained dramatically different to that of men" ("Heard but not Seen" 31). These women primarily remained in the West Indies, continued to write short fiction (not novels), and became known as writers for children (publishing, for instance, with Una Marson's Pioneer Press). Donnell argues that these women were not seen as serious literary figures during the mid-century explosion of the West Indian postcolonial novel.[106] Gendered assumptions about literary communities are reflected in *Caribbean Voices* broadcasts and

in the literary pieces of Selvon and Lamming that narrate the experience of the individual writer and the emerging community of West Indian immigrants in London.

A "SMALL PHENOMENON"[107]: HENRY SWANZY'S *CARIBBEAN VOICES* AS NETWORK

The sheer number of agents and connections within the network that was *Caribbean Voices*, along with the way producers, contributors, and readers described the program's influence at the time, explain in large part the ongoing fascination with the program. My analysis begins from Chris Campbell's description of *Caribbean Voices* as a site of contestation within the uneven power structures of the metropolitan institution of the BBC (491-92), as well as from Peter Kalliney's description of the mid-century as characterized by "concrete forms of exchange and reciprocation between London elites and West Indian artists" and "intense collaboration under the banner of high culture" (*Commonwealth of Letters* 118, 119). According to Bruno Latour, the idea of a network emphasizes both how things are connected in the real world (including technical networks such as radio broadcasting networks[108]) and how these relationships are narrated: the idea of a network is "simultaneously real, like nature, narrated, like discourse, and collective, like society" (*Never Been Modern* 6). Where network theorists' claims that networks are "local at all points" have been criticized for losing focus on power structures (Latour *Never Been Modern* 117; see *Reassembling* 164-72), the history of broadcasting in the West Indies and the broadcasts reveal pervasive imperial power dynamics within *Caribbean Voices*. At the same time, understanding *Caribbean Voices* as a multi-nodal network in which broadcasts were shaped by West Indian writers'

contributions, listener feedback, and audience appropriation challenges conceptions of the BBC as simply the "voice of colonial empire" (Sharma 82).[109]

Marson founded *Caribbean Voices,* (see chapter 1), and her role has recently received more critical attention, as has V.S. Naipaul's role as producer and critic after Swanzy left in 1954,[110] but writers and critics agree that the most influential years of *Caribbean Voices* were under Swanzy's leadership. *Caribbean Voices* expanded from fifteen to thirty minutes in February 1948, and scholars estimate that the BBC's audience may have approached three million listeners (Simpson 4; Campbell 492).[111]

Any discussion of *Caribbean Voices* usually includes some well-known superlatives. The program is remembered as the "*single most* important literary catalyst" and "*the most* profitable writing outlet for young writers" (emphasis added, Brathwaite 87; Cedric Lindo, qtd. in Low 29). Figueroa argues that as a radio program, "Caribbean Voices brought together those who were interested . . . in a way that *nothing else*, except cricket broadcasting, ever has" (emphasis added, 73). Breiner declares that "It was a great piece of luck for the development of West Indian poetry" that the central literary outlet was directed at a "diverse West Indian audience listening *at home*" (99). Swanzy's role as *Caribbean Voice's* producer and as "mentor" to West Indian writers in London is also well established (Low 29). V.S. Naipaul writes of Swanzy's "standards and enthusiasm" and the way "[h]e took local writing seriously and lifted it above the local" (qtd. in Nanton 12). Lamming describes Swanzy finding work for struggling West Indian authors in London and claims, in 1960, "No comprehensive account of writing in the British Caribbean during the last decade could be written without considering [Swanzy's] whole

achievement and his role in the emergence of the West Indian Novel" (Lamming, *Pleasures of Exile* 67).

A typical *Caribbean Voices* program included several selections of poetry or prose, usually introduced by Swanzy, and sometimes followed by critical commentary. There were also regular review talks, special critical essays, discussions, and reviews of published literature. The literary pieces were almost always read by West Indian readers; some of these individuals were dedicated readers, others were writers reading their own or others' work.[112] The voices were disembodied, but accents referenced nation, race, and class, creating and disrupting audience identification with the literature. The voice was often not the artists,' which creates, Briener argues, "an apt emblem of the ineluctability of colonialism, particularly given the irony that imitative writers of the previous generation had been condemned for *writing* in a voice that was not their own" (99). At the same time, the readers were, overwhelmingly, West Indian rather than British voices. Thus, West Indian and British voices often existed side by side on air, sometimes engaging in dialogue, sometimes transitioning between introductory remarks, literary works, and critical commentary. On at least one occasion, the readers (Pauline Henriques and Willy Richardson) engaged in the literary discussion with Swanzy and Calder-Marshall after reading the pieces aloud ("Caribbean Voices" [10 October 1948]).

Swanzy took the oral presentation of literature seriously. A good reader may reveal a poem's good qualities ("The Last Six Months" [1.3.53] 4), but a good reading can become a problem, as "a good reader can give a false value to a bad piece of writing, and that is as much a danger to the young Caribbean literature as a bad reader ruining a good piece" ("Critics Circle – no. 5" 9). Simpson argues that as a radio program,

Caribbean Voices was key in developing an "oral aesthetic" that was "integral to expressing anti-colonial and nationalist sentiments" (Simpson 2). The aural medium highlighted West Indian literature's relationship to an oral tradition, encouraged the literary representation of dialect, and allowed literature to reach diverse audiences (Simpson; Figueroa 72-73).

One of Swanzy's most significant changes to *Caribbean Voices* was to solicit unpublished manuscripts and pieces published in West Indian literary journals with limited circulation. Gladys Lindo collected submissions from the Caribbean, and her correspondence with Swanzy records ongoing discussions about Swanzy's criteria for acceptance and West Indian listeners' responses. While Gladys Lindo wrote the letters, it is generally accepted, drawing from contemporary accounts, that it was her husband, Cedric Lindo "who made the editorial decisions and conducted the work relevant to the program." (Wycliffe Bennett, qtd. in Griffith, "Deconstructing Nationalisms" 14). Cedric Lindo worked for the Jamaica Fruit and Shipping Company, and a formal position with the BBC would have been perceived as a conflict of interest. This circulation of manuscripts leads Gail Low to characterize *Caribbean Voices* as "a transnational institution in the modern sense of the word" (81). *Caribbean Voices* transcripts became important literary artifacts and were circulated beyond the Lindo-Swanzy route.

Because the main distributor of new West Indian literature was a radio program, aural and printed reception overlapped in productive and sometimes frustrating ways. Figueroa writes that, "Willy Richardson made certain to take from Port-of-Spain to Fyzabad a copy of Swanzy's critical review so that he and Telemaque could discuss it" (79). Figueroa assembled the *Caribbean Voices* anthologies for school curricula from

microfilms of *Caribbean Voices* scripts: he "obtained from the BBC a full microfilm copy of the scripts of Caribbean Voices. Unfortunately there was then no available microfiche reader at Mona, and the film had to projected on to a white wall and then copied before the scripts could be selected and edited" (Figueroa 78).

Swanzy was acutely aware of the numerous far-reaching and intersecting networks necessary for literary culture. In an essay describing literary culture in the West Indies, Swanzy states that in the mid-1930s, Kingston did not have a "single, separate book shop ("Literary Situation" 266). He goes on to describe the publications, scholarship, and literary organizations that existed in the West Indies in 1956, explaining, "This material detail, the social background, is stressed because the literary world is pragmatic like any other, and the canon of literary achievement, the very commerce of ideas, depends so largely on the development of outlets" (267). Swanzy sought to use *Caribbean Voices* to support developing "outlets," especially the literary journal *Bim*, edited by Frank Collymore in Barbados, but also *Kyk-Over-Al* in British Guinea, the Jamaican journal *Focus*, special issues of *Life and Letters* devoted to West Indian literature, and critical scholarship on West Indian literature. There was "two-way traffic," especially with *Bim,* as *Caribbean Voices* broadcast poems published in the little magazines, critical broadcasts from *Caribbean Voices* were reprinted in the little magazine, and *Caribbean Voices* reviewed *Bim* issues, which Collymore hoped would help sales (Swanzy qtd. in Nanton 17).

During Swanzy's *Caribbean Voices*, writers were earning little through the limited West Indian publishing opportunities, and the younger generation had not yet

secured publishing deals with British publishers. *Caribbean Voices* provided financial support by paying for accepted submissions and for readers. Lamming writes,

> If you looked a little thin in the face, he would assume that there might have been a minor famine on, and without in any way offending your pride, he would make some arrangement for you to earn. Since he would not promise to 'use' anything you had written, he would arrange for you to earn by employing you to read" (*Pleasures of Exile* 67).

While such economic support is often seen, justifiably, as a much-appreciated means to keep writers like Selvon and Lamming financially afloat while they completed their early novels (Nanton 14), there are echoes of imperial structures and economies as the colonial writers occupied dependent, comparatively impoverished positions. Chris Campbell concludes that it is important "to see the position of the programme within the corporate structure of the key British cultural institution as recasting in various ways the hierarchies of colonial power." (490)

Caribbean Voices also facilitated interpersonal networks within London. Writers from different West Indian islands immigrated to London, many hoping to work at *Caribbean Voices* (Nanton 14). Once there, they met other West Indian writers at the BBC and through Swanzy's patronage. In a BBC interview in 1966, Andrew Salkey recounted the importance of Swanzy's personal relationship with West Indian writers:

> Henry not only became our patron but our friend. He held tutorials at his house in Hampstead. He helped us a great deal to meet the critics of the day. He suggested books and so on . . . And a very close compassionate look at our work. I think this has been invaluable in getting the writers

> started in writing novels and plays for the theatre . . . Because of Henry's influence we got to know one another. I got to know the doyen of West Indian writing, Edgar Mittelholzer. I got to know people like V.S. Naipaul, George Lamming, Sam Selvon. We looked at each other's work, we all threatened to write the West Indian novel. And of course there was always Henry Swanzy there to make us realize that there was more than just passing responsibility to him, the BBC and to our area. (qtd. in Nanton 17)

In Swanzy's talks, he occasionally mentioned these 'real-life' relationships with *Caribbean Voices'* authors and readers. Swanzy mentions meeting Michael Smith in London and remarks in a discussion of Spence's short story that "At the moment, I know he is having a hard time of it in London" ("The Last Six Months" [15.8.48]; [12.2.50]). Such remarks validate his role as producer and highlight the material realities of a literary career. These references, along with the experience of the broadcast voice more generally, help the audience feel as if they know the writers personally. Listeners did often come to feel that they knew the readers. Figueroa writes:

> I had many experiences up and down the Caribbean of meeting people who actually felt that they had previously known me simply because they had heard me broadcasting from London. And I once introduced a relative, who I doubt has read three books in her life, to Frank Collymore, only to be told that, as far as she was concerned, she knew him for she listened regularly on the reading to his reading, in Barbados, of his own sketches. (73)

The British West Indies of the 1950s and the Politics of Caribbean Voices

Caribbean Voices' investment in West Indian literary culture was responding to existing literary movements that sought cultural expression of national and regional culture, society, and politics. The intensification of anticolonial nationalism and the labor uprisings of the late 1930s were closely tied to literary development in the West Indies. Lamming writes:

> It is not often recognized that the major thrust of Caribbean literature in English rose from the soil of labor resistance in the 1930s. The expansion of social justice initiated by the labor struggle had a direct effect on liberating the imagination and restoring the confidence of men and women in the essential humanity of their simple lives. In the cultural history of the region, there is a direct connection between labor and literature. ("Caribbean Labor")

Swanzy and Calder-Marshall sympathized with West Indian social and political movements, and *Caribbean Voices* is often celebrated for encouraging the development of West Indian national literatures. Swanzy states as a given that developing a literary culture is "a very important aspect of nation-building" (Swanzy, "The Last Six Months" [21.8.49] 8). Many writers whose work appeared in *Caribbean Voices*, including Selvon and Lamming, sharply critiqued Britain's colonial history in the region, as well as the ongoing effects of British colonialism (especially racism and class inequality).

Notwithstanding the evidence of *Caribbean Voices* as a "[field] of contestation (Newton 495), the program's emphasis on education, mentorship, and apprenticeship corresponds to broader political dynamics in which Britain continued to assert influence

in the process of independence. In the West Indies, independence was seen as won primarily through negotiation and diplomacy rather than violent struggle, although the violent labor uprisings of the 1930s should not be ignored. The independent countries' economies remained closely tied to both Britain and a United States expanding its global reach. The BBC was also invested in maintaining influence in the West Indies in opposition to increasing American influence and Soviet Cold War allegiances. Regionally, Cold War concerns were most visible in Cuba, but the BBC also sought to counter Soviet broadcasts to the British West Indies.

While Swanzy supported independence for Britain's West Indian colonies and valued individuation of the regional culture, he emphasized the need for cooperation and harmony between individuals and peoples. He praised Vic Reid's novel *New Day* as "not extremist" and cited the Jamaican poet Norman Dawes who, in a *Caribbean Voices*' broadcast, described the West Indian sensibility as "a surface exuberance and beneath that a more somber tone of brooding and long sorrow and resentment, which *never becomes really violent*, and beneath that again a deeper joy in, and gratitude for, existence" (emphasis added, "Literary Situation" 271, 274 [Dawes 8]). Swanzy recognized that West Indians had legitimate reasons for "sorrow and resentment," but held up writers from the West Indies that sought non-violent means to independence and emphasized universal values, which sometimes led to downplaying the history of British colonial exploitation, exclusion, and racism.

Because of *Caribbean Voices*' unique format and Swanzy's intense commitment to West Indian literature, imperial power dynamics are sometimes ignored, or *Caribbean Voices* is celebrated for subverting the expected colonial relationship. Figueroa writes:

> one of the great contributions of Caribbean Voices was that it offered an outlet to all and sundry, as any full list of its contributors shows. And in doing this it executed an odd twist and inversion of what would then have been considered the proper metropole/periphery relationship. The upsetting thing was that London – the BBC! – was allowing not only Swanzy who had status as being British, as a man of character, and a brilliant producer, to have opinions but also allowing people such as Figueroa and Gordon Bell (and later the 'tedious' Lamming!)[113] to express opinions which presumably should have been allowed only to the British of a certain status or to those who, for instance, ran, intermittently, *Focus* in Jamaica. (Figueroa 72)

On the other hand, while Lamming frequently praised Swanzy's *Caribbean Voices*, he also describes the program's replication of colonial structures in the cultural sphere. Lamming states that the BBC "played a role of taking the raw material and sending it back, almost like sugar, which is planted there in the West Indies, cut, sent abroad to be refined, and gets back in the finished form" (qtd. in J.Dillon Brown, "Tactical Difficulties" 670). Research on *Caribbean Voices* and cultural imperialism shows that Swanzy's gatekeeper role, the ongoing role of British critics, and the BBC's imperial authority created not insignificant metropolitan influence.[114] Swanzy and Calder-Marshall were aware of political and institutional structures and created programs in response to and sometimes in spite of fears of cultural imperialism. Swanzy himself uses imagery of colonial resource extraction similar to Lamming's in describing the early days of the program as functioning as a "mechanical harvester" ("The Last Six Months"

[31.8.52] 1). It can be tempting to read the producer's awareness of such power dynamics as evidence that Swanzy could subvert such structures. I argue that while it appears that Swanzy sought to resist metropolitan power dynamics, and to some extent did so, performances of self-critique reinforced a rhetoric of goodwill that created bonds between British and West Indian intellectuals and reified notions of the BBC's indispensability.

LITERARY CRITICISM ON *CARIBBEAN VOICES*

Swanzy and Calder-Marshall were the two most frequent critical voices on *Caribbean Voices* from 1946-1954. Swanzy presented most programs and provided brief linking commentary throughout; he also wrote regular six-month "stocktaking" programs from 1948-1954 that discussed the recent broadcasts and West Indian literature more broadly (Swanzy, "The Last Six Months" [14.8.48] 1). Calder-Marshall frequently analyzed individual stories (and, less frequently, poetry) for the instruction of the author, other writers, and the audience. Formal critical reviews gave young writers exposure and could catch publishers' attention, providing "links with the wider literary world and, in effect, recognition for Caribbean writers as equals in the metropolis" (Nanton 16). Fuller's review of Walcott's *25 Poems*, for example, led to a publication deal with British Press Jonathan Cape. More broadly, criticism was intended to improve the quality of literature as a whole and to educate the audience about how to read and appreciate literature. Swanzy's six-month reviews mention authors whose work, in his estimation, has improved through criticism. He praises one writer as "one of the few whose progress

is quite visible in the scripts we receive. That is to say, his stories get more and more shape. He has learned exactness and economy" ("The Last Six Months" [21.8.49] 5).

In November 1953, Calder-Marshall used "The Porter Incident," written by an author using the pen name of Harrison Lloyd, as a particularly "remarkable" example of bad writing—"a cautionary tale of How not to Do it" ("Critical Comments" [18 November 1953] 1).[115] He suggests that the listener "see how many howlers you yourself can spot" as a educational exercise (1). Although Calder-Marshall's inability to find any redeeming qualities in "The Porter Incident" is atypical, the talk nonetheless illustrates many aspects of Calder-Marshall's critique and the qualities he was looking for in prose writing.

Calder-Marshall criticizes Lloyd's "inappropriate and irrelevant detail," "wrong use of words," and "illogicality" of plot, and proposes re-writings of various sentences with simpler, more direct language (2, 3, 4). The author uses excessive "complexity," Calder-Marshall argues, "to prevent himself the trouble of thinking" (5). Calder-Marshall defends himself from anticipated charges of metropolitan snobbery with an appeal to professionalism:

> Please don't think, by the way, that I'm being a snooty Englishman criticising a West Indian de haut en bas. Not a bit of it; as a professional writer, I am plagued week in, week out, by stories and novels written by English amateur writers, most no better and some even worse than the effort which I am criticising now. And what do I mean by a professional talking about amateur writers. Just this. As a professional, I regard writing with fear, with awe and humility; the words, the story, the audience.

> Writing a story is like trying to build a substantial house on quicksand. You've got to see it doesn't sink, you've got to make it a good house and you've got to sell it to a client. But amateurs rejoice at the very things which make professionals tremble. There are so many ways of saying any one thing, that the amateur feels proud and the professional humble. (4-5)

Calder-Marshall answers the anticipated charge of imperial arrogance by suggesting that the real arrogance is in those who do not pay enough respect to the craft of writing, or, perhaps, those too proud (or careless) to consider the lessons provided on *Caribbean Voices*. *Caribbean Voices* intended to build up a community of professional writers with technical skill and awareness of market and clients. Calder-Marshall makes a point of mentioning English amateurs, and he seeks to include West Indian writers in the professional community—the role of professional writer is not exclusively that of the British writer.

Calder-Marshall's critical commentary is directed to the audience and the writers themselves. He asks the audience to participate in the critical scrutiny and shows the writer how to improve their story and their future work. These critiques assume an engaged audience who may object to the commentary offered—which was often the case. *Lamming* describes listening to *Caribbean Voices* in Trinidad:

> The West Indian writers would meet in the same house and listen to these programmes. Then they would wait for the closing announcement in the hope that next week's programme would include some of their music. Since the radio was not mine or Cecil's or Clifford Sealey's, and there was no way of avoiding the commercial intrusion which followed, the writers,

> furious or elated according to the critics' recent judgment, would ramble to Down Town Port-of-Spain ...And all the way they were tearing Fuller and Calder Marshall to pieces. . . . 'Who the hell he think he is...?' 'Is all right for him sitting up there talking 'bout we don't take more time...' 'Is what we got to get is a native critic...' And so on" (*Pleasures of Exile* 66).

Even when airing authoritative voices, *Caribbean Voices* "created the possibility of interactivity, an occasion for dialogue among the writers themselves" (Birat 15). Debates over *Caribbean Voices'* assertion of or resistance to cultural imperialism often center upon these critical talks.

The critics' talks emphasize both the subjectivity of the reviewer and assert certain standards. In the six-month reviews, Swanzy uses memory as a critical metric. He states, "I would like now to recall some of the stories that pleased me at the time, and still stay in my memory" ("The Last Six Months" [12.2.50] 1). He often introduces his discussion of stories and poems with phrases like "do you remember" "You probably remember," or the anticipatory, "I hope you remember" ("The Last Six Months" [14.8.48] 2; [30.8.53] 6). References to memory usually serve to introduce selections that Swanzy speaks of favorably although in at least one occasion he states "I also remember, but not so happily" (3). Memory is particularly important given *Caribbean Voice's* "ephemeral" aural existence for most listeners (Swanzy, "The Last Six Months" 21.8.49 1). The argument that what is remembered is that which is valuable artistically is powerful because the listeners do not have a written record of the literature. They cannot flip through the poems, stories, and sketches to revisit or judge the literature.

Swanzy's performance of scanning through his memories of the past six months highlights the subjectivity of his critical statements. He emphasizes his personal pleasure in individual literary selections and prefaces statements with "In my opinion" ("The Last Six Months" 18.2.51 4). He does not present literary value as a purely personal reaction, however. He also references "standards" and technical skill ("The Last Six Months" [1.3.53] 1). Swanzy tells his audience regarding a quote from a Selvon piece, "Now you mayn't like that style, but there is absolutely no denying its quality, or the quality of any number of other phrases" ("The Last Six Months" [1.3.53] 1). In recounting that which is memorable, Swanzy implicitly argues that the valuable literature is that which he, the producer, remembers. By recalling certain pieces to his audience's attention, he anticipates what he thinks they would remember and ensures that they are more likely to remember, with him, those pieces that he mentions in these reviews. Authors paid close attention to Swanzy's personal responses to the pieces, as he made the final decisions on submissions.

While Swanzy's critical statements are mostly the broader strokes of the six-month reviews, Calder-Marshall provided detailed feedback on individual pieces. His suggestions on craft were sometimes very specific. He criticized Karl Sealy's "Dream of Gold," for example, for ending "his three characters' names in a similar way, Janis, Carless, Norriss" and commented that the author Alex Fitzgerald "should either choose Alec or Alexander as his first name. Alex Fitzgerald is a tonguetwister which immediately sets up speaker-resistance" ("Caribbean Voices" [11 June 1950] 4; "Critique" [8 July 1951] 4).

Calder-Marshall gave predictable advice to avoid unnecessary wordiness and detail and to 'show, not tell.' He praises Selvon's "The Sea" for being "told simply" with an opening that "plunges you right into the story" ("Caribbean Voices" [14 March 1948] 4) and argues that Vic Reid's simple language conveys "sincerity and power" ("Review of Life and Letters" 5). He references aspects of writing that are unique to radio: Calder-Marshall states that Selvon needed to make transitions to "unspoken thought" clearer as they were marked in brackets—information unavailable to the listeners ("Caribbean Voices" [25 June 1950 8]). He also points out an eight-line multi-clause sentence, and exclaims in dismayed surprise that the story was "specially written for broadcasting!" ("Caribbean Voices" [14 March 1948] 9). Ultimately he argues that for the short story, changes made for better radio listening experience also improve the overall literary work. In a review of "A Coffin for Ethel" he states, "It was on the tip of my tongue to say that it was too literary. But that isn't so. In fact the improvements that would be necessary to make it better for broadcasting would I am sure improve it from a literary point of view" ("Caribbean Voices" [13 March 1949] 8).[116]

Calder-Marshall offered advice on form, describing "Taxi Mister" as an "anecdote, with trimmings" rather than a short story ("Caribbean Voices" [13 March 1949] 7). Likewise, he found Lamming's "Growing Up in the Village" "a poet's short story rather than a prose writer's. . . . transmission of emotions and impressions" ("Caribbean Voices" [9 January 1949] 4). Calder-Marshall describes the structure to be a "pattern" comparable to that of "a dance, a piece of music or a painting" ("Comment on 'The Thought'" [25 January 1953] 3). At the same time, structure and craft are meaningless if the story doesn't have "life," or ambition to say something important.

Swanzy frequently emphasized the importance of "local colour" in his letters to Gladys Lindo ([August 1946] qtd. in Griffith, "This is London calling the West Indies" 203). Swanzy's local color includes environmental details, plots and themes representing West Indian concerns, representations of a West Indian "sensibility" and local language patterns (Dawes 8). Swanzy believed that the local was the genesis of universal art and maintained that "Most West Indian writers have not really recognized the truth of Chesterton's aphorism that only the local is real" ("Literary Situation" 270). Calder-Marshall shared this belief that "a literary work's "universality," [was] derived from its rootedness in 'the life and thought of a particular time and place'" (Griffith, "Deconstructing Nationalisms" 13). He also acknowledged that his audience may feel as if they are receiving conflicting direction, as Swanzy's insistence on pieces that capture the character of the West Indies could explain why authors include ample details in the first place. Calder-Marshall responds, "I know you may say that this process of pruning is cutting out something essential, the local colour; but to that I'd answer that at the moment the story is obscured by local colour and that we'll get all the local colour we need by concentrating on what is essential to the story as such" ("Criticism" [16 May 1954] 3).

"[W]hy should the BBC set up as a critic at all"?

Both Swanzy and Calder-Marshall were acutely aware of their outsider status when commenting on West Indian literature, and of the irony of British critics judging representations of local setting and experience. Swanzy and Calder-Marshall attempted to mitigate their outsider status by emphasizing personal experiences which made them more understanding of the West Indian situation. While Swanzy did not visit the West

Indies until March 1952, he connected the Irish and West Indian experience of colonialism (Griffith, *This is London Calling*). Swanzy recounted:

> I mean, one had the sort of "left-wing" view of encouraging people who had had a raw deal, really . . . and my problem of course is that I come from Ireland, you see. I'm Irish, and although I left Ireland when I was 5 and never went back, or seldom did, one did have the feeling that what one wrote and was interested in was not the kind of thing that somebody like a Philip Larkin or a Gavin Ewart would write, really. (qtd. in Griffith, "Deconstructing Nationalisms" 2)

Many scholars emphasize Swanzy's Irishness to complicate the representation of his *Caribbean Voices* as a monovocal imposition by an English BBC. While, as the above quote shows, Swanzy found his Irishness inspiring, it seems that most West Indian listeners considered Swanzy British.[117]

Calder-Marshall was the only regular non-West Indian *Caribbean Voices* critic to have visited the region. Swanzy had read and admired Calder-Marshall's travel-narrative and social history *Glory Dead*, which Calder-Marshall wrote after spending three months in Trinidad and Tobago in the late 1930s (Griffith, "Deconstructing Nationalisms" 11). Calder-Marshall describes his experiences in Trinidad and Tobago briefly in his talk, "What I Hope to See from the West Indies" as "three months which I shall never forget . . . for the beauty of the islands; for the good friends I made there; for my first acquaintance with West Indian life, its brilliant richness and its somber shadows; its gaiety, its sudden outbursts of anger, of passion; its simple generosity" (1). The "outbursts" referred to include the labour uprisings of the late 1930s; Calder-Marshall, a

trade-unionist, supported unionization in the West Indies as a means to "raise the pitifully low standard of living" (1).

While Swanzy and Calder-Marshall argued that their experiences made them "sympathetic" to West Indians and knowledgeable about their history and concerns, they were also upfront about the limitations of their outsiders' perspective. In an early six-month review, after commenting that the reception of *Caribbean Voices* has been good, Swanzy addresses the question of outside criticism head on, with a touch of humor:

> I don't know what your own impressions of the last six months have been, except that you do seem to like this outlet. Speaking for myself, I am glad of the check on my own judgement, provided by Arthur Calder-Marshall, the novelist, on five or six occasions, and the poet Roy Fuller on one occasion. I found their views excellent. They were the same as mine . . . Of course, you will probably say that all three of us are Britishers, with our own values and background, different from yours. We are conscious of this difficulty, really conscious of it, but we haven't met the criticism so far, of too much European uniformity, except on the technical side of broadcasting . . ." (**"**The Last Six Months" [15.8.48] 1).[118]

A year later, Swanzy addresses the fact that his audience is making the complaints of outsider critiques that he anticipated in the 1948 talk:

> Sometimes one wonders what is the good of a programme like Caribbean Voices. It provides some recognition for writers, it is true, and a little money from time to time. But it has not the time to develop a theme or the space to develop a circle, it is ephemeral, and above all, it is so incredibly

> remote. Literature, as opposed to science, is above all a regional thing, rooted in the soil of every day life. What can one really do at a distance of 4,000 miles?
>
> For these reasons, no doubt, the programme has been rather severely criticised in the last six months, especially for its treatment of poetry. The commentators from here, it is said, are remote and patronising, they consider influences rather than the actual achievement of promising West Indian poets, they bring in their small literary feuds and axes to grind etc. In any case, why should the BBC set up as a critic at all, apart from the selection of manuscripts which is presumably essential? All of which questions are difficult to answer, given a genuine alternative outlet for West Indian writing. And the real question is, does the programme assist the development of that genuine alternative – a first-class literary review with money and an alert public to back it, or even a regional wireless station building its own literary tradition? ("The Last Six Months" [21.8.49] 4)

This talk comes early in Swanzy's time at *Caribbean Voices* and shows him publically questioning the program's purpose and impact. He acknowledges that his commitment to the local in literature also requires a commitment to local critical voices but concludes that even with its flaws, *Caribbean Voices* is necessary. A "genuine alternative outlet" refers not only to the ability to reach a broad regional audience, but one open to artists experimenting with dialect and influenced by European modernism, as opposed to the

British nineteenth-century tradition favored by colonial elites. Swanzy states the transitional nature of *Caribbean Voices* more directly in a letter to Roy Fuller:

> the purpose of the programme, in so far as it has a purpose is to attempt to build up some kind of contemporary tradition by the exchange of writings between the islands and at the same time to give the writers the benefit of some of the critical standards of Europe. Of course the relationship is temporary; the real work can only properly be done in the Caribbean itself. ([1948] qtd. in Nanton 15-16)

The program's ongoing relationship with *Bim* was one attempt to help strengthen regional venues for the dissemination of literature and criticism within the West Indies.

Calder-Marshall repeats the question about whether *Caribbean Voices*, as a deliverer of British criticism, is needed at all in a review of a West Indian edition of *Life and Letters.* He argues that the introductions by British and American outside perspectives were not as effective as allowing West Indians to discuss their poetry themselves. He acknowledges the irony of stating this on *Caribbean Voices*:

> in my view the Jamaican number of Life and Letters is very good value, in so far as it's written by Jamaicans; it would have been better value still if Jamaicans had written what they wanted to see happen generally for themselves instead of our having the views of outsiders, however sincere and able they may be. Perhaps some of you are even wondering why I am giving this review. ("Review of Life and Letters" 7)

With that, Calder-Marshall ended his segment without trying to answer this apparent contradiction. *Caribbean Voices* critics stress the limitations of the outsider's ability to

offer useful judgment, while, of course, making those critical judgments in large and small form regularly throughout the life of the program.

Staging critique and dissent

By acknowledging actual and anticipated objections of West Indian audience members, *Caribbean Voices* did include critiques of the program, usually mediated through the voice of the producer or critic. Swanzy and Calder-Marshall included comments that question their very right to offer critique, which could be seen as giving air to views that challenge their authority. Swanzy portrays criticism as reciprocal and part of an ongoing conversation. He states, "I hope writers and their friends, even impartial listeners, will not be offended if it has been a little outspoken here and there. In our turn, I have to admit that we in London have had a certain amount of criticism of the reading, especially of poetry" ("The Last Six Months" [15.8.48] 4). Swanzy shows that he responds to listener feedback, and that listeners shape the program through their submissions and their feedback communicated through Lindo.

It was not only British critics who valued critique. J. Dillon Brown writes that Lamming "considered disputation both constructive and necessary, and he encouraged opportunities for intellectual contention and debate" (*Migrant Modernism* 76). There is evidence for this in Lamming's supposition that Swanzy encouraged more robust criticism: "it was a most salutary change when, under Henry Swanzy's direction, I'm sure, Fuller and Calder Marshall became stringent. And Calder Marshall, whose sincerity was beyond question, could be very rough" (*Pleasures* 66). Campbell argues that the debates aired within *Caribbean Voices* "energized a broad audience who felt they had a

stake in the shape and direction of national cultural forms in the Caribbean, and, with this, a stake also in a growing autonomy from the "impersonal hand" of the mother country's cultural codes and standard" (493). Literary criticism could help improve the writers' craft, but even more than that, the writers could enter into a conversation, speak back to the critic whether they were speaking to their radio, writing letters, or conveying their opinions to Lindo.

On air, however, dissenting voices do not truly counter Swanzy's, Calder-Marshall's, and Fuller's perspectives, but are incorporated into their arguments. Swanzy's public self-criticism also reinforces *Caribbean Voices* status as a "genuine . . . outlet for West Indian writing" (Swanzy, "The Last Six Months" [21.8.49] 4). When Swanzy includes parenthetical phrases like "perhaps you will forgive me that metropolitan 'but,'" the self-effacing rhetoric defuses dissent by making it clear that the critics have considered their audiences possible objections ([21.8.49] 5**)**.

Swanzy sometimes directly asserted the critic's perspective over the disgruntled audience member's. To the listener who objected to Fuller's critique that "Walcott should write more directly out of his background" ("the Last Six Months" [13.8.50] 5), Swanzy responded:

> And yet this comment, surely mild enough when we consider that Walcott is a young poet, still uncertain of his direction, was savagely attacked by a poet in Jamaica, who called it 'patronising'. I hope that this counter-critic had had time now to contrast Senaa Alcum Soapette with Walcott's recent play, Henri Christophe, and see the contrast in power, when the poet is

> expressing not only himself, but the whole balance of forces of which he is the centre. (5-6)

Swanzy argues that Walcott's youth indicates his clear need for guidance from older, wiser (British) critics; his youth mirrors that of West Indian poetry more broadly. Swanzy's rhetoric portrays the listener's objection as emotionally charged and confrontational (he "savagely attacked" Fuller's talk) and contrasts this with Fuller's reasonable, "mild" critique. Finally, Swanzy offers evidence from Walcott's work that proves the British critic Fuller was correct in his assessment. While this sort of direct taking sides in disagreements between West Indian listeners and British critics is not common in Swanzy's six-month reviews, the reviews' inclusion of critique serve, in the end, to reinforce rather than undermine the authority of the British critical voices aired on *Caribbean Voices*.

Swanzy made a point to highlight the fact that he made changes to *Caribbean Voices* in response to audience feedback. Even his six-month review programs were instituted, he claims, in response to a listener suggestion ("The Last Six Months" [15.8.48]). In a six-month review from 1949, Swanzy states that in response to audience criticism that the British reviewers are "remote and patronising," they have "laid off" on critical talks for the time being ("The Last Six Months" [21.8.49] 4,5). He frequently discussed audience response to different readers on air. Although he had earlier stated his dislike of the competition created by prizes, he asked his audience if prizes would increase poetry submissions and be a useful form of "social recognition" ("The Last Six Months" [21 August 1949] 8).[119] These appeals to audience participation show other

ways in which *Caribbean Voices* could be seen as a responsive and reciprocal radio series.

However, the critical talks that Swanzy talked about reducing in the summer of 1949 returned in large numbers by the next summer, though Fuller gave far fewer reviews than Calder-Marshall. While he may have made some changes to readers, Swanzy's preference for West Indian readers remained, and the experiment to use English readers appears to have been brief. *Caribbean Voices* never (to my knowledge) delivered prizes. The fact that Swanzy raised questions and made brief changes to the structure of *Caribbean Voices* makes the program appear very open to audience input, and his talks deliberately highlight this sense of reciprocity, but the outcomes eventually align with Swanzy's stated preferences. Swanzy's six-month review programs are in many ways a democratic performance that allows Swanzy to explain why his way is most suitable and makes outcomes appear democratically chosen.

A West Indian Symposium

Swanzy included more West Indian writers talking about West Indian literature and giving formal critical reviews in response to critiques that the criticism was dominated by outsiders. Swanzy was particularly proud of the symposium of West Indian writers "fortuitously assembled in London" that aired in 1950 ("Literary Situation" 270).[120] The writers were a diverse group—men and women from various islands and of various ethnicities. Consistent with *Caribbean Voices*' goals of mentoring literary and critical voices, Calder- Marshall introduced the various writers, provided some opening questions, and gave brief final remarks.

The writers each spoke upon the question of how to define West Indian literature and the value of outside (European) standards and literary influence. The symposium includes a number of different perspectives. Most panelists agree that there is not a shared West Indian culture: Selvon celebrates that "we have no tradition . . . we can accept and reject as we want" and Mittelholzer resists the very idea of "consciously and deliberately creating a culture" ("A West Indian Symposium" 3, 1). Others scold West Indian writers for "a lack of perseverance" or complain that West Indian writers are not "well-read" (4, 5). In the closing announcement, Swanzy states "We hope you enjoyed [the Symposium] and that [the writers] adequately expressed your own point of view" which gives the audience the sense of participating; with diverse voices and views it is hoped that the individual audience members can identify with at least one of the perspectives given (8).

Calder-Marshall follows the writers' remarks with a short statement on the symposium and the development of West Indian literature in general:

> It's quite impossible to sum up a discussion like this, except by saying that it's quite plain from the tone of this discussion that West Indians and Jamaicans especially are becoming more and more self-critical. And to me – as an outsider – the progress of Caribbean literature during the past twenty years, despite aberrations, appears quite remarkable. (8)

What also appears remarkable is that Calder-Marshall uses the term discussion twice in his closing statements while the symposium script records something very unlike a discussion. Each author presents his or her response and Calder Marshall then moves on to the next author. While some speakers refer briefly to previous comments, there is no

back and forth as there was in the *Caribbean Voices* book review program "Critics Circle" or in Orwell's "Voice" on the *Indian Section*. Each writer speaks only once. This is clearly a result of the large group assembled for a thirty-minute program. The insistence that this was a discussion presents the show as if it was an enactment of a community of writers, like the groups that gathered in Swanzy's home, and invites the audience to feel as if they have participated in some way, or were at least represented. What was presented was much more constricted: there were no debates, even when contrary perspectives were offered, because the writers never talked to each other. The opportunity to truly enact a discussion of West Indian literature fell flat. The symposium reveals the possible difficulties and failures of produced radio programs to truly replicate, create lively debates and discussions on air given time and production constraints.

"As an outsider"

In the symposium, Calder-Marshall suggests that his "outsider" position offers a certain valuable distance when judging broad trends in West Indian literature. While Swanzy and Calder-Marshall usually presented their outsider status as detrimental, they also spoke on air about the value of this position. As producer, Swanzy benefited from the outsider perspective. Marson, the original producer of *Caribbean Voices*, was an insider, of course, and faced accusations of favoritism towards Jamaica and black West Indian writers. Swanzy was outside island allegiances.

At times, the rhetoric of outside perspective was baldly imperial, even while clearly intended to praise the developing literature. In his first talk for *Caribbean Voices*, Calder-Marshall describes his experience reviewing the last year's broadcasts:

And it gave me great joy; any writer who discovers a new literature growing in new soil gets a peculiar delight; but mine was all the greater because this was coming from a people, very dear to my heart, who has been dumb and now at last are beginning to speak with their own voices . . . .

Now the great strength of this new writing of yours is that you're writing of the world around you. Your poets are taking not just the narrow poetic diction of the nineteenth century to express their meaning; they're lifting words from everyday life, making their poetry from these. . . You're discovering your landscape, the streets you live in, the words to paint the pictures of your everyday life. Good! It's essential that you should fix your world in words, your words to express your vision of that world. . . .

Generalising wildly, I should say that at the moment you writers are rather like men on a dark moonless night trying to find their way with torches; as far as the torch throws its light things are clear and distinct; and from the deep shadows sometimes comes the most distant flash of an animal's eyes caught in the light; but all round is darkness.

Every poem and short story that you write which is original and fresh pushes the frontiers of darkness a little further and a little further. You yourself sitting at home in your own room, in your own town on your own island may not see this. But here in England, at this distance, I can see it; like someone standing on the top of a hill looking down over a city;

> on Laventille for example looking over Port of Spain as night falls and the lights flash on one by one until the sky glows with reflected light. I can see the West Indies beginning to glow as a poet here, a short story writer there succeeds in kindling his fire. . . . ("What I Hope to See from the West Indies." 2-3)

I quote at length because Calder-Marshall's colonial imagery goes through several iterations. He describes himself in the imperial position on top of a hill looking down upon Trinidad observing the civilizing fires of literature come to light in the wilderness. In describing British criticism on *Caribbean Voices*, Kalliney notes that "these examples give the impression that metropolitan intellectuals were allowed, even encouraged, to pronounce judgments on West Indian writing from Olympian heights" (*Commonwealth of Letters* 122). Kalliney goes on to show the ways writers also had "the opportunity to defend their work and challenge such criticisms on the air" (122), but here Calder-Marshall enthusiastically embraces such an "Olympian" position. He is the explorer, "discovering writers in new soil" as one would discover a new plant species, and he has passed the torch to the West Indian writers who are now pushing back the "frontiers of darkness." The awakened 'natives' are only now "discovering" their local places as subjects of literature and emerging from their "dumbness."

This rapid and exciting development in West Indian literature is one Calder-Marshall sees as original creation by West Indian writers, but one nurtured by the BBC and other British producers, writers, and critics. It is the outside observer, who, with a close personal affection for the West Indies and West Indians (and personal knowledge of Trinidadian places and peoples), can teach West Indian writers about the proper forms

that they are only now discovering and teach an audience to appreciate them. Significantly, part of this discovery is refusing the yoke of cultural mimicry that was brought by British colonialism. But it is the British critic who must help the West Indian remove that yoke. Swanzy and Calder-Marshall were deeply committed to West Indian literary independence. Swanzy often said that he regreted the necessity of an outsider program like *Caribbean Voices.* However, the rhetoric of the BBC's indispensability at this time in the development of West Indian literature becomes paternalistic and imperialist. Self-conscious discussions of how *Caribbean Voices* was failing and succeeding at creating literary community on and off air reinforced the representation of the BBC's authority and its suitability for developing such a literary community in a place where one did not exist. Moreover, *Caribbean Voices* aired dissent and included literature of oppositional, anti-colonial voices, but continued to operate within the constraints of the radio medium, which make spontaneous discussion impossible, as well as within assumptions of culture and "standards" that continued to operate within colonial power dynamics. Moves to highlight the diversity of voices simultaneously reinforce the essential singularity of the BBC voice.

GEORGE LAMMING AND SAM SELVON: ARTISTS WITHIN AN EMERGING IMMIGRANT COMMUNITY

In August 1950, Swanzy introduced the work of two writers who had arrived in London the previous April:

> A few months ago, two young writers from Trinidad journeyed to London on the same boat in search of wider horizons. You have heard their voices

> reading several items in the programmes since then, but you may have wondered what has become of them as writers. Well, here is a poem by Lamming and a prose-poem by Selvon which may express some at least of the complex reaction to the new experience. ("Reaction to England" 1)

Lamming's and Selvon's pieces are very different, but their works and their experiences are already being grouped—they came "on the same boat" and have become part of the emerging West Indian community in London.

Lamming's Emigrants and Schoolboys

Lamming addresses "Song for Marian" to the African-American singer Marian Anderson, who he heard sing in London. The speaker describes "parading my color" when attending the concert—even as a member of the audience the presence of a black man in England is a spectacle. The poem also conveys his pride to share Anderson's race. Lamming writes:

> Now I venturing from scattered islands
> To rediscover my roots
> Have found an impersonal city
> Where your tales are incredibly true,
> And I who had never sworn violence
> Nor charted courses for the heart's refusal
> To white, black, brown at home or afar
> Am urged to register with the outlaws. (2)

Whereas the speaker, hearing Anderson's songs in the West Indies, did not understand them, in coming to London he experiences life as part of a black minority within white-dominated society. The poem evokes a community of exiles ("outlaws"), though one fractured from others and potentially from each other by "our criminals' lone commandment, / Hate thy brother as thyself" (2). The poem's themes of racism and isolation within London are ones that appear often in Lamming's fiction.

In 1953, *Caribbean Voices* broadcast a selection of Lamming's novel in-progress that would be published as "A Voyage" section in *The Emigrants* in 1954. This piece describes the men's conversation in the ship's dormitory, which "seemed a private little territory." As long as the ship was going from island to island, their attention was on the islands and "The ship was simply the vehicle," but after leaving the Azores, "Only the ship remained . . . They had come together without effort or invitation, exchanging confidences, telling stories . . ." ("Extract" 1). A community forms in this transitional space along routes between countries. The men discuss their hopes for life in England, and two men posture and debate over the big islands and the small islands.

The group of men in the ship's dormitory is another rendering of the schoolboy groups in *In the Castle of My Skin* and "David's Walk," broadcast on *Caribbean Voices* in August 1947 when Lamming was still teaching in Trinidad. In "David's Walk," Lamming describes a section of road, again showing an interest in the physical routes that connect places. The road exists apart from and outside of the institutions it connects, but it only exists because of them: "This road with its dust and bristling hare and mongoose (,) was no less a part of the general scheme of things (,) than the school or the church which lay a few miles away" (1). Schoolboys, the "pride and virility of the village's

prospective manhood," make the "ritualistic" walk to school along David's Walk "carrying on from where their fathers had left off" (1, 2).

In the ship's dormitory of the extract from *Emigrants*, however, the artist, in the figure of Collis, both values the experience of community among the immigrant men, but also stands apart. Collis is wary of the "Governor," whose "every limb seemed an assertion of loud masculinity" (9). All the other men join in "open admiration" of the Governor's physique, but Collis "recoild . . . trying to avoid his eyes" (8, 9). As Nicole Rizzuto argues, *The Emigrants* "at once instantiates this precarious community and defines this instantiation as a risk" (398). Although the entire selection seems to argue that these men have formed a brotherhood, it is the "Governor," not Collis whose words conclude the piece: "All you down here is my brothers" (9). In the published novel, the Governor looks toward Dickson, who "covered his face with a magazine . . . 'All you,' he said doubtfully" (39). Lamming's stories and poems of schoolboys and immigrants evoke the emerging West Indian immigrant communities of the 1950s. J. Dillon Brown argues that his novels reveal a recognition of the complex, contending relations between individuals themselves, and their consequences on notions of community" (*Migrant Modernism* 96). Lamming's and Selvon's *Caribbean Voices*' pieces resist fully idealizing these communities and insistently portray the personal, individual, subjective experience of the immigrant West Indian writer.

Poem in London

Selvon's "prose poem" that followed Lamming's "A Song for Marian" on "Reaction to England" also tells of the poet's experiences as a recent immigrant to

Britain. There is much continuity between "Poem in London" and Selvon's well-known novel of West Indian immigrants in London, *Lonely Londoners* (1956), but the pieces also differ significantly in content and form. "Poem in London" is written in a stream-of-consciousness style not unlike that used in Selvon's novel. It establishes a stream-of-consciousness style with incomplete sentences, accumulated phrases, and repetition. The poem also includes many images and places of the later novel—the weak English sun, Waterloo station, "the black sooty mucus" from the fog, racist exclusion from "a clerical job," but it is from the perspective of the fresh and optimistic new immigrant—not the Moses of *Lonely Londoners* but Galahad, or Moses ten years before the opening of the novel ("Poem in London" 3, 4). "Poem in London" contains no dialogue, and the narration, which shifts between first-person singular, first-person plural and third-person, does not use West Indian dialect or language patterns.

The most surprising difference is that the climax of "Poem in London" comes in the countryside around the village of Chesham, 30 miles northwest of London, not in the London neighborhoods of *Lonely Londoners*.[121] Initially the speaker wants to transform London into Trinidad and "unleash Woodford Square at midday" (3). Imagining Port of Spain's central place of public intellectual debate within London suggests a similar sentiment as Louise Bennett's "Colonization in Reverse" or *Lonely Londoners*' Tanty creating a West Indian community at the London grocery, but the poem refuses to identify with language of territorial conquest (78-80).[122]

At some point in the speaker's early days in England, a transformation took place. The poem tells of the speaker's transformation from being physically in England but 'existing' in Trinidad to waking up to life in England. The speaker refuses to claim that a

single incident marks this beginning, but provides a provisional narrative to his imagined audience that insists on a single moment to mark this rebirth.

> Yes, if you insist, we will not offer you the queues outside the coliseum or Albert Hall, of the time the man in the Ministry of Labour office said he was sorry we could not get a clerical job, because of our colour. Or the way the people bury themselves behind their newspapers or look at you glassily. These explosions will blast an understanding in your brains, but we did not truly die because of them. (4)

These experiences are all part of the immigrant's story, but the speaker's metaphorical death and rebirth happen in an English haystack. The poem shifts from first-person plural to a second-person address that narrates the events in third-person:

> You could imagine him in the hole which he had burrowed in the stack to keep warm, spread-eagled, a world four thousand miles away swimming lazily around in his brain, and memories. The morse code, coming to his ears in sweet birdsong, held him enraptured and amazed. He was being born again to live another cycle.
>
> . . . For a minute the moon peered from the window of a cloud then shook its head. And the birdsong continued, insisting on time, time to begin, to get a move on in life. Drunk and belittled by the valley and the first signs of light creeping into it, he stood up, a little man in a big country, and walked on gawky legs like a new-born calf, testing his new life.
>
> It was then that the poem sang in his veins. (5)

The speaker selects this moment to mark his reincarnation in Britain, with motifs recalling British pastoral poetry and nature writing in which birdsong, the moon, the landscape, and village assert the transformative power of the English countryside. It is difficult to create a mental image of someone both burrowed and spread-eagled within a haystack. Burrowing suggests a figure curled in the fetal position waiting in darkness and safety to emerge in a metaphorical birth. The speaker's outstretched, spread-eagled form emphasizes the masculinity and maturity of the adult heterosexual man. At the same time, the outstretched limbs suggest a figure fallen in death, as the poem refers to this event equally as new life and "death on the downs" (4). The maturity, masculinity, and vulnerability of the spread-eagled position is combined constructively, albeit awkwardly, with the image of a man, immigrant, poet, reincarnated from the haystack's womb. His immigration story is one of personal transformation and literary potential. He then "wandered off for more poetry" and found it in the village, the flowers, and in Robert Browning's lines engraved on a church clock: "Grow old along with me, the best is yet to be" (5). Browning's words appear as a welcome and a friend's or lover's promise from Britain to the West Indian writer. In some respects, the literary community that is being celebrated is that of the British tradition, but the piece is also about the current generation of West Indian writers.

The speaker has traveled to the countryside with a group of male friends. The one woman, "C's" unnamed girlfriend, resists the excursion. She is constantly "demanding to know what it was all about" and is afraid of getting back too late (4). Her agitation is described as humorous and inconsequential, but probably indicates a concern about returning as a single woman to face social censure and possibly a locked boarding house.

Her agitation is described as humorous and inconsequential, and consolidates the homosocial nature of this romantic quest.

But rather than celebrate the artistic possibilities of this community, the narrator cannot truly share his experience:

> The impossibility of recollection ever bringing back the truth of the moment made him breathe deep, or of ever telling them when he backtracked four thousand miles how it was. What should he say and how should he begin? They would have to live it themselves to know. . . .
>
> When he got back to the station he could not help but stutter out a few words about how it had been, trying to inject enthusiasm into his companions. But he managed the important thing, which was to make them get up to go and see for themselves.
>
> When we all went back to the village, however, the moment was lost forever. Smoke curled from a chimney, and a van roared in the road with the first edition of the newspapers from London. (6)

This describes not only a generalized impossibility of sharing a moment of artistic inspiration, but the intrusion of London, which, in this piece is the location of racial alienation intruding into the idyllic English pastoral.

The prose poem itself seeks to communicate to the West Indian listener the experiences of a community of immigrants, but this also remains elusive. The shifting point of view attempts to tell the story of both the individual and the community. The piece begins:

> Not one night in Piccadilly, with garish lights and blazes of noon, and chained laughter let loose upon the bewildered people. Not in Trafalgar Square, where water gushes from the mouths of lions and we are afraid of the pigeons. (2)

The "we" of "we are afraid of the pigeons" shifts in a few paragraphs to first person singular as the poet recounts "my loneliness," and the account of the experiences in the haystack are primarily third person (3). Fundamentally, however, this piece is an account of the individual immigrant's experience of loneliness and alienation and his subjective, romantic experience of rebirth in nature. Selvon had not yet found the "episodic" form "filtered through the central consciousness of Moses" of *Lonely Londoners* that would allow the expression of both the individual and the communal as well as the tension of Moses' "private identity" and "the consciousness of the group" (Salick 120; Nasta, "Setting up Home" 85).

Selvon's and Lamming's poetry and short fiction aired on *Caribbean Voices* in the late 1940s and early 1950s show the authors testing out themes and formal techniques for their early novels. These pieces also show Selvon and Lamming representing the tension between the individual artist and an emerging literary and immigrant community. These concerns are especially relevant in the context of *Caribbean Voices*. Swanzy celebrated when he found that "Individualities are asserting themselves" but emphasized the importance of community ([18.2.51] 2). While *Caribbean Voices* broadcasts propose that individual genius and a literary community develop symbiotically, they were sometimes in conflict.

"But the Caribbean can't stay sad for long": Selvon's Anti-Nature poetry and Caribbean Voices' *Literary Community*

If a prose poem extolling the beauties of the English countryside—replete with haystacks, country churches, and cuckoo calls—is somewhat at odds with the Selvon remembered for *The Lonely Londoner*'s and *A Brighter Sun*, Selvon's poetry submissions to *Caribbean Voices* are surprising for different reasons.[123] Selvon's poems from the late 1940s and early 1950s directly confront the popular tradition of West Indian nature poetry. Poems celebrating the beauty of the islands aired often on Swanzy's *Caribbean Voices* and often contained added layers of anti-colonial nationalist or regionalist pride. Selvon's poems systematically dismantle such images. Selvon uses these motifs to portray the West Indian under real economic pressures of colonial governments and global capitalist world system. Selvon's confrontational poems were included on *Caribbean Voices*, but the poems were also incorporated into cohesive episodes that made Selvon one of many voices.

When Selvon was still living in Trinidad, he submitted the poem "Lucky Lucre," to *Caribbean Voices.* It was read in 1947, part of a program of the (unfortunately titled) "human fauna" of the West Indies (1). Swanzy introduces the poem as "another personal confession by ~~a gifted being~~ Samuel Selvon, who has the whole gilded parade of the West Indies in front of him, people and kiskadees and poui trees and yet cries – [Figurero reads] "Lucky Lucre" (9). Swanzy's introduction chastises the speaker of the poem for thinking of money and ignoring the beautiful people, birds, and vegetation of the West Indies. In the poem itself, the speaker makes it clear that he yearns for money not for

prestige or for accumulating possessions (although he ironically suggests that the miser is wise for admiring his money) but because he has no money for food:

> Stranded with a lofty thought
>
> But not a loaf of bread!
>
> Cheap trees – beggar's beauty
>
> Babbling brooks, but breadless days!
>
> Sugarless stars, rice-less rivers
>
> A farthing for a pretty phrase
>
> A penny for your thoughts
>
> A million for your sweat! (10)

Against the context of a literary tradition that proclaims the value of natural beauty and, in Romantic fashion, often valorizes the virtuous peasant or the poet who eschews the crass search for wealth, Selvon insists on the need for a man to earn a living. He links the alliterative commonplace "babbling brooks" with "beggar's beauty" and "breadless" days. He continues alliterative pairings—"sugarless stars, rice-less rivers" that suggest the poor man's inability to appreciate natural beauty while starving. The beauty of nature does not feed the speaker and speaking of that beauty through poetry pays very little as intellectual labor is not valued.

The next year, Selvon's poem "I don't know how it is with you" was read with a number of poems from across the West Indies in a segment called "Caribbean Setting." The program is another example of Selvon's rejection of pastoral sentiments as well as Swanzy's framing of the poem to fit a version of Caribbean poetry as romantic

celebration of the natural world. The first poem was an exemplar of many common West Indian nature poems. Nicky Hendriks poem "Jamaica" concludes:

> Jamaica is a bower filled
>
> With fruits and flowers rare –
>
> Abundant Natures gift to us –
>
> O stranger come and share! (1)

The segment includes other poems that focus solely on the West Indies' natural beauty and poems of "everyday life," as well as poems that combine praises of the islands' natural beauty with cultural pride, mild social critique, nationalism, and anti-colonialism (Swanzy 3).

Selvon's poem, Swanzy says introducing it, brings "a dash of rain darkening the program" (4). West Indian nature poets may write about the rain, but it is usually another aspect of the island's beauty or is the hurricane rain that passes leaving the island more beautiful than ever. Selvon's rain causes individual, human suffering:

> I don't know how it is with you,
>
> But when the rain falls
>
> It seems to me
>
> All melancholy world
>
> Huddled hopelessly,
>
> [. . .]
>
> Time and again, I've tried
>
> To see the wet beauty
>
> Sparkling on trees,

Hear the gurgle as the water

Runs down the thirsty throats

Of dry-bedded rivers,

Share the renovation

With smiling flowers.

[. . .]

I miss the drought,

The sun's friendly warmth,

And slouch along wet streets

With strange, hunched figures

Rain falling in my heart. (4)

The speaker of the poem is in isolated, individual misery even as he knows the rain relieves drought.

Swanzy's follows the reading of Selvon's poem with the following summing up and moving on: "But the Caribbean can't stay sad for long" (4) and transitions with a pun on "blues" to a poem by Archie Lindos of the beauty of blue eyes, skies, and houses. It is a clever segue, but Swanzy's remarks negate the individual author's voice. The speaker of Selvon's poem does stay sad, it is only the other poems selected and presented around it that are not. The first line—"I don't know how it is with you"— emphasizes the individual and the subjective experience, but Swanzy groups the literature and the poets into a broad shared culture "the Caribbean" that can be grasped and evaluated as a whole. Selvon's anomaly was included, but Swanzy's introduction and its presentation among

other nature poems do not allow the audience to stay focused upon Selvon's melancholy piece.

While "I don't know how it is with you" subverts the conventions of describing tropic rain, "Sun," takes on the commonplace of sunny skies. In "Sun," the workers confront the sun: "We squint back at you / In the canefield, slaving under your venomous fist." The poem starkly denies all symbolism of the sun representing a new day and hope. The sun is "deceiving with the promise of another day, / Priming my children for my death / And the catastrophe of their own lives" ("Discovering Tropic" 3). The workers suffer under the sun's unrelenting heat even while that same sun attracts tourists to the islands. In "Triad," aired directly before "Sun," Selvon also satirizes tourists who seek to "discover tropic" but only seek out the wealthy and beautiful areas. Selvon tells the tourist that they must "talk with 'coolie' and nigger' / And sleep in mud houses" ("Discovering Tropic" 1).

At the conclusion of "Triad," Selvon again uses natural imagery in unexpected ways:

> No one discovers tropic
> But many make tropical discoveries
> Like tall bamboos crisscrossing the sky
> Like moving lines of green because of wind.
>
> And Caribbean voices cry
> To be as trees in the jungle:
> Untamed, grotesquely graceful

Standing sturdily for years

Still standing when the sap is dry

Lifelessly demanding attention. (3)

The resonance of *Caribbean voices* yearning for expression would not be lost on Selvon's audience. The trees' strength and beauty, however, is shown to be in spite of life, not a sign of it. These trees are "demanding attention" in death, not unlike zombies whose will is controlled by another. The trees claim space by refusing to fall, but are still dead.

Selvon's Trinidadian anti-nature poems are of the West Indian under real economic pressures, experiencing the materiality of the body and the materiality of the natural elements. In these poems, unlike in "Poem in London," nature is not romanticized as a spiritual or religious experience.[124] With these anti-nature poems, Selvon responds to Caribbean nature poetry tradition as a whole but also to *Caribbean Voices* as a distributer of nature poetry. These poems were "allowed" on *Caribbean Voices* but also incorporated into the broadcasts and made one of many voices.

By not only participating within multiple global networks, but also representing *Caribbean Voices* on-air as part of diverse networks connecting West Indian writers to each other and to West Indian and metropolitan audiences, *Caribbean Voices* helped create the lasting mystique associated with the program. The program celebrated diverse voices by broadcasting writers from different islands, including different literary forms, and voicing differing opinions. Such inclusion and participation can be seen as evidence of *Caribbean Voices'* leveling of metropole-periphery hierarchies, but the program also incorporated these voices in the interest of creating a cohesive West Indian literature. In

many respects, *Caribbean Voices* succeeded remarkably in representing and creating community, and provided West Indian authors with visibility that they most likely could not have accessed elsewhere. At the same time, *Caribbean Voices* broadcasts were constructed to make the program appear more democratic than it was and the radio magazine format was used to incorporate and neutralize contesting voices.

Chapter 3 Endnotes

[102] In the late 1940s, the British West Indies consisted of the Bahamas, Barbados, British Guinea, British Honduras, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, the Windward Islands (Grenada, St. Lucia, Saint Vincent, the Grenadines, and Dominica), and the Leeward Islands (Antigua, Barbuda, the British Virgin Islands, Montserrat, Saint Kitts, Nevis, and Anguilla)

[103] John Figueroa claims that West Indian audiences wanted readers with "very 'Oxford English' voices" and that "many people in the Caribbean felt that poetry on the BBC, even Caribbean poetry, should be read by English voices" (61). Gladys Lindo apparently wrote that Michael Smith was "sitting in a corner and weeping" hearing Figueroa's reading of his poetry (Swanzy to Lindo [10.11.47] qtd. in Griffith "Deconstructing Nationalisms" 15). In addition to deviations from "Oxford English," a West Indian reader reading dialect prose intended to represent language from another island could be "compromised by flawed intonation or accent" (16).

[104] Many of the most celebrated West Indian authors moved to London. Derek Walcott is a notable exception.

[105] See Belinda Edmondson, *Making Men*.

[106] Alison Donnell cites from her correspondence with Swanzy. Swanzy writes, "On reading this reply I am uneasily aware that I might be accused of male chauvinism. Possibly the same thing might be said of the various links in the chain of communication: Cedric Lindo, Frank Collymore, A. J. Seymour. I always think it [sad (crossed out)] odd that I never even heard of Jean Rhys." ("Heard but not Seen" 32)

[107] Swanzy, "Literary Situation" 273.

[108] As Alex Goody writes, "indeed, radio is not necessarily seen as a machine itself. . . . it seems obvious to take radio as the prime example of a universal techno-scientific network, drawing the world closer" (63-64).

[109] Figueroa writes of the significance of radio to *Caribbean Voices'* effects: "That would have been important anywhere, but it was was pre-eminent in the Caribbean, where 1200 miles of sea separated Trinidad and Jamaica, and where communication was by infrequent ocean liners from North to East and South, or by regular schooner in the South.

Short-wave radio really eradicated time and space" (Figueroa 72–73).

[110] See Rhonda Cobham, "The *Caribbean Voices* Programme," and Shizen Ozawa, "Mapping, the City, and Naipaul's *Miguel Street.*"

[111] Chris Campbell writes, “By 1954, a report from the United States Information Agency indicated that somewhere in the region of 93,000 individual radio receiver sets were in operation across the islands of Jamaica, Trinidad and the Windwards, and in British Guiana. Taking into account the realities of communal listening practices in many of these territories, Darrell Newton estimates a Caribbean audience of nearly three million for BBC broadcasts to have been possible” (492, also see Newton 491-92).

[112] *Caribbean Voices* occasionally used English readers, but Swanzy found this unsatisfactory:

> We ourselves were and are satisfied with this policy of using West Indian voices to read West Indian material, but self-satisfaction is a dangerous thing, and apparently some of these voices have European rhythms, besides being disliked in themselves. So we have taken note, and besides trying at more West Indian voices, we hope to have English readers from time to time . . . This will give variety to the voices of sterling programme stand-bys . . . We do realize that the European voice, as well as the European way of looking at things, may not entirely help the West Indies, which has its own voice-rhythm and its own view of life. All I can say is, I hope that the contributions for the coming six months will be strong enough to stand up to the worst that we in London can do to them, either in presentation or in criticism. Good-night” (**“**The Last Six Months” [15.8.48] 5.

Ironically, part of the solution to the European rhythms of some West Indian voices was to use English readers. Swanzy also reveals his awareness of his outsider role here: he notes “*apparently* some of these voices have European rhythms.” This subtle difference seems to only be evident to the West Indian listener.

[113] Earlier in the essay, Figueroa quotes one of his own short stories in which he sought to capture middle-class colonial attitudes towards the new generation of West Indian by having a character say about Lamming: “Oh, he has written a rather tedious book about growing up in Barbados” (63).

[114] In particular, see Philip Nanton, "What Does Mr Swanzy Want?” and Rhonda Cobham, “The *Caribbean Voices* Programme.”

[115] Swanzy mentioned this scathing review in his six-month review, reassuring listeners that the author had not been listening to the broadcast (“The Last Six Months” [10.2.52]).

[116] Over-specializing for radio was not going to win any points, however. Calder-Marshall wrote of Mittelholzer: “He has a very technical mind. Writing for broadcasting, he knows that the BBC don’t like a lot of ‘esses’ because sibilants can be very difficult over the microphone. You may or may not have noticed that apart from the title, the author has used not a single ess’ apart from the last eight words. “I’m lost, doctor! Lost! Sibilant and lost!

There are two difficulties about this stunt; first there is no absolute ban on 'esses' by the BBC. Secondly, even if there were, it is not common knowledge. And if you want a thirdly, the story to have an immediate impact should seem to the listener to addressed to the doctor and not to a BBC producer" ("Caribbean Voices" [4 June 1950] 9)

[117] As of this date, I am not aware that Swanzy discussed being Irish on *Caribbean Voices* programs.

[118] By technical side, Swanzy meant the engagement of more West Indian readers.

[119] See Peter Kalliney's discussion of competition (30). Also see Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters* and James English, *The Economy of Prestige: Prizes, Awards, and the Circulation of Cultural Value*.

[120] It was introduced as a grouping of "14 West Indian writers" but the script, as well as Calder-Marshall's closing recap only lists thirteen (1).
The Participants: Edgar Mittelholzer (Guyana); Doreen Goodwin Grayson (Antigua); Alfred Mendes (Trinidad); Samuel Selvon (Trinidad); H.D. Carberry (Jamaica), Willy Richardson (Trinidad), Emily Lockhart (white Domincan), A.E.T. Henry (Jamaica, former editor of Public Opinion), Elsie Benjamin (Jamaica), Terry Burke (Jamaica, ed. Madame), John Figueroa (Jamaica), Gordon Woolford (white Guyanese), Trinidad (Errol Hill)

Calder-Marshall explains that Lennox de Paiva, Vivette Hendriks, Louise Bennett, and Lamming were also invited but could not come.

[121] In "The Other Selvons," Ramchand analyzes some of the early *Caribbean Voices* stories that were later published in collections. Here, I am considering them within their original broadcast contexts.

[122] Louise Bennett's "Colonization in Reverse" begins:

> Wat a joyful news, miss Mattie,
> I feel like me heart gwine burs
> Jamaica people colonizin
> Englan in Reverse
>
> By de hundred, by de tousan
> From country and from town,
> By de ship-load, by de plane load
> Jamica is Englan boun.

In *Lonely Londoners*, Tanty creates the atmosphere of a West Indian market at the shop though gossip, credit, and West Indian goods.

[123] As Kenneth Ramchand argues, scholars focus upon a limited number of Selvon's works and themes within these works (*A Brighter Sun* and *Lonely Londoners*; peasant experience, dialect, and immigrant communities), often to the neglect of other works, including his earlier short stories and poetry ("Other Selvons" 6).

[124] This is not simply a difference in setting (England versus the West Indies). In "Poem in London," Selvon also romanticizes memories of Trindadian natural beauty.

Chapter 4: "Brotherhood of Blackness": The Transcription Centre's Broadcasts to Postcolonial Africa

In 1964, the Nigerian writer Cyprian Ekwensi was interviewed in London for the Transcription Centre's radio program, *Africa Abroad*. As the announcer explained, Ekwensi was "on his way back" from presenting a paper at the American Society of African Culture in Cleveland, OH ("Africa Abroad 106").[125] While connections between African and African-American intellectuals were hardly new in the 1960s, the fact that writers often stopped by the Transcription Centre studios while travelling from the United States to Africa or vice versa rather than expressly visiting the U.K. is a telling sign of the decentering of Britain on the world stage as well as U.S. interest in building connections with writers from recently decolonized African states. The Transcription Centre's institutional history emerged within these dynamics. The centre, which produced radio programs for transmission on mostly African stations, was based in London and directed by former BBC employee Dennis Duerden, but was funded by the U.S. grant foundations the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF) and the Farfield Foundation that were revealed as CIA fronts in 1966.

The Transcription Centre's magazine program *Africa Abroad* (1962-66), celebrated the explosion of African literature in English. It focused on the cultural and political ties between Africans, African-Americans, and Afro-Caribbeans: the second

episode proclaims "The spirit of 'Mother Africa' is truly abroad!" ("Africa Abroad 2"). In the second episode, for example, the narrator explains that they will examine historical evidence on "the impact of Africa to American Jazz music." *Africa Abroad* programing asserted shared cultural traditions formed through histories of slavery and colonialism, but participants also were quick to explain that the program is not "recklessly throwing slogans around." *Africa Abroad's* often scrupulous avoidance of "slogans" is a response to and rejection of Négritude, the literary movement started by French colonial writers Aimee Césaire, Leopold Senghor, and others in the late 1930s. The relevance of Négritude in postcolonial Africa was hotly debated throughout the 1950s and 60s in periodicals like *Presence Africaine* and *Black Orpheus* and conferences like the Congress of Black Writers and Artists and the Makerere Conference. Many young Anglophone African writers, most famously Wole Soyinka, rejected Négritude as essentialist (Jeyifo 51-52). The recurring debate on *Africa Abroad* is how to talk about global pan-Africanism without Négritude.

The centre's focus on connecting peoples of African descent across Africa and across the world, a project with political resonance after the Bandung Conference (1955) where Asian and African leaders theorized a Third World opposing neo-imperialist divide and rule policies, would seem to counter any suspicion that the program was serving U.S. and/or British political interests. Moreover, most of the creators and participants on the programs were African, from the producer of *Africa Abroad*, the South African writer and journalist Lewis Nkosi to the novelists and poets aired on the program. Nonetheless, repudiating Négritude, I argue, also reflects the political investments of the U.S. funding sources behind the Transcription Centre. Négritude was

associated with self-sufficiency of African peoples and the "neutralism" of the Third World that the U.S. saw as a threat (Prashad 48). Rejecting Négritude had Cold War implications, as the literary movement was broadly associated with Marxism and what some at the Transcription Centre termed an African insularity. While the Transcription Centre's CCF funders did not push specific propagandistic content through the Transcription Centre's programs, as Frances Stoner Saunders and Greg Barnhisel have shown, the CCF promoted general Cold war goals of American influence through positive publicity and through promoting certain ideas of culture and politics and discouraging others.

I argue that the Transcription Centre's alternatives to Négritude can be seen as a move from ties of racial brotherhood to friendship as the ideal for the Commonwealth era. Friendship, with its connotations of freely chosen association, moves beyond bonds formed by historical subjugation and is universalist rather than solely based on race. Although friendship does not come up as a major trope in *Africa Abroad* programs, it is a useful model for thinking about African writers' assertions of political and aesthetic autonomy in the decolonization era as well as the continuation of neo-imperial models of interpersonal connection with the U.S. government's investment in building relationships with members of the African elite. It is important not to ignore the term that does arise most often in Transcription Centre programing, however—brotherhood—not only in regards to race but also gender and ways these radio programs implicitly establish the African man as the normative subject and reinforce assumptions that African literature was a mostly male project.

"[A]lmost an institution": Dennis Duerden's Evolving Vision for African Radio

Dennis Duerden was working within the BBC's Hausa Service when he was approached by the CCF, which was interested in developing radio programming for a rapidly decolonizing Africa. In 1961, Duerden, who had connections throughout Africa in part because he had worked as principal of the Government Teachers' College in Keffi, Nigeria, went on a CCF-BBC joint-funded research trip to Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Sudan, and Tanganyika on broadcasting in Africa. He brought tapes of three sample programs to play for African broadcasters—a discussion on a recent book by William Abraham, "*The Unity of African Culture*," a talk by Batchelor Folson entitled "Marxism in Africa," and a discussion on Tsui and Zulu poetry (Duerden, "Broadcasting in Africa"). Duerden's report testifies to the continent's transitional moment: in some cases Duerden was meeting and corresponding with newly independent nations' broadcasting companies and in others with broadcasting companies operating under British rule. In the case of Tanganyika/Tanzania, the transfer of power and changes in radio leadership occurred in the months in which Duerden was arranging the initial distribution of Transcription Centre tapes.

When Duerden returned to London he resigned from the BBC and founded the Transcription Centre in 1962.[126] Through Duerden's personal relationships with African intellectuals and a location close to the British Museum, the Transcription Centre became a gathering place for writers, artists, and musicians in London. In addition to producing radio programs, the Transcription Centre curated a library, published the newsletter, *Cultural Events in Africa*, ran a theatre workshop, produced films, and briefly hosted a Writers' Group. The expansion to other projects was due in part to Duerden's ambitions

to expand the Centre, but was also in response to pressures from CCF for the centre to become financially self-sufficient and increase its visibility within Africa and the African diaspora. The Transcription Centre was consistently over-budget, often excessively so, and was frequently in danger of bankruptcy.

When compared to the BBC, which had global name recognition and tight bureaucratic control over the production and broadcasting process, the Transcription Centre was a new and unknown institution with little control over how African listeners received their programs.[127] The Transcription Centre recorded and distributed individual talks, interviews, and *Africa Abroad* to Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda, Nigeria, Zambia, and Ghana, as well as some European, U.S, and Asian stations. Radio stations could air *African Abroad* in its entirety or use portions as they chose. Some of these broadcasting decisions seemed to Duerden to be politically motivated. In 1966, he writes, that the Director of Broadcasting from Sierra Leone

> said that they had great difficulty with programmes like those on 'One Party Government', 'Freedom of the Press', etc., and they had to be taken off the air. Even a programme like The African Image' was criticised although ostensibly it was about literature and culture . . . Other radio stations like Zambia and Ghana seem to take our programmes when they say things which they agree with about Africa. ("Report to the Farfield Foundation September" [1966] 5)

This distribution process meant that broadcast information is difficult to determine or verify. While recording dates are noted, the dates of broadcast in different regions is often

unavailable. Duerden himself often did not know whether stations had chosen to broadcast their tapes until well after the fact.

In another indication of the way technological and geopolitical changes transform imperial relationships, the Transcription Centre did not only rely on inviting African writers in London into their studios to create content for their radio programs. Transcription Centre producers also traveled throughout Africa collecting taped interviews to bring back for production in their London studios. In some ways, the Transcription Centre's recording practices challenged London-centric cultural production by gathering interviews and literary discussions from African writers *in Africa* and not only African writers in England. At the same time, such practices echo colonial specimen-collecting expeditions even though the programs were produced for an African rather than an English audience.

Although the centre constantly faced financial worries and logistical difficulties, the small size and unestablished nature of the Transcription Centre provided, Duerden believed, flexibility and freedom from bureaucracy. In a letter to Frank Platt, the director of the Farfield Foundation, Duerden wrote, "I found it extremely difficult to work in large organisations because of the ponderousness of the men that I had to deal with" (18 June 1969). Duerden also valued the Transcription Centre's unique position as neither government funded or commercial. As a grant funded institution, he claimed, the Transcription Centre could avoid suspicion of European state intervention in postcolonial Africa, and could have the freedom to produce programming apart from commercial considerations. This seems to reflect the relative autonomy of the Transcription Centre in producing programs, but assertions of being free from government involvement are ironic

given later revelations of CIA funding of CCF and Farfield and elide the program and policy direction provided by CCF and Farfield representatives that, though limited, did exist.

Some African broadcasters and intellectuals were suspicious of the motives of a London-based, U.S. funded organization giving away programming. In the report of his fact-finding trip, Duerden argued that current CCF publications currently circulating in Africa were reinforcing such suspicions: "it is important that parallel Congress activities should not create the impression that the Congress has a cold-war stance" ("Broadcasting in Africa" 28-29).[128] He writes that the Ghanaian playwright Efua Sutherland and a Ghanaian academic "immediately pronounced the Congress to be an anti-marxist organisation and not one to be talked of too much if Iwanted (sic) a favourable reception in Ghana" (19). In Sudan, Duerden also reported unfavorable reception of Congress' journal, *Forum*, that led him to reiterate:

> It could not be made too clear how dangerous this was for the rest of the Congress' work. Africans already held the Americans responsible for introducing the cold war into Africa by attaching the condition to aid that its recipients should renounce communism and criticise the Eastern bloc. An organisation like the Congress must be especially careful to absolve itself from this charge by its interest in art and writing in general, and not by appearing to show an exclusive interest in political questions" (25).

In Kenya, where the British colonial government was trying to crush the Mau Mau Uprising, officials also suspected Cold War motives. The Kenyan director of broadcasting asked the head of the BBC's African Service, in respect to Duerden's

proposed visit, "what exactly is the Congress for Cultural Freedom; it sounds too frightfully Iron Curtain to be true!" (Jubb). After receiving the demonstration tapes, a Kenyan official wrote Duerden that they found the first program to be direct propaganda. It could be that the Kenyan officials objected because they felt the programs were promoting U.S. policy, but those associated with the Transcription Centre assumed the officials feared the programming would encourage anti-colonial sentiments. Duerden copied and circulated this letter to his directors, and the director-general of the Tanzania Broadcasting Corporation, Thomas Chalmers, responded that he didn't understand the accusation: "Propaganda for what? I can only supposed that people in Kenya, or rather in the KBS [Kenya Broadcasting System], are surprised and rather resentful to find that Africans are as capable as Caucasians in writing music and poetry!" (18 June 1962). Whether or not this was an accurate interpretation, Chalmers' response reflects contemporary assumptions that the colonial Kenyan radio would see African literature as threatening.

Duerden did not spend much energy trying to win over KBS; he did, however, argue that the importance of cultural rather than political programming to CCF was needed to engage listeners suspicious of cold war motivations:[129]

> Programmes for Africa should concentrate on art, literature, music, architecture, etc. to begin with; also descriptive features on African society including discussion about the nature of African society. I did not realise myself until I went there how sensitive the African audience is to political discussion. . . Discussions or talks in which Western political theorists, philosophers, etc. were putting forward arguments which could be

> remotely construed as taking sides in the cold war would be suspect. I am not saying that it is a bad policy to acquaint people in Africa with the arguments used in the East-West ideological battle and to take a pro-Western side in the matter. In fact, I regard it as essential for someone to point out the dangers implicit totalitarian political structures and the mistakes implicit in the concept, "African democracy". I <u>am</u> saying that I regard this role as the wrong one for the Congress in Africa – there are plenty of external broadcasting services of the major countries involved in doing it already. The African broadcasting services would only be extremely suspicious of an organization called the 'Congress for Cultural freedom' which took on this role, and would be very unlikely to co-operate. (28)

The report provides clues about how Duerden saw the CCF's mandate as promoting cultural freedom versus totalitarianism. Duerden was aware that the U.S. funding organizations had a "cold-war stance" though he does not appear to have been aware that the CIA was funding the CCF. He seems comfortable downplaying or perhaps hiding the Transcription Centre's funding sources. He later quarreled with CCF leaders over attributing the CCF on recorded programs. Duerden maintained that the association would hurt the Transcription Centre's credibility while Congress insisted that they should be credited publicly. Duerden's remarks stem from both from his shared commitment to cultural freedom over totalitarianism as well as, I think, a willingness to use CCF strategically for his own investment in encouraging African culture.

Duerden also argues that political talks by Western speakers are inappropriate for African audiences' current stage in development. He argues that even elite Africans lack the sophisticated English listening skills and political savvy necessary to understand complex debates by English speakers:

> The African listener or even the African radio producer does not understand enough English to understand all that is said in an English discussion. He only knows that a discussion is taking place whose issues he regards as irrelevant, an attempt to drag him into the maelstrom of tensions created by the ideological division between East and West. It is better to leave these discussions until he is able to speak with his own voice about them. He is beginning to do this, but for the time being we should leave him alone to make up his mind about his own position and not try to behave like a Dutch uncle showing him dangers ahead which he believes to be imaginary. (29)

In assuming that the African audience is not only unable to appropriately listen to such radio programs but is also voiceless on global politics, Duerden dismisses African's political positions on the Cold War conflict. In focusing on the Transcription Centre's planned English language programming, he implies that English language skills are necessary for an understanding of global geopolitics. If so, perhaps radio programming in English language is seen as helping to bring the African listener into the modern global political age. Duerden creates a paternalist developmental narrative while scolding Congress for paternalist tendencies, but he also states a commitment to allowing African

communities to remain nonaligned, echoing political positions of many postcolonial African leaders in the 1960s.

Duerden assumes his audience would interpret Congress's motivations crudely. The Nigerian audience, he claims:

> knows what the B.B.C. stands for, but what does the Congress stand for? Where does its money come from? It must be a subtle instrument of American politics and he would prefer it to come out in the open and admit what its politics are. He admits of no spectrum between the bald stating of a fact and absolute partisanship; and he has no experience of any form of broadcasting other than pure entertainment, news and propaganda" (4-5)

While this is presented as failing of the educated Nigerian audience to appreciate disinterested, autonomous cultural projects, it is also reflects the half-truths and secrecy of Cold War cultural politics. "Where does its money come from?" turns out to have been a very good question, and I do not believe Duerden was naïve, even though ignorant of the CIA's funding. While I think that Duerden sincerely believed in certain aspects of the CCF's Cold War aims, he, along with many British, African, and European intellectuals in the 1960s, was happy to take U.S. money for his own projects.

Duerden's rhetoric on logistical matters of distribution and publicity also show a slippage between purportedly disinterested investment in cultural development and strategic plotting. The initial plan was to give away tapes, but he decided to sell tapes for a nominal fee to African stations "on the grounds that people are not so likely to be suspicious of one's motives if they have to pay for what they use" (Duerden to Chalmers

[16 May 1962]). Although Dueden asserted that the programming would be higher quality because it was not tied to commercial interests, he reasoned that capitalist goals would be less suspicious than philanthropic ones.[130] Likewise, Duerden tried to increase the Transcription Centre's reputation by distributing tapes outside of Africa hoping global distribution would enhance the program's reputation within Africa and affirm their investment in simply creating quality cultural programming rather than propaganda.[131] Duerden argued that charging for the tapes showed that African culture could sustain itself without outside philanthropy.[132] The pretense of seeking profit became painfully real as grant funding dried up and CCF executives demanded that the Transcription Centre be financially self-sustaining. This placed Duerden and his assistants in the absurd position of "chang[ing] the image of ourselves as a benevolent cultural centre" and hounding down stations for fees for tapes that a few years earlier they would have been happy to give away for free (Letter to Platt [17 January 1967]).

Transcription Centre programs do not gloss over power structures and histories of racism and discrimination in an attempt to whitewash British or US politics, policies, or current racial conflicts. Interviewers and contributors included criticisms of the history of colonialism and slavery and contemporary American racism. *Africa Abroad*, for example, aired a discussion of J. P. Clark's extremely critical travel memoir, *America, Their America.* In an interview, Baldwin critiqued white society dividing African communities in his discussion of the upcoming Dakar Festival in 1966, which would bring together African American, Afro-Caribbean and West, East, and South African writers. Baldwin stated, "the impact on the white world will be a little – will probably be a little chilling since so much of the historical endeavor of white societies has been precisely to prevent

such a communication" ("Africa Abroad 108" 2). Such critiques address pertinent social issues of interest to their audience and demonstrate shared experiences of racism by Africans and members of the African diaspora. Criticism of the U.S. might also function to rhetorically demonstrate the Transcription Centre's ideological independence from their American foundation sponsors. I do not read such critiques as solely cynical nor purely demonstrations of political and intellectual autonomy but rather some combination of "authentic" and strategic critique.

WRITING ABOUT AFRICA

The Transcription Centre's programs, produced by Africans and airing primarily African voices, were presented as emerging from the perspective of the "we, the natives of the soil of Africa" rather than the "them" of U.S. sponsorship and British directorship. Duerden's initial report to the CCF shows that the Transcription Centre was not immune, however, to critiques of paternalistic white sponsorship. Throughout the *Africa Abroad* broadcasts, white scholars' research on Africa is held up for discussion and analysis. John Mbiti, a Kenyan student studying at Cambridge, did a series on "literature on Africana," beginning his first segment by listing the clichés used by outsiders to describe Africa:

> Almost every man or woman who visits Africa from other countries wants to write a book about "the natives", "the negroes", "the Africans", "the black men, "the wind of change", "the lions and snakes", and about a thousand other subjects on Africa! It is fashionable to speak about "Africa" – and some people with either envy or ignorance or regret, speak of it as "the great continent of the future". Some of the authors write with

> sincerity, others with defiance, some do so simply to expose their own ignorance. Yes, so much literature about Africa is being written that we, the natives of the soil of Africa, do not get to know the quantities of the truth, semi-truth, and lies that are being manufactured under the guise of African studies. ("Africa Abroad 17") 4).

The list of terms in quotation marks signifies how African subjects have been objectified in current African scholarship. Elsewhere, the narrator notes that "These days Negroes are clearly in fashion" ("Africa Abroad 85") and Mphahlele criticizes European scholars' interest in Négritude as a prurient interest in the exotic: "Others of course regard the concept as an interesting and curious phenomenon, something for delicious and juicy study" ("Conference on African Literature," 5-6).

Is the Transcription Centre complicit in such projects or open to such criticism? While the Transcription Centre's radio programming was primarily for African audiences, and the literature aired on *Africa Abroad* radio programs was typically in "Western" or syncretic forms rather than "purely" indigenous forms, the Transcription Centre also broadcast audio recordings of indigenous music collected by music ethnologists to African and non-African audiences and sponsored African art showings in Great Britain, and recorded translations of "traditional" poetry.

Frank Parkes' contentious review of Gerald Moore's *Seven African Writers* shows that disagreements between Transcription Centre contributors sometimes came to a head within the institution. The Ghanaian poet and journalist Parkes drafted a scathing review of the anthology edited by the British academic Moore, who participated in Transcription Centre projects. Parkes criticized Moore's ignorance of African culture and accused him

of being a "reverse Beento"—a "Beento," or "been-to" being a pejorative term for an African traveller in England, for example, who had little direct experience of British culture and life who nonetheless rejected African customs for British ones. Parkes' two-page review was cut down to nine sentences and the edits included the handwritten "hypocracies" written alongside Parkes' accusation that Moore was a "reverse Beento." It is not clear from the scripts whether Duerden, Nkosi, or some other editor cut the material from Parkes' review, but the review that aired was much less scathing than the original.

Nkosi writes an account of white criticism and spectatorship in a review of the *Ballets Africaines* from Guinea performance in London. Nkosi challenges the way performances for white audiences rely on exoticization and sexualization and also evokes tropes of Africa as a woman raped by white men. He criticizes the divorcing of African art from African culture in the performance of African art in London. Nkosi describes a transformation undergone when indigenous dance is performed for a an audience of "lustily cheering white people." Nkosi continues:

> was it the dance they liked, the soft rippling muscles, the opulent rounded breasts shaking and trembling in a ceaseless agony of action, now a little beaded with sweat and so well nippled that one's throat went dry with surprise? Where was this Africa – so rich in beauty and strong in limb – to be found? Yes, one wondered. After one had grown limp with pleasure the questions remained . . . It seemed that African forms had been raped, imposed upon, and forced into an unnatural display ("Insert").

The white audiences are aroused, Nkosi claims, by these black bodies on stage, though according to his account, Nkosi, a black South African, experiences the sexual arousal and release as well. It is not just that white audiences are watching black performers, but that removing the dance from the setting in which it arose, a participatory setting, occasions what Nkosi, in gendered language evoking the image of "Mother Africa," terms of rape. Nkosi argues that formal modifications must be made to prevent this sense of voyeurism.

Duerden himself was typically held to be a knowledgeable Africanist and skilled networker, but his evident pleasure in serving as a curator of African culture led to accusations of paternalist intervention. In a letter to Platt, Duerden recounted that Aidoo told him 'Poor Africa you all want to teach us something – isn't there something we don't need to learn, something we know already'" (Duerden to Platt 21 Sept 67 0283). In a more personal account, Mphahele writes Duerden about an argument they had. Mphahele had asked Lewis Nkosi to do some work, and Duerden had "insisted that Lewis should not do the Bulletin even in his free time because not only did you 'control' his out-of-office hours but you think he will serve you better if he does creative writing during that time." Mphahele accuses Duerden of "tak[ing] on one [sic] someone as a protégé. Frankly, it reminded me of the ghastly liberals of S.A. who love to protect their 'natives' and to think for them. An unfair image? Maybe: but there it is" (8967-68). In Aidoo's question and Mphahele's comparison between Duerden and South African liberals, Duerden himself is included among those well-meaning but white cultural missionaries the *Africa Abroad* programs sometimes criticized. Duerden was sometimes put in the position of negotiating his outsider status as Henry Swanzy and Arthur Calder-Marshall

did on *Caribbean Voices*. Primarily, however, because of the far greater number of African critics and Nkosi as producer, Transcription Centre programming was primarily created by African writers and broadcasters.

"ARE WE BLACK MEN RELATED?"

The Transcription Centre's radio programs were intended to foster transcontinental connections between Africans and members of the African diaspora. The early programs tried out several versions of the program's opening description. It was initially described as a program "featuring Africans abroad," but a caveat on the tenth episode was added that "AFRICA ABROAD not only brings you news of Africans who are travelling or living outside Africa. In this magazine programme we want to bring you news as well of how *African culture* is spreading, or has spread overseas, in the United States, in the West Indies, or in South America" ("Africa Abroad 10" 1). A relatively standardized opening was developed that took account of the travels of African individuals as well the spread of culture in the African diaspora: "a programme featuring the social and cultural activities of Africans as well as people of African descent living abroad" ("Africa Abroad 12" 1). The programs celebrated the interchange of people from different places with different ideas. A Nigerian student in London described her desire to "to mix with all the people" and an *Africa Abroad* narrator described the "exciting little community of people with differing backgrounds [that] has grown up [in London]. Here ideas are exchanged, arguments rage, theories rise only to fall again under the weight of counter-arguments as Africa meets the Carribean (sic)" ("Africa Abroad 6" 6; "Africa Abroad 55" 1).[133] As in Swanzy's *Caribbean Voices*, *Africa Abroad* programs celebrated

the possibility for debate among a diverse immigrant community in London in ways that reflect investment in both the pan-African activism that have been intensifying in London since the 1930s as well as European liberal conceptions of the public sphere (categories that are not, of course, mutually exclusive).

The basis for such global African communities—shared identification based on race or a common experience of slavery and European colonization—was debated from the earliest Transcription Centre programs. Many mid-century Anglophone African writers, most notably Soyinka and Ezekiel Mphahlele, criticized Négritude in the 1960s as a romanticization of African culture. Broadly speaking, Négritude was a response to European and American racism that celebrated black history and culture and asserted a distinctive identity shared between people of African descent. Négritude was also associated with political theories of pan-Africanism championed by leaders like the Ghanian president Kwame Nkrumah as a means to political and economic self-determination for postcolonial Africa.

One of the demonstration programs Duerden played for African radio stations in his 1961 exploratory trip was a discussion of William Abraham's book, *The Unity of African Culture*, which promoted a version of Négritude. In his introduction, Nkosi highlights that these issues are the subject of current debate and not established doctrines: "In *discussions* with him . . . various African and European students of anthropology and sociology have asked for a clarification of what he wants to do and some have *strongly disagreed* with him. In this program we present some of the *protagonists in the argument expressing their views* . . ." ("Broadcasting in Africa" 34). The second *Africa Abroad* program aired Donatus Nwoga's review of *African Image*, Mphahlele's critique of

Négritude. Nwoga argues that Mphehlele "does not attach enough importance to the concept of the African Personality" ("Africa Abroad 2" 4). Though these early programs presented assertions and critiques of Négritude equally, Transcription Centre programs increasingly insisted that Négritude was not a useful way to understand the global African community and that it was aesthetically limiting. Even more importantly, Négritude was portrayed as a rigid doctrine stifling the type of debate and free exchange of ideals modelled on *Africa Abroad's* programming.

The program's critiques of Négritude reflect not only the ongoing debates among African writers about literary forms and identity, but also liberal commitments to free speech and "democracy" the CIA sought to promote in Africa. *Africa Abroad*, with its stated interest in "abroad" also distinguished itself from versions of continental pan-Africanism, and focused rather on creating ties between African intellectuals and other members of the African diaspora. The influence of the CCF is evident in the ways programs encouraged articulations of a pan-Africanist project into something less "insular" and potentially more open to ties with the United States. In the 1960s, the CIA was targeting African political regimes deemed threatening through coups and other covert operations. Speaking against Négritude becomes a way to speak against external influences and 'isolationist' and 'divisive' expressions of pan-Africanism in the decolonizing world.

"Brotherhood of Blackness"

In 1963, three African writers—Nkambo Mugerwa (Uganda), Willie Abraham (Ghana), and Lewis Nkosi (South Africa)—and two Afro-Caribbean writers—Arnold

Gibbins (British Guinea) and Barry Reckord (Jamaica)—debated "the question of the relationship between black people all over the world" in an *Africa Abroad* discussion entitled "Brotherhood of Blackness" (ICWA).[134] The discussion was moderated by Charles Patterson, an African American student studying in England under a fellowship from the U.S. Institute of Current World Affairs. The debate was initially broadcast to Sierra Leone, but the Transcription Centre sometimes created compilation programs from existing material, so the discussion was repackaged and recirculated later.

To open the discussion, Patterson quotes Langston Hughes' poem "Brother," claiming that Africans, West Indians, and African-Americans "are related": "We are brothers, you and I." Patterson cites the following definition of Négritude; he attributes the quote to Césaire, but the exact phrasing seems to come from an editor's introduction in the periodical *Black Orpheus* (22):

> Négritude denotes a certain quality which is common to the thought and behavior of Negroes. It stands for the new consciousness of the negro, his newly gained self-confidence, and for his distinctive out look on life with which he distinguishes himself from non-negroes. (1)

Patterson then states that James Baldwin is "[o]ne of the best" writers to propose an answer to the question, "Are we black men related? If we are what is the nature of this relationship?" (2). He quotes Baldwin's speech from the Congress of Black Writers and Artists in Paris in 1956 where Baldwin stated that "What they [all black men] have held in common was their precarious, their unutterably painful relation to the white world. . . the necessity to remake the world in their own image" (2). These three writers are used to offer three overlapping but distinct answers to the question to what defines a global

community of "black men": Hughes' assertion of racial brotherhood, Césaire's description of essential black consciousness, and Baldwin's description of unity through the shared precarity of the black male subject.

The discussion gives every indication of being a genuine argument—not only do people present different positions, they question and challenge each other and speak frankly. The moderator, Patterson, even stops talking for significant portions of the discussion as the panelists speak directly to each other. It is a very different program from *Caribbean Voices*' "West Indian Symposium," discussed in chapter three and supports Duerden's claim that the Transcription Centre could create engaging and in-depth content that the BBC could not due to its bureaucracy and ethos of respectability.

The framing of the discussion suggests certain conclusions, however. Most of the panelists argue that Africans, Afro-Caribbeans, and African-Americans are connected by political factors, specifically the history of slavery and colonization. However, they are quick to distinguish this conception of community from Négritude, which they portray as an essentialist belief in a shared culture of all members of the African diaspora. The Ugandan law professor Nkambo Mugerwa argues:

> In so far as almost all black people at one point or another, have been subjugated to domination, either as slaves or as colonial people, that is certainly a very strong uniting bond. Whether one is a West Indian or a Nigerian or a South African, one feels that Europe has, over the years, deprived him of what was his own, namely that most precious of assets – liberty.

> When one goes on to the freedom for cultural expression, I'm afraid I do not share the conviction held by very important people, like Aime Cesaire, quoted earlier by Charles, who suggest that there is a kind of brotherhood, call it Négritude, call it a blackhood, call it blackness. That, I'm afraid, I do not freely accept. (2-3)

Mugerwa emphasizes specific locations, demonstrating a geopolitical understanding in contrast to Négritude's sometimes sweeping references to continental "Africa." His contrast between Négritude and "freedom for cultural expression" echoes, of course, the name of the group funding the Transcription Centre, the Congress for Cultural Freedom, and presents Négritude and aesthetic autonomy as mutually exclusive.

The producer of *Africa Abroad*, the South African writer and journalist Lewis Nkosi, suggests that the panelists "start off by expunging the word Négritude from the discussion . . . it's too nebulous a term, and people mean different things by it" (4). It is important that the term is first raised in order to refused or expunged from the discussion. Nkosi argues that the word Négritude should be avoided not only because the meaning is unclear but because it over-generalizes the cultural expressions of artists of African descent: "Certainly one could find certain African remains in the self-culture of the American Negro . . . But that two is very superficial" (4). Nkosi is interested in historically, ethnographically provable connections, but even these, he argues, are not as important as others might claim, recalling Frantz Fanon's assertion in *Wretched of the Earth* that "Negritude finds its first limitation in the phenomena which take account of the formation of the historical character of men" (216). Négritude, Fanon argues, does not

take into account the importance of national and geographical factors in shaping people and their culture.

In his final statement, Nkosi makes a long argument concluding that affinity based on color is "arbitrary" but nonetheless:

> when I see a white man in Picadilly fighting a black man there are certain emotional kinks in me and I make certain assumptions about this which I would not necessarily make if a black man was fighting a black man or a white man was fighting a white man and it's no use, Barry, blaming me for this, or blaming this on inferiority complex it's a matter of historical heritage which we can't deny, we want to get rid of it now, but it certainly is there so I think that I would feel less secure if I were talking about this as being based on cultural heritage, although there might be an affinity between certain negroes and certain Africans, but I feel strongly that politically there is this affinity because of the way we have experienced the white man in our midst. (13)

Nkosi argues that a sense of brotherhood based on skin color should be moved beyond but that it can be understood as having a real historical context. Nkosi does not impose a pat conclusion on the debate, but his statement is fairly definitive because of his role as *African Abroad* producer. He brings his listener into the conversation and then to his own conclusions through directly addressing Barry Reckord and using a shifting point of view. In the first paragraph of his conclusion, he focuses on the theoretical "black child" or "black man." The second paragraph shifts to "I," emphasizing the individual man making an argument from his own experience. In the final lines Nkosi uses "we" to

include the black members of the discussion and the black audience in this desire to "get rid of" a race-based "inferiority complex" and possibly also "certain assumptions."

If the "inferiority complex" that Nkosi describes is gotten rid of, do you also get rid of brotherhood? The "Brotherhood of Blackness" program raises brotherhood as a question rather than an assumption; Nkosi suggests that this filial relationship but needs to be moved beyond; he is looking toward a future where race-based identification is not necessary because racism is eradicated. Patterson's conclusion to the program also envisions moving beyond brotherhood. He describes "this brotherhood of blackness that we have been discussing" as something that will "fully and freely extend brotherhood across racial lines." His conclusion soon makes a shift from the term "brotherhood" to "community of colour" that "would recognize that regardless of the painful path along which the community has developed, the community will continue to exist only as long as it rejects vengeance and retribution" (13). Patterson's final condemnation of violence likely references Martin Luther King's civil rights campaign in the U.S. as well as the response of black African governments to white settler populations.

Four years later in 1966, at the Dakar Festival, Césaire himself argued that the era of racial brotherhood should be relegated to the past. An account of the festival in *West Africa* reported on the festival's debates on African literature:

> It was Cesaire, one of the founders of Négritude, who finally put Négritude in perspective by calling it 'a word I do not like.' 'During the abominable time of the years 30 to 40,' he continued, 'Négritude represented an instant of human conscience . . . that is to say, that Négritude has never been anything other than an irritated and impatient

> affirmation of brotherhood.' Perhaps, as the 'abominable time' recedes into Africa's past, Négritude will seem less and less necessary. (Foltz 519)

It is usually the Césaire of the 1930s that is quoted on Transcription Centre programming, but his argument also situates brotherhood, or at least certain versions of it, in the past. Césaire, like Patterson, describes a transition from brotherhood, with connotations of genetics and involuntary relation and affinity, to community, which, though still based on race, implies a freedom to define the nature of future affiliations. These disavowals of brotherhood can be political; As Vijay Prashad writes of the Bandung conference that "[u]nity for the people of the Third World came from a political position against colonialism and imperialism, not from any intrinsic cultural or racial commonalities" (34).

Anti-Négritude and Cold War Competition

I argue that the Transcription Centre's critiques of Négritude reflect not only the ongoing debates among African writers about literary forms and identity and Third World international identification, but also liberal commitments to free speech and "democracy" the CIA sought to promote in Africa. The South African writer Richard Rive describes Négritude as

> essentially a transitional phase [that] can only be evaluated in terms of chronological perspective. It cannot be used as the ultimate gauge of present-day literary performance. It would be arrogant to assume that any writer in present-day Africa must be forced into a mode of writing in order to venerate the glory that was or is. If he strikes on such a chord it must be

> his personal choice, not because he is creating to external pressures and rules (6).

Négritude is described as a product of colonialism and neoimperialism, forced upon African writers by European cultural establishments. Mphahlele argues that current French intellectuals misguidedly nurture essentialist ideas of Africa, imagining "the noble savage which they imagine it is possible for the African to be catapulted back into" (6).

Postcolonial African states are also charged with attempting to shape or restrict cultural production using Négritude. In a review, Lewis Nkosi criticizes the Ghanaian magazine *Okyeame*:

> it must be said that the quality is not of high standard. One sees in these poems and stories the implications of a literary ideal ideology which may be as crippling to young writers as the high-handed dictates of a cultural commissar in a communist country. It does not seem an accident that most of these poems and stories deliberately foster an image of traditional Africa which was simple but strong, beautiful but virile. (47-8 7)

Négritude was described as a tool of censorship or self-censorship that restricts artistic expression. Evoking a comparison to "a cultural commissar" aligns Négritude as a threat to artistic freedom akin to that posed by the Soviet Union, which was the main antagonist that the Congress for Cultural Freedom focused on. An emphasis on cultural freedom writ large allowed slippage between decolonization struggles against European colonial powers, critiques of postcolonial African states, and Soviet cultural and political influence on the continent.

The Ghanaian origins of *Okeyame* may have occasioned the parallels between Négritude ideas and communism. Some U.S. and European leaders saw Nkrumah's socialism and policies of continental pan-Africanism and nonalignment as obstructionist and insular. Duerden originally hoped that Transcription Centre programming would change "'Ghana-centred' attitudes" so that "Ghanaian culture might be made broader and more tolerant" ("Broadcasting in Africa" 24). Ghana's initial suspicions of the CCF and its comparatively developed broadcasting corporations meant that Ghana was never a large recipient of Transcription Centre material, but the programs do seem to attempt to counter what were seen as dangerously insular attitudes.

In painting Négritude as a censoring force, *Africa Abroad* programs also entered into debates over modernist aesthetics. Nkosi critiques the clichéd content of Négritude poetry by quoting canonical interwar modernists: "They are – in the words of [F.R.] Leavis – 'poetical' and in the worst sense here. Also there is a lack of tightness in many lines. T.S. Elliot warned a long time ago that free verse does not enfranchise poets to write loose, enervated lines" (8). The narrator, in introducing Nkosi, connects, through the little magazines, American modernists and decolonization-era African writers: "The literary scene in emergent Africa is comparable to what was happening in America at the turn of the century" (7). In the mid-twentieth-century, as Greg Barnhisel recounts, "modernism became a weapon in what has become known as the 'cultural Cold War,' the struggle for cultural prestige and influence between the Communist Soviet Union and its Eastern Bloc satellites on one side and the United States and the nations of western Europe on the other" as figures in the U.S. were "recasting modernism as a celebration of the free individual subject" (2, 24). At the same time, Peter Kalliney argues that Cold

War era arguments of aesthetic autonomy draw on the tradition of literary modernism to assert the importance of aesthetic and political autonomy for artists. Kalliney sees this as a generative position for African writers, who were able to carve out spaces of aesthetic expression ("Modernism, African Literature, and the Cold War" 334).

In the South African writer Ezekiel Mphahlele, Director of the African Program of the CCF in Paris (1961-63) the aims of Transcription Centre writers and the CCF converge. Mphahlele was a key figure in Congress's African projects in the early 1960s, including the Transcription Centre, and was also one of the most vocal critics of Négritude. In "Remarks on Négritude," from a conference at the University of Dakar in 1963, (in Senegal, where Senghor was president) Mphahlele defended his critiques on Négritude. He asserts that,

> Négritude, while a valuable slogan politically, can because its apostles have set it up as a principle of art, amount to self-enslavement - autocolonization, . . . We should not allow ourselves to be bullied at gun-point into producing literature that is supposed to contain a négritude theme and style. (8)

In his confidential report to Congress, he recounts:

> I could not take the reference to me in terms of colonialism and neo-colonialism lying down. Nor can I tolerate such a charge against the Congress by people who are always dragging debates on "foreign aid" from the intellectual plans to diatribe, even while they use the platform provided by the Congress, a 'foreign' body according to their definition. ("Conference on African Literature" 1)

Notwithstanding Mphahlele's protests about accusations of neocolonialism, this suggestion is not completely unfounded: Mphahlele was at Dakar primarily to see how Congress could "use" individual authors and establish a presence in Senegal (5). He concluded that Congress should not pursue this avenue because "we shall be resisted for one of two reasons in this context: either simply because we are foreign and therefore 'neo-colonialist' or because the French resist us, albeit subtly, and the emotional and economic factors that govern Franco-African relations prevent the blacks from taking in whomever they please" (6). Mphahlele places all responsibility for such competition on the side of *Presence Africaines*, which, he writes, claimed Senegal "as its province" (5).

Moving Beyond Négritude: Hughes and Baldwin

On *Africa Abroad* programs, repeated references to Hughes and Baldwin, as well as interviews with both writers, present Hughes as the emblematic writer of the Harlem Renaissance, and Baldwin as representing a new generation of writers. Their relevance for mid-century African writers was not only due to their prominence in African American writing but each writers' work and writing on African politics and literature. Baldwin was at this time a significant public figure in the U.S., and had appeared on the cover of *Time* in May 1963. On *Africa Abroad*, Baldwin is prized for both his expression of current racial identity and for a striving for universal meaning.

The short radio feature, "Temples for Tomorrow," produced by Frank Parkes, presents Hughes as an influential and respected poet. The program was produced using a recording Hughes made at the studios of the public radio station WHYY in Philadelphia. Sections of Hughes' readings are introduced and commented upon by a narrator. The

transatlantic production process allows the Transcription Centre to collaboratively create a program with Hughes. The program differs significantly from *Africa Abroad's* interviews with contemporary writers or episodes of straight-forward literary criticism. Such features, Duerden argued elsewhere, were where the Transcription Centre could make a unique contribution to African radio programming. In 1966, he argued that radio's educative function was most effective when producers took advantage of all the possibilities of radio form: "It is possible to make excellent radio programmes about complicated problems. One way is to make the radio programme a series of sound illustrations to the printed word, i.e. with the voices of personalities or with readings from their literary work or with drama and actuality" ("Report to the Farfield Foundation" 4). He continues, in discussing the technical skill and resources required to edit such programs on controversial issues, that "these techniques can only be carried out by skilled broadcasters . . . Such programmes are not available in Africa. Most African radio stations are simply crude information services for the political parties in power" (5).

The title, "Temples for Tomorrow," taken from Hughes' "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain" (1926), suggests the program's investment in chronological narratives. Notwithstanding its gesture to the future and Hughes' participation in the present moment, the writer is presented as a voice from the past rather than a writer discussing his earlier work with an interviewer. The narrator introduces Hughes as a "Smiling Jeremiah of the Negro World. Black Opheus who by his song seeks liberation for the enslaved sons and daughters of colour through out the world" (1). "Voice 1" introduces Hughes' first excerpt in which he is speaking from the moment of the Harlem Renaissance and reads from "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain":

> "Declaring the literary independence of black writers at the turn of the century, this spokesman of the Negro race said:
>
> Hughes: "We, the younger Negro artists who create now intend to express our individual dark-skinned selves without fear or shame. If white people are pleased, we are glad. If they are not, it doesn't matter. We know we are beautiful. And ugly too. If coloured people are pleased, we are glad. If they are not, their displeasure doesn't matter either." (1)

Hughes' importance is clear, but his "now" is that of the Harlem Renaissance emphasized by the introducer's use of past tense while Hughes reads from a past work. Later in the program the narrator states "It isn't strange that Langston Hughes has been called the Poet Laureate of the Negro World. The universal desire for dignity among all negroes the great urge for liberty and equality has been his concern long before politicians started shouting slogans in Africa, long before musicians thought up new scores for New National anthems" (3). As a representative of the Harlem Renaissance that first proclaimed, "literary independence," Hughes is presented as a precursor for contemporary cultural and political independence movements in Africa.

Other programs critique Hughes' contemporary projects and reinforce the ways he is respected but seen as the poet of yesterday. His sensibilities are presented as largely irrelevant for current writers. In the introduction to the review of Hughes' collection *Poems from Black Africa*, he is introduced at "the Harlem 'New Negro' poet of the thirties" and the reviewer critiques the poems as examples of belated Négritude ("Africa Abroad 40" 1):

> Many of the poems in Mr. Hughes' collection are self-consciously black. They extol the virtues of an African Past, the nobility of the African Present and the beauty of African colour. They are Négritude poems. The subject of Négritude is surrounded by cliches and platitudes, so much so that *these days* it is almost unendurably painful to mention the subject." (emphasis added, 2).

He describes Bloke Modisane's poems, for example, as "formless dung of self-pity (3). While the reviewer states that "There is nothing wrong with Négritude if it can inspire good poetry" he clearly believes that African letters have moved on. It is not that Africa's past is irrelevant to Africa's present, but Négritude is an outdated literary philosophy that does not account for the present or provide an aesthetics or politics for the future.

If Hughes is the figure of a past moment that helps establish a history of global black literature, Baldwin is presented as the preeminent figure of contemporary black letters. Nkosi famously admired Baldwin—an editor at the South African paper *Drum* remembered him "larking about for a week with a James Baldwin paperback in his pocket"—but Baldwin is cited as an authority on society and literature by several different writers on Transcription Centre programming (qtd. in Herbstein). In the second episode of *Africa Abroad*, the narrator establishes Baldwin as a touchstone: "Let me read you a passage from a book by the brilliant Negro author, James Baldwin." He then quotes from Baldwin's essay, "East River, Downtown" (1991): 'The American Negro can no longer, nor will he ever again be controlled by white America's image of him. This fact has everything to do with the rise of Africa in world affairs." In the program, these lines illustrate the connection between decolonization, newly independent African states, the

U.S. Civil Rights movement, questions of African-American identity. A later program cites Baldwin's frustration that 'All of Africa will be free before we can get a lousy cup of coffee'" ("Africa Abroad 42" 2). Modisane and Nkosi repeatedly use Baldwin as an authoritative voice on questions of racial identity in America when discussing Modisane's recent trip to the United States.

In Salkey's review of Baldwin's *Notes of a Native Son* and *Nobody Knows My Name*, Salkey emphasizes Baldwin's "concern for America, and even more far-reaching, his concern for all men" ("Africa Abroad 79"). Salkey argues that from the "autobiographical essays" "One can easily take from them quotations of universal meaning" and that his writing "def[ies] the easy classification" of black literature (2, 3). Such celebrations of Baldwin's universality while writing of specific examples of racial prejudice contrast with criticisms of Hughes' poetry not being universal enough. In a review of Hughes' 1961 *Ask Your Mama*, the narrator critiques it as simply a "poem . . . of militant protest" that fails to be "a genuine human expression about human suffering, about the inscrutable fate of man, about the joys, the tensions, or abrasions of living" ("Africa Abroad 3" 1). If Hughes is identified with more simplistic ideas of racial identity and racial struggle, than Baldwin is prized for both his expression of current racial identity with a striving for universal meaning and possibly a utopian hope of moving beyond race. In the often-contradictory world of Cold War Politics, Baldwin could be seen as encouraging cultural freedom in Africa even as he was viewed with suspicion in the U.S., as evidenced by his extensive FBI files, active between 1960 and 1974 (Field 45).

African Aesthetics

In the review of Hughes' collection *Poems from Black Africa,* the narrator identifies a limited number of poems to praise in contrast to what he primarily identifies as Hughes' focus on "Négritude poems" that "are self-consciously black" ("Africa Abroad 92" 2). He contrasts romanticized visions of Africa with examples from the Sierra Leonese poet Abioseh Nicol and the Nigerian John Pepper Clark. Nicol's poem "African Easter" is interesting, the narrator claims, for its "attempts to reconcile African and European emotional attitudes within the same dogma and ritual of the Christian faith" ("Africa Abroad 40" 3). The poem asserts that there may be a value in Christian faith to bring "peace" and "comfort" to modern Africans while also providing space for criticisms of colonial history in which Christian missionaries preceded or accompanied military conquest. In the poem, Christ states

> "Say
>
> That I am an invention to keep you held
>
> Always in thralldom.
>
> The avant-garde of your disintegration. (3).

The poem not only is about modern colonial history, it references specific aspects of the modern state. The poem examines a divide between "tradition" and "modernity" is centered around Christianity, not indigenous African culture and religion. The speaker states, that he gives "A tenth of my goods . . . Through income tax" (3). The poem does not attempt to praise or recreate an idea of Africa or Africans before colonization, and it is ambivalent about the exploitative history of colonialism in Africa and "modern"

intellection attitudes. The narrator praises Nicol's "intelligence" and the rich and specific contrasts between the "simple man of faith" and the "intellectual" (3).

The narrator's next example of one of the few laudable poets in the anthology is John Pepper Clark, and Clark's "The Agbor Dancer" is a revealing counterpoint to Négritude aesthetics because it is not an example of poetry that presents "universal" or "modern" themes but describes a speaker watching a traditional dance performed by a woman from the town of Agbor in South Nigeria. "The Agbor Dancer" begins:

> "See her caught in the throb of a drum
> Tippling from hide-brimmed stem
> Down lineal veins to ancestral core
> Opening out in her supple tan limbs
> Like fresh foliage in the sun. (4)[135]

The poem's focus on a specific place and event differs from the general reference to drums in the poem by Kwesi Brew read earlier in the program: "The drums that whisper to us," or the broad assertions of blackness in Bloke Modisone's poem that begins "God! / glad I'm black" (1, 2). Clark, the narrator states, is "the most interesting young poet in Nigeria. He seems to me to be not only intelligent but to have known what to do with the obvious techniques he has observed from modern European poets. He is modern without being sterile" (4). These "techniques" that the narrator praises include "choices of imagery" which is characterized by "felicity" and "precision" (4). The poem uses simile, and the vocabulary is elevated—"lineal," "tremulous," "trenchant"—and synchronistic. There are many latinate words, and the Nigerian woman's song is described as "a

descant," a term describing a counterpoint melody that developed within the European Medieval and Renaissance musical tradition.

"The Agbor Dancer" itself follows a loosely organized rhythm and close rhyme without being "ditty"-like (the critique of Peter Clarke's earlier poem) (1). The first stanza establishes a loose pattern of four-stress lines with a final line emphasized by three stresses. The line-endings, though seldom rhyming directly, use similar sounds: in the stanza above, "drum and "stem" are slant rhymes and the final word of the line, "sun," repeats the vowel sound in "drum." The effect of the repetition of sounds and stresses creates a poem that feels crafted without fitting into a strict pattern of meter and rhyme.

The events of the poem are initially described from a perspective that appears omniscient with the second-person command to "See." The final stanza, however, reveals the speaker's subject position:

> Could I, early sequestered from my tribe
> Free a lead-tethered scribe,
> I would answer her communal call,
> Lose myself in her warm caress
> Intervolving earth, sky and flesh." (4).

The appearance of an "I" makes the reader or listener aware of the person watching the dancer. There is a distance between the individual watcher "sequestered from my tribe" who imagines, but is unable to, respond to the dancer's "communal call." Clark himself was born in Kiagbodo, also in South Nigeria, but after attending Government College in Ughelli, he earned his BA in English at the University of Ibadan. Such feelings of

alienation from one's place of birth and community were common concerns of African writers writing in English in the mid-century.

"The Agbor Dancer's" concern with the educated African subject's enchantment with a "communal" tribal experience through the use of specific and complex language and modern forms was understandably attractive to the creators and listeners of *Africa Abroad*. I think it is debatable whether the description of the dance completely avoids the "clichés and platitudes" that the narrator of the radio program criticizes in other Négritude poems (2). The description of the female dancer certainly relies upon gendered clichés; the presumably male observer admires her "supple tan limbs" and the woman has immediate access through the drum's rhythm to an "ancestral core" as she is "entangled in the magic maze of music." She is also part of the natural world, calling upon conventional associations of women with the earth, with "Mother Africa." He body allows the male observer to observe and experience a desire (though frustrated) to connect with his heritage. This desire is, of course, erotic as well as cultural, and describes the woman's "warm caress / intervolving earth, sky and flesh."

The woman, observed, is part of a communal experience and inextricable from the music, which she does not create. The third stanza describes the drumbeats evoking a melody within the dancer's body rather than through her voice or writing:

> Tremulous beats wake trenchant
> In heart a descant
> Tingling quick to her finger tips
> And toes virginal habits long
> Too atrophied for pen or tongue. (2)

The meaning and referents of the phrases "too atrophied" and "virginal habits" is obscure. Are her fingers and toes "atrophied" [by] "virginal habits" or are her habits (behavior or raiment) themselves atrophied? In any case, the inability for linguistic expression seems in fact to be one of the dancer's essential attributes.

"Women in Africa," African Women Writers, and "Mother Africa"

The Transcription Centre's radio programs included women on air as artists, discussion participants, and sometimes moderators. The Ghanaian playwright and short story writer, Ama Ata Aidoo, for example, received a Farfield grant through the Transcription Centre to work on a play. Duerden praised Aidoo's *The Dilemma of a Ghost* on air as "a drama of quite considerable and often distinguished quality" and Aidoo's *The Lover* was also broadcast ("Africa Abroad 28-2" 5). These plays highlight concerns specific to women: in *Dilemma of a Ghost* an American woman's decision to use birth control is met with confusion and disapproval from her African husband's family. *The Lover* explores "corruption" at the governmental and personal level through the figure of a powerful older man with "so many wives and girl friends." *Africa Abroad* aired some other examples of literature by women, and interviewed the Ghanaian dramatist Efua Sutherland in 1968. Notwithstanding these examples, questions of gender and sexuality were, I argue, presented as peripheral to the main political and cultural work in Africa.

In an interview with Duerden, the Ghanaian poet George Awooner Williams recounted a conversation with the U.S. poet Allen Ginsberg in New York. According to Williams' account, he confronted Ginsberg for opposing "sexual oppression" and

dismissed questions of gender and sexuality as not only less urgent than the Biafran war but also fundamentally apart from African states' struggle for independence and success ("Africa Abroad" 14-2" 1). Williams reported, "I said to him [Ginsberg], well I come from a place, I come from a continent or a country which hasn't got any problem of sex oppression, the problem there is illiteracy, desease (sic) and hunger, and also next door to me where I come from me, there is a war going on" (1). Feminism is presented as a first-world problem and evidence of the hippies' privileged position. While most programs do not contain directly dismiss women's issues the program was overwhelmingly dominated by male voices.

The unequal representation of women was noted by Transcription Centre creators at the time. Patrick Delahunty from the Tanganyika Broadcasting Service suggested using more women arguing that their voices would make programs "livelier." Aminu Abdullahi of the Transcription Centre responded in agreement, but added patronizingly that it was difficult to get the right sort of "girl contributors" (13 May 1964). This issue arose again in a recording for the Folklore Commission when Barry Campbell wrote to Duerden "As regards a narrator, it occurred to me that since all the speakers in the programme (with the exception of Mrs. Harris) are men, it might be an idea to use an actress for the narration to add variety to the voices" (28 November 1966). Duerden replied "Yes, I think it might be a good idea to have a girl" (7 December 1966). As the desire is for an actress, not a writer or producer, this is not a question of including (let alone prioritizing) a woman's perspective on literary or political matters, but an argument that the woman's voice will provide diversity in the listening experience, a different timber, pitch, and intonation will help distinguish voices and provide a pleasant contrast. Statements on the

scarcity of skilled women may reflect the fact that more African men traveled to England for school and work than African women at the time, and fewer women in Africa were involved in creative writing, but it also repeats a time-worn complaint and self-perpetuating male assumption that there is a scarcity of qualified women.

This focus on women's voices as serving an aesthetic or instrumental role is indicative for the way many women were involved in supportive roles for the betterment of the Transcription Centre's productions (print and broadcast), but few women writers and musicians featured as the main intellectual and creative figures. The physical community of writers that gathered at the Transcription Centre's offices were primarily men, although Ama Ata Aidoo received a grant to work there for a few months, and Frances Ademola, a Ghanaian woman who worked as a broadcaster in Nigeria also worked at the Transcription Centre for a short time. [136]

Letters exchanged between Duerden and the writers, engineers, and producers also show a casual objectification of women and the lack of women in leadership roles. The men joke about sending girlfriends as gifts and discuss getting women for the show using double entendres suggesting sexual conquest or romantic possession (Campbell to Duerden, n.d.). Such attitudes are common in British and U.S. institutions of the 1960s, but the homosocial bonding of the male heterosexual community is reinforced by the exchange of women in this fashion and women contributors whose professional roles are always at risk of overlapping with their sexual desirability.

The Transcription Centre produced a few programs focusing on issues specifically relevant to women. "Women in Africa" (1966) was a panel discussion on "the status of women in Africa" and included the topics of sexism, women in African independence

movements, their current participation in government, education, and commerce, and women's roles in family and community health (1). The South African journalist Frene Ginwale moderated a conversation between three panelists: Zanie Jamal who was involved in women's organisations and government committees in Tanganyika, Jeanette Macauley of Sierra Leone and student at Lancaster University, and the British Lady Cohen who was "closely associated with women's organisations in Uganda" (1). Women's role in independence movements was noted and the panel was asked: "But what of African women today?" "Her people have achieved freedom but has she been emancipated?"(1). Panelists discussed women's role in independence movements, but clearly believed that national independence did not automatically ensure equal rights and representation in society.

The program also showcases dissent between the panelists as Macauley calls for more equality throughout society and concludes that "lot of men also in Africa who are completely half-baked idiots" . . there shouldn't be this thing of a woman's or a man's world" (10). Jamal responds condescendingly, "Well, I realize Miss Macaulay is living in a dream world, this is something that is not going to happen for another century I can tell you. . ." Macauley interrupts, countering, "It's not at all. . . ." before Jamal finishes ". . . men being what they are." The differences between the panelists are shown to be substantive ones, as Macauley and Cohen assert the possibility of women participating in equal (or more equal) numbers in education and employment while Jamal argues that with limited budgets "you see, they have to give, any nation has to give priority to the educational programme for men, you see, because after all the ^nation building programmes must go on. . ." (4).

Some of the disagreements are explained in the program as the differences between the different parts of Africa that they come from—Sierra Leone's history of women chiefs and socially powerful market women in West Africa—as well as individual governments' differing abilities to support education and job training. Nonetheless, major constraints are perceived to be due to women's reproductive roles. Macauley says fewer women go to or complete school "because of the greater temptations" of marriage (5), and Jamal argues that that women are not good candidates for filling great need for civil servants because they "prove redundant" when having to take off work for maternity leave or because "they are ill oftener than men." Lady Cohen acquiesces that this is the case, that "They are more difficult to fit into the pattern" (4). The conversation ends with laughing despair that African men, or any men, do not want to marry educated women.

As a whole, the conversation raises important points of disagreement and does not offer easy answers. At the same time, both the social "pattern" and differences between the sexes are considered essentially unalterable. The rigorous quest to historicize, evident on programs about Négritude, does not extend to challenging constructions of sex and gender. Moreover, the scarcity of such programs suggests that the Transcription Centre did not prioritize women's perspectives or assumed that their audience was not invested in these questions. Women's issues are seen as separate from African literature, African politics, African economics.

On *Africa Abroad*, African writers and academics advocated an approach to literature focusing on locational specificity and historicized understandings of cultural exchange. At the same time, they attempted to theorize a literature of the African

diaspora that was heterogeneous but also unified under what would become termed postcolonial or global Anglophone literature. I am not suggesting that these writers were subsumed in some monolithic U.S. based radio propaganda, but it is also important not to lose sight of the role played by the U.S. funding sources that make some of these global expressions possible. They provided the platform and are invested in these projects for Cold War political goals of resisting Soviet influence among African intellectuals and strengthening ties between African intellectuals, U.S. intellectuals, and U.S. organizations.

Chapter 4 Endnotes

[125] The American Society of African Culture also received CIA funding (Dongen et al. 27-28).

[127] A number of people assumed the Transcription Centre was a division of the BBC, a confusion that the CCF insisted Duerden correct in order that publicity benefit CCF. The Centre also occasionally received mail from artists believing the Transcription Centre to be a creative agency and even received queries from medical transcriptionists seeking employment.

[128] Some of the parallel activities listed included: ". . . Forum Survey articles, of reprints, of Clearing-House press material, and of invitations to conferences given to African journalists . . ." (29). See Frances Stoner Saunders for a short discussion of *Forum* (213-14).

[129] A 1964 memo lists a few tapes sold to Kenya ("Memo" [11 March 1965]) but another summary report of tapes sold does not include Kenya. In a report to the Fairfield Foundation in 1966, Duerdan states that Radio Kenya has "never taken our programmes" (5).

[130] See David Garrioch, "From Christian Friendship to Secular Sentimentality," on Adam Smith and free friendship under capitalism (173).

[131] Non-African distribution was not solely for profit-making or prestige-increasing, however. In a research report for the Transcription Centre, Lalage Bown described the proposal to produce programming for Birmingham, U.K. as an attempt at "civilizing" Birmingham by airing programs about African peoples and cultures designed to counter English prejudice (86). The reversal of civilizing rhetoric recalls Una Marson's discussion of the exile's "mission" in the first chapter.

[132] The Transcription Centre explained lower price for African distribution versus non-African as made possible through subsidies from American foundations.

[133] In an interview, the British Guinean painter and novelist Dennis Williams states that the West Indian "stands as a bridge between–an obvious bridge between Africa and Europe" ("Africa Abroad 83-5").

[134] The Transcription Centre Records at the Harry Ransom Center contain a draft of this script. The centre sent a transcript of the program for promotional purposes to the Institute of Current World Affairs, and I cite from this copy available in the ICWA's online archives.

[135] The quotation marks surround all quoted text in the script; they are not original to the poem.

[136] Frances Ademola, who had worked at the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation, was recruited by Duerden and accepted a position at the Transcription Centre to develop a Mbari club in London. She moved to London with her young son, and wrote in her correspondence with Duerden about the personal and financial difficulties of this move. She returned to Nigeria after a year working at the Transcription Centre, accusing Duerden of using her only as a secretary.

Afterword: Broadcast Media, State Power, and Literature in the Twentieth Century

I have recently begun to pay closer attention to the reactions elicited by my "elevator pitch" description of my dissertation project, especially my research on BBC literary programming, as few people have heard of the Transcription Centre. When I talk to people at academic conferences throughout the U.S., I see their expressions brighten while they tell me of listening to the BBC as children in India or South Africa; a nostalgia for past listening experience often merges with a more general nostalgia for radio as a medium. My colleagues and academic peers frequently tell me that they trust the BBC's impartiality and attention to global issues over what they see as the parochial, commercial, and partisan U.S. media. Such responses fascinate me because of what they say about how the BBC has retained a specific mystique and reputation for reliability and trustworthiness through affective ties, even in listeners who suspect Britain's historic motivations in producing radio programming for Overseas broadcast.

While the BBC retains its credibility as a source of news, its global aims to foster literary culture have waned. The BBC World Service produces some literary programs such as the *World Book Club*, and the news and current affairs program *Newsday* occasionally produces a show on a literary topic, but the BBC no longer produces long-running literary programs directed at specific overseas regions. The educationally motivated cultural projects of the mid-century are seen to be paternalistic or ineffective

when compared with the global mass-media of U.S. television and film. At the same time, BBC radio's extensive literary programming produced for U.K. audiences—dramatizations of short stories and novels, radio plays, and literary radio magazines—are available to anyone with internet access for online streaming and as podcasts.[137] Podcasts have been frequently noted for extending the life of audio programming into the twenty-first century and proving wrong cultural critics who assumed radio has been on a continual path of decline. It is also, of course, a distinct media form in which individual listeners can listen on demand, and podcasts can be produced and shared with little equipment and technical skill as long as the creator has internet access.[138] An online platform not only allows a broader though less targeted audience, it allows producers to create new forms of reciprocity through social media. The *World Book Club*, for example, accepts listener questions through email and WhatsApp and has a Facebook page and Twitter account.

The BBC's global reputation and evolving overseas literary programming are legacies of the BBC's and other London-based radio institution's scope and influence in the decolonization era. Radio was the dominant media in colonial locations even as television was quickly establishing its cultural influence in Britain and the United States. In the mid-century, without call-in programs or the instantaneous response of social media, broadcasters attempted to establish reciprocity through formal composition of the radio broadcast and listener correspondence. Many producers and listeners believed in the importance of preserving of a shared cultural heritage of English language literature with a concurrent excitement about the emergence of a new Commonwealth literature to bring diversity of voices to reinvigorate this shared tradition.

In many ways the mid-century appears as a moment in which institutional and imperial power was more consolidated. As my analysis of iconic BBC photos in the introduction shows, the BBC brought together broadcasters and listeners from across the British colonies to broadcast a version of Empire and Commonwealth that could serve British interests. The Transcription Centre, funded secretly by the CIA, is evidence of U.S. imperialism and Cold War political tactics. On the other hand, the decolonization era saw the ultimate fracturing of Empire. As John Figueroa argues, literary programming echoed these political changes by reversing the power differential and flow between the metropole and the periphery (72). The CIA may have funded the Transcription Centre, but they did not control the programming or censor literary pieces aired by African writers at the Transcription Centre.

I return to those broadcasts in which the institutional influence seems the strongest, in which the presentation of British cultural ideology seems the strongest. There are many examples—the literary criticism I discuss earlier in the dissertation, Empire Day programs, Coronation Day programs. And Columbus Day, or Discovery Day programs. The West Indies Service, for example, often broadcast "Discovery Day" programs on the anniversary of Columbus' arrival in the West Indies or other programs about Columbus. As in Calvin Lambert's poem discussed in the first chapter, these programs often celebrated Caribbean geography and people but did not challenge the myth of Columbus the great explorer.

In 1942, Una Marson produced a feature taking place in a club, in which different characters discuss Columbus. Different characters provide European history, Caribbean history, and one man reads "The Creation" by James Weldon Johnson. Music plays, a

waves sound effect is played. The radio listeners are directed to "Imagine that we are on Watling Island, in the Bahamas – the first land sighted by Columbus – the land that gave to Europe the New World. It is Columbus Day – Discovery Day." The feature seems to present a straight-forward portrayal of Columbus as a hero complete with romanticized accounts of an Edenic new world sparsely populated with exotic inhabitants.

When the narrative tells of Columbus arriving in the Caribbean, however, the details of the natural world take over with lengthy description and extensive detail:

> The plateau itself is of limestone and coral, covered by white and glistening sand – there is not sand so white in all the world. On it grow sea-gardens with branching trees and ferns of coral, masses of grass and weed, and great beds of living sponge . . . ("Discovery Day" 5)

Marson's feature, like Lambert's poem, does not challenge the Columbus narrative, and does not elaborate upon the connections between Columbus' "discovery" and the genocide, colonialism, and slave trade. She does not call him a pirate and a slave trader as Aimé Césaire does in the play *Et les chiens se taisaient* (1956).[139] Passages like these do, when considered alongside Marson's other nature poetry, insert the specific materiality and beauty of the West Indies into the myth.

Fourteen years later, a short story by Sam Selvon about one of Columbus's later voyages aired on "Calling the West Indies." "The Third Voyage" (1956), like Marson's "Discovery Day," does not challenge the European myth. At the same time, the protagonist of the story is not Columbus, but rather a young boy. Selvon, the author of the piece and the reader, reads this first person account on air: "I remember it was the thirtieth of May, in the year fourteen ninety-eight, that we set sail" (1). In these and other

Columbus programs, West Indian writers write the West Indian subject and setting into the European myth even if they do not upend the myth altogether.

The production history of these Columbus Day programs deserves further investigation, and represents only one example of the artifacts and questions that remain to be explored. The BBC's African programming such as *West African Voices*, for example has received little attention when compared with *Caribbean Voices*. There is also much to consider about the way radio programs brought the literary and the musical together and how complete songs, listeners' requests, and other musical elements were incorporated into literary programs. While this dissertation has provided a comparative account of the BBC's Overseas programming in English, working across linguistic lines through the BBC archives and with the Transcription Centre's Swahili programming would open up understanding of whole other projects and ways of thinking about global literary radio. Mid-century radio programming continues to offer certain obstacles to study—lack of audio recordings, incomplete records, histories of censorship, and sometimes bizarre or alienating formal features—but also remains a rewarding area of cultural and literary study to examine the development of postcolonial and twentieth-century world literatures.

Afterword Endnotes

[137] Of particular interest, the BBC's Asian Network airs a broad selection of South Asian literature and music, primarily in English but also in Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Bengali, Gujarit, and Mirpuri, produced for listeners of South Asian descent within Britain.

[138] Individuals and organizations who create highly produced podcasts that are widely distributed do have considerable salary and bandwidth costs.

[139] See CLR James, *The Black Jacobins*, Lamming, *Pleasures of Exile*, and Aimee Cesaire, *Chiens* (1956) "Est-ce toi Columb? capitaine de négrier? / est-ce toi vieux pirate, vieux corsair?"

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