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THE AFRICAN-BRITISH LONG EIGHTEENTH CENTURY AND SIERRA LEONE: A READING OF DIPLOMATIC TREATIES, ECONOMIC AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL DISCOURSE, AND SYL CHENEY-COKER'S "THE LAST HARMATTAN OF ALUSINE DUNBAR"

presented by

TCHO MBAIMBA CAULKER

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Major Professor's Signature

Date

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By

Tcho Mbaimba Caulker

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ABSTRACT

THE AFRICAN-BRITISH LONG EIGHTEENTH CENTURY AND SIERRA LEONE: A READING OF DIPLOMTIC TREATIES, ECONOMIC AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL DISCOURSE, AND SYL CHENEY-COKER'S "THE LAST HARMATTAN OF ALUSINE DUNBAR"

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At the heart of this archival project is an exploration of the emergence and evolution of British colonialism in Sierra Leone, and inherent with emerging colonialism is the decline of indigenous sovereignty. In Chapter I, I begin with an exploration of African-British treaties that, sadly, have never been explored in this manner before. The treaties I explore span from the *Treaty of 1787,* which resulted in the first British colonial foothold in Sierra Leone with the "Colony of Freedom"; to the *Treaty of 1807,* which resulted ultimately resulted in the demise of the British Sierra Leone Company and the establishment of the official British Crown Colony and colonial administration in Sierra Leone; and I conclude with the *Treaty of 1819,* that was signed at a point in history when the era of modern colonial administration had begun.

In Chapter II, I explore the links between the British Sierra Leone Company (1791-1807), and the economic and moral philosophy of Adam Smith, that form a colonial philosophy linking European economic success with the so-called "civilization" of Africa. I analyze, in this chapter, the various *Reports of the Sierra Leone Company,* as well as Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* and *Theory of Moral Sentiments.* With the decline of the Sierra Leone Company's, it was ultimately decided that colony building and administration in Africa were not

tasks suited for private joint-stock companies, but were instead, to be job of the British Crown and British Government, and the emerging British Empire.

In Chapter III, I will focus on the manner in which enlightenment philosophy of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries gives way to an observational and anthropological pseudo science. I explore the ways that an emerging anthropology and pseudo-scientific methodology were utilized by the likes of individuals like German, Johann Blumenbach—*On the Natural Varieties of Mankind* (1775); and Swede, C.B. Wadstrom—*An Essay on Colonization Particularly Applied to the Coast of West Africa* (1794). I also explore the *Reports of the African Institution of London*, established in 1807, whose vocation was rooted in anthropological exploration and discovery on the African continent.[1]

Chapter IV explores the novel *The Last Harmattan of Alusine Dunbar* by Syl Cheney-Coker's. The task that Cheney-Coker accomplishes through his novel, by constructing a historical fiction that spans the history of Sierra Leone from the 1787 "Colony of Freedom" to independence in the 1960's, is very similar to what I've hoped to accomplish through this archival project. "The duty of the writer is to explore, to show its [or the events of historical consciousness] in a continuous fashion to the immediate present," and the task is to do this with "a full projection forward into the future" (Glissant 63-64). In the end, the archive is a powerful tool, and the job of the archivist, the writer, the historian, and literary scholar, who commits to working with the archive, is to empower generations so that they may knowledgably go forward to construct sound, stable, and knowledgeable "presents" and "futures."

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[1] The African Institution was founded in 1807 upon the demise of the Sierra Leone Company.

DEDICATION

To my parents who sacrificed to bring their children to the United States to live the American dream, while still never allowing them for forget the African dream: To my brothers and sisters Iyesattu, Patrick, Saffi, Dwight, Charles, Winni, and Denise for the love and strength that they have never failed to provide me with. To my nieces and nephews Musu, Tittor, Macpenna, Jomo, Hassan, and Rasheed those yet to be borne—that they may always pridefully know the history of their people, and their own place in this world, as they progress forward into the future. To all my family that I cannot mention here in this dedication because of space limitations, know that you are not forgotten, and that you are forever in my heart.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A heartfelt, genuine, and respectful thanks: To my dissertation directors Ken Harrow and Salah Hassan, and committee members Jyotsna Singh and Laurent Dubois, who embraced my vision of what this project could be and understood its potential, and who took the time to listen, nurture, and care, as opposed to the misunderstanding that sadly closes the door to so many minority students with potential. To Alfred Fornah, Mr. Cole, Mr. Moore, and the entire staff at the Sierra Leone National Archives, who have not only assisted me in my academic research, but have also always treated me as family without fail. To Dr. Strassa King, former President of Fourah Bay College (University of Sierra Leone), who welcomed a young and eager upstart of a 24 year old as a father who would welcome a son home from abroad. To my Aunty Tuzyline Allen (Caulker), whose book, *Womanist and Feminist Aesthtics: A Comparative Review,* provided me with a vision of what was possible for my own work. To Keith Sandiford and Lyndon Dominique, who took the time to personally introduce themselves at respective ASECS conferences in order to kindly welcome me into the profession. Many thanks to Ania Loomba, Suvir Kaul, and all of the scholars who made me feel at home in my first professional scholarly seminar experience as a young 21 year old at the 2001 West Virginia University Summer Seminar: *'Race', Colonialism and Intercultural Contact in Early Modern English Theater.* Thanks to Tony Brown, who made also made me feel welcome as a young 21 year old at my first conference panel experience at the NY Conference on Language & Literature. To Judith Miller, Edward Papa, and President Anthony Cernera, and

all of my mentors at Sacred Heart University in the English and Philosophy Departments, who always listened to my classroom questioning as that which came from an active precocious mind, instead of a student looking to upstage his mentors. To my MA advisors Lisa Tilton-Levine, Roger Apfelbaum, and Owen Schur—much thanks and appreciation for your support. To Monsignor Kelly and the faculty at Seton Hall Prep: The motto "Hazard Zet Forward" is forever emblazoned in my mind. To my ice hockey coaches at Sacred Heart University—Shaun Hannah, Stephan Gauvin, Jim Drury—whose reinforced the message from my parents that hard work will get you everywhere, and that talent and competence are what matter, not the color of ones skin.

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INTRODUCTION

The African-British Long Eighteenth Century and Sierra Leone: A Reading of Diplomatic Treaties, Economic and Anthropological Discourse, and Syl Cheney-Coker's "The Last Harmattan of Alusine Dunbar"

An Archive of the Past, Present, and Future

I begin this study with a statement about my strong commitment to archival study, and a fluid definition of the archive as a living, breathing, and continually evolving entity that allows us to know ourselves in this age of world-citizenship; as well as the idea of the archive as an entity that allows us to know and construct our pasts from whence we and our ancestors came, so that we might contribute to the greater global whole (Indeed, it takes all people to make a world).

The scope of this archival project begins with the proto-colonial eighteenth century that saw the British signing diplomatic treaties with African indigenous in Sierra Leone to secure land rights, and British institutions and companies being formed to enact colonial economic ventures that they hoped would someday reap and exploit an economic and territorial harvest out of the African continent. My archival study then spans into the early nineteenth century in which the British would attempt to establish a firm colonial foundation within Sierra Leone, West Africa, and the African continent as a whole. Finally, the project culminates in the twentieth century, with *The Last Harmattan of Alusine Dunbar*—a novel that looks back upon this seminal eighteenth-century colonial period, which saw the British Empire take root in Sierra Leone and the African continent.

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I come to this project as a scholar who wears multiple hats that command my allegiance and complicate my own positioning in relation to this project that deals with the African-British eighteenth century: I am a student of "traditional" British eighteenth-century studies, yet I am also keenly aware that we can continually push the boundaries of a metropolitan eighteenth-century and, to borrow the worlds of Srinivas Aravamudan, "instead propose several eighteenth centuries animated by the agency of their differently worlded subjects" (Aravanudan 25). In addition, I am also a student of African literature and Postcolonial studies, and it is most certain that having a foot within these three fields has broadly shaped my scholarly outlook to become one that operates with the premise that no field can exist with a vacuum.

Further still, there is my personal and familial positioning as one who comes from a Sierra Leonean family that is an indigenous Afro-British family, which has played a role in the political history of Sierra Leone. For instance, the name of my ancestor, George Caulker, can be seen on the Sierra Leone *Treaty of 1807,* and even today in 2007, a member of my family, Charles Caulker, sits in the Sierra Leone Parliament as an elected Paramount Chief of Sierra Leone's Moyamba District. As Joe A.D. Alie writes in *A New History of Sierra Leone,* "At least four of the resulting Afro-British families—Caulkers, Tuckers, Clevelands, and Rogers—were to continue to play a significant role in their areas into the twentieth centuries" (Alie 35)[1].

[1] In 1684 Thomas Corker came out from London in the Company's service, was employed in the Sherbro, and in 1692 promoted Chief Agent. He was transferred to the Gambia six years later, and in 1700 returned to England and died. His

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We might also say that my positioning is further complicated by my own personal identity as a Diasporal subject, whose early years have taken him from Sierra Leone to the United States, and whose present life regularly carries him to and fro, across the Atlantic with personal commitments and obligations in two different global continental spaces in the industrialized and developing worlds. It is because of all of these hats that bear my allegiance—academic, personal, familial, political, and perhaps even some that are latent—that I have developed as a scholar who is committed to the powerful idea of fluid and evolving archive.

It is said that the world is a small place, and becoming smaller everyday with technological advances in transportation, communication, and evolving global economic systems. However, I would posit the irony that in this "small" world, which is becoming "smaller" with each technological advancement and each passing year, it becomes dangerously easier to become distanced from the pasts that contributed to the emerging "presents" and "futures" we are continually being thrust toward. We now live in a world where Diaspora is the norm, and in which Diaspora, as a term, no longer inherently implies leaving one's place of origin, never to return. Instead, the nature of Diaspora, today, implies that one might leave one's place of origin to live in another region of the world (say North America for instance), while still calling one's place of family origin home (say Sierra Leone for instance).

This concept of knowing ourselves and knowing our pasts, so that we can advance confidently as world-citizens, who may contribute our share to the

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descendants by a member of a chiefly family became prominent people in the Sherbro. They established the maternal claim to rule as chiefs, but retained the paternal surname, which, by the end of the eighteenth century, they spelt Caulker. (Fyfe, *Sierra Leone Inheritance* 62)

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greater global whole, is a major reason that I am committed to the archive as more that merely a physical repository for documents that tell us about the past. As Edouard Glissant points out:

> The duty of the writer is to explore, to show its relevance in a continuous fashion to the immediate present. This exploration is therefore related neither to a schematic chronology nor to a nostalgic lament. It leads to the identification of a painful notion of time and its full projection forward into the future...That is what I call a prophetic vision of the past. (Glissant 63-64)

I propose a radical and fluid definition of the archive as a living, breathing, and continually evolving entity that allows us to know ourselves and construct our pasts from whence we and our ancestors came.

The archive is an entity that operates in service of the present and future, and allows us to construct solid "presents" and "futures" that speak to who we are and how we evolve as human beings in an ever changing world. For instance, the Sierra Leone National Archive of my parents' generation might consist of the same physical repository today, and indeed, many of the same documents. Still, inevitably, within an ever-evolving and ever-changing postcolonial world, this same archive and the very same documents signify and register at a different level based on generational experience and modes of perceiving the pasts—modes that are shaped by the current state of world affairs and world orders. It is with this manifesto of knowing ourselves and reconstructing our histories, firmly in mind, that I proceed with my archival journey and study.

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Overview: Chapter I

Over the course of Chapter I entitled "The Art of British-African Treaty Making and the Construction of a British Imperial State in Sierra Leone," I explore the treaties that the African indigenous of Sierra Leone made with those who would become their British colonizers over the period of 1787 to 1819. Through an analysis of these treaties, we see the emergence and solidification of a modern British colonial administration that goes through a learning process of power, which sees Sierra Leone evolve from a supposedly benevolent "Colony of Freedom" in 1787, to a profit-driven joint stock Sierra Leone Company and colony in 1791, to an official British Crown Colony in 1808. The Crown Colony form of modern colonial administration that was installed in 1808 is the form that Sierra Leone, and indeed all of the British African colonies, would assume well into the twentieth century until independence in 1961 during the 1960's African decade of independence.

The treaties that I will explore are literary diplomatic manifestations of how this blueprint of colonial administration evolves from one of repatriation, benevolence, and freedom, to one of commerce, economic profit, and territorial acquisition. When we think about the history of interaction between the Sierra Leone indigenous and British colonizers, and the treaties made between them during the years 1787-1819, we should think about the evolution of the power relationship between indigenous and colonizer; or in Foucauldian terms, about the nature of power, and how discourse can be manipulated and reanimated in order to build and maintain a firm hegemonic grip on power. The "irreconcilable

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interests" of affirming African sovereignty by signing treaties, while usurping African sovereignty is made possible through the discursive diplomatic discourse of the treaties. It is the link between discourse and material practice that will make it possible to render African sovereignty into African colonial subjectivity.

Overview: Chapter II

This chapter deals with the Sierra Leone Company (1791-1807), and the emerging economic and philosophical systems that were combined to form a colonial philosophy linking European economic success with the so-called civilization of Africa, and morality or moral education in Africa. We can argue that the Sierra Leone Company project, like the Colony of Freedom model, which was its predecessor, was closely aligned with the abolition movement and providing a viable economic alternative to the slave trade. However, Christopher Leslie Brown, in *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism* makes an important point when he remarks that "the [abolition] had its roots in a distinct and distinctive moment in British imperial history, a moment that presented both unfamiliar challenges and novel possibilities to those preoccupied with the character and consequences of overseas enterprise" (Brown 2). The "emergence in Britain of shifting definitions of imperial purpose" and "of new ways to conceive relations among subjects of the crown, and between overseas colonies and the imperial state" were also at stake during this period of early emergent colonialism in West Africa (Brown 2).

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Through an analysis of various *Reports of the Sierra Leone Company,* issues by the company to promote itself and its mission of commerce and so called "civilization" in Sierra Leone and Africa, in addition to an analysis of the economic and moral literary works of an eighteenth-century economic figurehead like Adam Smith, we gain further insight into the link between discourse and material colonial practice that guided a venture like the Sierra Leone Company. Foucault also makes an important epistemological observation when he asserts that is applicable to the Sierra Leone Company and its mission in African. He writes that, "among all the reasons for the prestige that was accorded in the second half of the eighteenth century, to circular architecture, one must no doubt include the fact that it expressed a certain political utopia" (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*).

In attempting to establish a colony designed to promulgate western civilization and British culture in Africa, and fashioned with the explicit premise of commerce and enterprise, the proprietors of the Sierra Leone Company were engaged in an endeavor that sought to engineer a commercial utopia from which an abundance of profit would flow. The company's joint-stock venture in Sierra Leone, however, was confronted with task of colonial engineering that proved to big for the company's capabilities and financial resources, which ultimately contributed to its demise and reconstitution as the African Institution of London, which will be the subject of Chapter III. The fall of the Sierra Leone Company in 1807 convinced the British government that the tasks of colony building and colonial administration were the job of a national government and an emerging

empire that could readily absorb the impact of inevitable setbacks to a utopian colonial vision and provide adequate military defense. The end of the Sierra Leone Company's joint-stock venture ushered in the era of modern colonial administration that began with the establishment of the Sierra Leone British Crown colony in 1808.

Overview: Chapter III

This chapter entitled "The Evolution of the Linear Progress Model, Scientific Anthropology, and the Colonial Project in West Africa" will focus on the manner in which the philosophy of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries gives way to a pseudo-science of an observational and very anthropological nature. You will recall that in Chapter II, we explore the manner in which evolving economic theory contributed to the emerging British colonial project of the later eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and how discourse contributed to colonial material practice. Here in chapter III, I intend to conduct a similar archival study that explores the relationship between discourse and colonial material practice by looking at the ways that an emerging anthropological science, and emerging pseudo-scientific methodology contributed to pseudo-scientific colonial ventures and exploration.

The study includes the woks of individuals like the German Johann Blumenbach, who wrote his famous *On the Natural Varieties of Mankind* in 1775; the Swede C.B. Wadstrom, who wrote *An Essay on Colonization Particularly Applied to the Coast of West Africa* in 1794; and the Englishman Sir Joseph

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Banks, who made his name by participating in the *Endeavor* voyage of Captain Cook in the South Pacific from 1768 to 1771, and was to be come a great proponent of African exploration[2] (Burns 16). The late eighteenth century also gave rise to what I will dub "the age of the pseudo scientific institution" like the African Association of London, which was founded out of a gentlemen's Saturday dinner club 1788, and the more prominent and organized African Institution of London, which was established in 1807 (the 1807 date is extremely significant because it is the year that the Sierra Leone Company was disbanded and taken over by the British government, in addition to the year the African Institution was created).

Overview: Chapter IV

I have labeled Chapter IV of the project *The Last Harmattan of Alusine Dunbar, and an Archive of the Postcolonial Past, Present, and Future.* It is a culmination of a project that speaks about the archive as a fluid, continually changing and continually evolving entity that allows us to know ourselves in this age of world-citizenship, and an entity that allows us to know and construct our pasts from whence we and our ancestors came. Syl Cheney-Coker's *The Last Harmattan of Alusine Dunbar* is included as a novel of great significance because it demonstrates that the study of an archive that comes to us from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries has just as much to do with the present postcolonial era that we live in, as it does with those centuries that have passed.

[2] Some seven years later, in 1778, Banks was elected president of the Royal Society.

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Syl Cheney-Coker, in *The Last Harmattan of Alusine Dunbar,* takes on the role of a teacher, who constructs an interpretative history of Sierra Leone and the establishment of the British colonial system in West Africa. Cheney-Coker, through his text, also offers us a unique lens through which we might read and re-read the archival materials—*i.e. treaties, reports, essays, etc*—that we have explored in the previous three chapters that span from the eighteenth to nineteenth centuries. When Edward Glissant asserts that, "Our historical consciousness could not be deposited gradually and continuously...as happened with those peoples who have produced a totalitarian philosophy of history," this also refers to an important reality that applies to West Africa as well.

Glissant's thoughts on historical consciousness also offer a way to approach the first three chapters of this project that deal with the evolution of British colonialism in Sierra Leone and West Africa, a significant part of which deals with the repatriation of African slaves to Sierra Leone in 1787. We might also characterize the analyses of the British-African treaties, the Sierra Leone Company documents, etc, as the study of those peoples who attempted to impose a course of history upon those peoples of West Africa who were thought to be void of civilization and history. On the notion of this history characterized by ruptures and fissures, Glissant also remarks that "the converging histories of our peoples relieves us of the linear, hierarchical vision of a single history that would run its unique course" and that "the depths are not only the abyss of neurosis but primarily the site of multiple converging paths" (Glissant 66). In the end, the archival study that I will embark on in this chapter of the project deals with the

construction of history and analysis of historical narrative, both of which combine to give those of us in the postcolonial present, a greater understanding of the histories that have brought us to our places here in the present and allow us to knowledgeably construct postcolonial futures upon solid foundations.

European Renaissance Beginnings and a Lasting Vision of Africa

While I do not intend to undertake a comprehensive or exhaustive analysis of contact that occurred between Africans and Europeans from the Renaissance into the Eighteenth century, I do plan, within this introductory section, to isolate certain instances involving the Portuguese and the English (specifically Sir John Hawkins) and their proto-colonial exploits in Africa during the period. The ambivalence and fixity of the African stereotype from this time forward in history—the creation of the ideological construct of difference within the European imagination, that allows Africans to be taken as human cargo without regard for their humanity, is something that I hope to establish here. I also hope to point to instances of diplomatic contact that establish a tradition, which allows Europeans to engage in these diplomatic endeavors involving diplomatic contact on a "human level" for economic benefit, while paradoxically, at the same time, retaining the imaginary construct that disregards the humanity of Africans and Africa.

The constancy of the stereotype of Africa as a site where humanity is lacking had not appeared with the dawn of the eighteenth-century. It is prudent to view it in the manner that Derrida suggests when he states, "the very condition of

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a deconstruction may be at work, in the work, *within* the system to be deconstructed," which allows us to decipher that this trope of African inhumanity was already there, already present before the eighteenth century. It is logical to conclude that:

> African and European relations initiated in the pre-nineteenth century era were forged on the wrong base principally because of the nature of the European motivations which paved the way for such contacts. These motivations were, to say the least, purely and simply acquisitive. The Portuguese, the foremost European power which initiated and pioneered these direct contacts, had as their primary objective the circumvention of the Arab Muslim economic and commercial monopoly over the trans-Saharan caravan trade routes. The commercial relations that developed between Africa and Europe during this era were dictated by European demands and needs and not by African interests. Thus, from the very beginning, the relationship was lopsided; and it was quite easy for a relationship dictated by and promoted for acquisitive aims, first for gold, and then for ivory, pepper, and other commodities, to degenerate into the trade for human cargoes.
> (Caulker, Patrick S. 398)

The concept of acquisition is one of the elemental factors that can be deconstructively deciphered and tagged as the motivation that lay behind the activities of virtually all the contact that occurred between Europeans and Africans—from the Portuguese in West Africa during the 1400's, all the way to colonialism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

During the fifteenth century, the Portuguese were the European sea-faring power that who took the lead with exploration of the African continent. In 1444, Nuno Tristao discovered the mouth of the Senegal River, which marks the end of the Sahara Desert and the beginning of the populous sub-Saharan region of Africa (Axelson 32). In the year 1455, when the famous Portuguese navigator Prince Henry assumed control of sea-faring expeditions along the African coast, "The

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Venetian Cadamosto, who visited west Africa with Henry's permission, reported that from the factory or trading post of Arguin, south of Cape Branco, between 700 and 800 slaves were exported every year to Portugal, and from every cargo Henry collected his fifth share"[3] (Axelson 33). In 1462, Pedro de Cinta, visiting the peninsula for the first time, called it Serra Lyoa, and the estuary soon became an important source of fresh water for ships traveling to and from India.

> In 1482 Portuguese traders began to build a fort on an island at the end of the bay...The traders eventually established themselves along the coast. European goods like swords, kitchen and other household utensils and attractively colored ready made clothes were exchanged at first for gold brought from inland and for fine ivory. The opening of European plantations in the New World (the Americas) in the 1550's and beyond, however, made slaves a major commodity that the Portuguese, and later, other Europeans, sought in Sierra Leone. (Alie 33)

Perhaps one of the most telling acts of this period, which sums up European attitudes towards those locations of so-called incivility and the human beings who inhabit these areas, came in 1493 when Pope Alexander VI issued a Papal Bull that sanctioned the division of the world's undiscovered and uncivilized lands between Portugal and Spain (Axelson 36). Such an official Papal sanction mirrored prevalent attitudes toward the African continent (and beyond) that labeled it as site of otherness that could, and in fact, should, be used for the benefit of Europe with little regard for the inhabitants themselves (although there were also instances of intermarriage between the Portuguese traders and African women, who set up African-Portuguese families).

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[3] Axelson, Eric. *Cape to Congo: Early Portuguese Explorers,* p. 33 Axelson also writes that "Cadamosto took a particular interest in malaguetta pepper, which soon became known in Europe as "grains of paradise," with the result that the region from which it was exported—roughly equivalent to eastern Sierra Leone and Liberia—became known as the grain coast."

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In *The Hawkins' Voyages During the Reigns of Henry VIII, Queen Elizabeth, and James I,* published in 1847 by the Haklyutt Society during the height of the colonial era (no doubt with great pride as well), we are given an account of Portuguese, and later, English, interventions in the slave trade:

> It was in 1517 that Charles V issued royal licenses for the importation of negroes into the West Indies, and in 1551 a license for importing 17,000 negroes was offered for sale. The measure was adopted from philanthropic motives, and was intended to preserve the Indians. It was looked upon as prudent and humane, even if it involved some suffering on the part of a far inferior race. The English were particularly eager to enter upon the slave trade, and by the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 England at length obtained the asiento, giving her the exclusive right to carry on the slave trade between Africa and the Spanish Indies for thirty years. So strong was the party in favor of this trade in England, that the contest for its abolition was continued for forty-eight years, from 1759 to 1807. (Markham *introduction p.* v)[4]

Of course, in Chapter I, we will see that 1 January 1808 is the year that the British Government officially assumed control of Sierra Leone as a British Crown Colony (which rhymes with the 1807 date we see in the above passage by Markham). However, my emphasis in highlighting this account is to highlight the fixity of the ideological construct of African incivility and inhumanity that is ambivalently transitioned from 1551 to 1713, and all the way to 1847 and when this piece was written.

By the time the middle sixteenth century arrived, the English, along with the French, Dutch, and Danish began to exert their sea-faring influence and broke the monopoly that the Portuguese had established in West Africa. I turn to the figure of Sir John Hawkins as an example of early English desire for a stake in the

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[4] Markham, Clements R. *The Hawkins' Voyages...,* (Intro p. v)

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African continent because we can label him one of the first, if not the first, proto-colonial English in West Africa. P.E.H. Hair writes that "There is a strong case for seeing the Hawkins voyages as innovatory [because] Hawkins took Englishmen to Guinea to act as soldiers for the first time, and used them on land against the Portuguese."[5] Hawkins took great pride in his sea-faring expeditions to Africa, and although his slaving voyages were of trivial economic gain compared to the ventures that were to take place during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, they were still a source of pride for Queen Elizabeth I and the English Crown. "Be that as it may, on the widest view, in terms of world history, the significance of the Hawkins slaving in the 1560's is its singularity. Between the 1440's and the 1640's, the only intervention [of England] in the developing export slave trade from West Africa was in the 1560's" (Hair 8).

I think that it would be worth our while to actually point to a specific account of Hawkins's third voyage to Guinea where he engages in diplomacy with an indigenous African sovereign that results in a windfall of slaves in the form of captured prisoners.

> There came to us a Negroe, sent from a King, oppressed by other Kings. His neighbors desiring our aide, with promise that as many Negroes as by these wares might be obtained...
> I went myselfe, and with the helpe of the King of our side, assaulted the towne, and put the inhabitants to flight, where we tooke 250 persons, men, women, and children, and by our friend the King of our side, there was taken 600 prisoners, whereof we hoped to have had our choice; but the Negroe (in which nation is seldom found truth) meant nothing lesse. (Markham 71)

It is interesting to note that while there is an alliance in place, which will result in mutual gain for Hawkins and his indigenous allies, Hawkins reifies the trope of

[5] Hair, P.E.H. *Hawkins in Guinea, 1567-68,* p. 7.

African incivility when he points to a widely held European belief that, in Africa, there "is seldom found truth." Africa is framed as a site of immorality as well, which is a trope that we will also see reified in the moral and economic theses of Adam Smith, the Reports of the Sierra Leone Company, African Institution, etc. Again, the ambivalence of this trope is what allows the fixity of these imaginary constructs of Africa to exist intact throughout the centuries.

The British, prior to the *Treaties of 1787* and *1788,* had a rather long history of attempts at establishing commercial companies for purposes of trade (this is a history that I will touch upon in Chapter II as I speak about the economic history of British Companies in Africa). There was also a tradition of diplomacy and contact that was developed between the British traders and African indigenous peoples. For instance, Fyfe writes that:

> In 1684 Thomas Corker came out from London in the Company's service, was employed in the Sherbro, and in 1692 promoted Chief Agent. He was transferred to the Gambia six years later, and in 1700 returned to England and died. His descendants by a member of a chiefly family became prominent people in the Sherbro. They established the maternal claim to rule as chiefs, but retained the paternal surname, which, by the end of the eighteenth century, they spelt Caulker. (Fyfe, *Sierra Leone Inheritance* 62)

The European trader was forbidden to go into the interior to trade, and was required to pay rents and tribute, and also obtain permission to trade from the African indigenous rulers as well. In order to discourage the slaving practices and promote legitimate trade, coastal rulers developed a system and tradition of demanding hostages of a ship's crew. The indigenous coastal ruler was essentially the European trader's landlord, and was therefore responsible for the conduct of the traders themselves (Alie 35).

I finally turn my attention to *A Treatise Upon the Trade from Great-Britain to Africa,* published in 1772, the same year in which the Mansfield Declaration was handed down during the height of the abolition movement. The treatise itself is penned anonymously, and the only name attached to it is "An African Merchant." The treatise launches into an argument that favors the establishment of an economic market for European goods, and more specifically British goods, over the slave trade. This is an argument made on economic grounds that we will see in the various documents we encounter throughout this project—i.e Adam Smith, Olaudah Equiano, Sierra Leone Company Report, Reports of the African Institution, etc. For example:

> Consider the vast continent of Africa, the extent of coast within the limits of our trade by act of Parliament, (from Port Sallee in Barbary, to the Cape of Good Hope, both inclusive) an extent of nearly three thousand leagues, most advantageously situated for commerce, the inland parts rich in gold, and other very valuable commodities beyond description, watered with innumerable rivers for many leagues up the country, the soil amazingly fruitful, and the people numerous. From a concurrence of such circumstances what advantages may not be expected? (A Treatise Upon Trade...6)[6]

The treatise then launches into an argument that paints the perennial English rival—the French—in a favorable economic light for taking advantage of African trade that is supposedly there for the taking.

> The French were fully sensible of this, and in the year 1701 presented a memorial to their government wherein they alledge, "their West India Islands cannot subsist, unless due encouragement is given to the African trade;" in consequence of which they had many privileges granted them then, and a few years ago, the bounties and exemptions allowed them for that trade were very little short of 45,000*L* annually. If France deemed this trade of such importance to her, it must be of much greater to us, who may

[6] *A Treatise Upon the Trade From Great-Britain to Africa,* p.6.

> be said to subsist only as a maritime power. (A Treatise Upon Trade...6)[7]

It is especially during this period of the abolition movement, but more importantly, emerging industrialism and commerce that more potentially lucrative alternatives to the African slave trade were being pondered. In fact, the driving forces behind these actions were more economic and profit-driven, than they were humanitarian in nature. Acquisition and profit for the colonial mother country were the ultimate goals of these new proto-colonial ventures, as there were during the era of the slave trade as well.

Prelude to Chapter I and the 1787 Sierra Leone Settlement and Treaties

I begin this exploration of African-British treaty making by surveying the events in England leading up to the establishment of the first "colony of freedom" in Sierra Leone for British Black Poor. For this reason, I turn to Olaudah Equiano, the former slave and British freeman, who gained much notoriety and novelty as an eighteenth-century black man of letters and as a black abolitionist. He was part of a movement spearheaded by British abolitionist Granville Sharp to create this "colony of freedom" to atone for the wrongs committed as a result of slavery through Sharp's *Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade.* The colony was also seen as a way of addressing the plight of the Black Poor of England who suffered greatly as freemen and freewomen on the streets of England.

Some would think that the Mansfield Declaration handed down in 1772 to conclude the Sommerset Case was the ruling that brought an end to slavery in

[7] *A Treatise Upon the Trade From Great-Britain to Africa,* p.6.

England, thereby, resulting in the great number of English Black Poor. However, this was not so. The case was sponsored by Granville Sharp on behalf of the slave James Sommerset, who protested for his freedom on grounds that his master planned to sell him outside of England. "Sommerset was set free. But the Chief Justice did not declare a complete prohibition of slavery, nor did he say that any slave who came to England became a free man. Thus, the status of the slaves in England was unaffected by this decision" (Alie 48). The reality is that a majority of the free men and women, who made up the Black Poor in Eighteenth-century England, came there as a result of the defeat in the American Revolution because they fought on the side of the English. The destitution that the Black Poor of London experienced was heightened simply because "The Poor Law offices in London, who normally cared for paupers, bore no responsibility for the blacks because the laws stipulated that paupers were to be supported by their parish of origin. And the place of origin for these blacks was Africa" (Alie 49). No doubt, there was also inherent racial bias that was involved in the decision.

Perhaps the greatest irony is that the African "place of origin" to which these Black Poor were to be repatriated was not an actual location of origination. This is highlighted by the fact that a treaty had to be signed in order for the settlement to be established (as we will see in Chapter I). They were strangers and settlers when they arrived in 1787 at the territory that was chosen for the "colony of freedom."[8] The reality is that this was a Sierra Leonean location that had been deemed best suited for purposes of European trade for over 400 years since the

[8] This is something that I will explore in detail in Chapter IV through Syl Cheney-Coker's *The Last Harmattan of Alusine* Dunbar.

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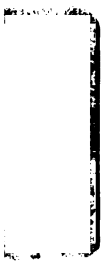
time of the Portuguese exploration in West Africa. Furthermore, the repatriation effort was seen as an opportunity to remove an unwanted black population from England. Olaudah Equiano puts the circumstances of the pending repatriation project in a different and perhaps performatively joyous light since we must recall that he is a black freeman writing for a white English audience:

> On my return to London in August, I was very agreeably surprised to find that the benevolence of government had adopted the plan of some philanthropic individuals to send the Africans from hence to their native quarter; and that some vessels were then engaged to carry them to Sierra Leone; an act which redounded to the honour of all concerned in its promotion, and filled me with prayers and much rejoicing. (Equiano 242)

Sharp and his colleagues requested financial support from the British government to undertake the repatriation project, and the government, anxious to get rid of them, agreed to provide support.

Equiano, in his biography, then goes on to write about the poor state in which he finds the preparations for the expedition. Perhaps the greatest irony is that the lack of care with which the African slaves were shipped across the Atlantic to the New World, is the similar lack of care that we see being manifested here, except that we might label it tolerated governmental corruption. Equiano is quite detailed in his description of his grievances:

> During my continuance in the employment of government, I was struck with the flagrant abuses committed by the agent, and endeavored to remedy them, but without effect. One instance, among many which I could produce, may serve as a specimen. Government had ordered to be provided all necessaries (slops, as they are called, included) for 750 persons; however, not being able to muster more than 426, I was ordered to send the superfluous slops, &c to the king's stores at Portsmouth; but when I demanded them for that purpose from the agent, it appeared they had never been bought, though paid for by government. But that was not all,



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> government were not the only objects of peculation; these poor people suffered infinitely more; their accommodations were most wretched; many of them wanted beds, and many more cloathing and other necessaries...
> I could not silently suffer government to be this cheated, and my countrymen plundered and oppressed, and even left destitute of the necessaries for almost their existence. I therefore informed the Commissioners of the Navy of the agent's proceeding; but my dismission was soon after procured. For the truth of this, and much more, I do not seek credit from my own assertion. I appeal to the testimony of Capt. Thompson, of the Nautilus, who conveyed us, to whom I applied for a remedy, when I remonstrated to the agent in vain. (Equiano 244)

Indeed, Equiano's writing here is performative in order to gain favor with his audience, and takes care to specify that he "could not silently suffer government to be this cheated" before he makes any mention of his black "countrymen [who were being] plundered and oppressed" as a result of this corruption. His reward for attempting to counteract or eliminate the corruption he saw taking place, was to be removed (or what he calls "my dismission") from the group of Black Poor that was set to sail in 1787 for repatriation in Sierra Leone.

Sierra Leone historian Christopher Fyfe offers another detailed historical account of the events that took place before the repatriation expedition to Sierra Leone set sail in 1787. He writes:

> At Plymouth the passengers wandered ashore, alarming the authorities who feared they might stay behind. Vassa began accusing Irwin (the agent) to Thompson and the Navy Board of cheating in ordering stores, and ill-treating settlers. He wrote Cugoano, who stayed in London, a letter which appeared in the newspapers calling Irwin, [Patrick] Frazer (a Scottish Prebyterian who persuaded the archbishop of Canterbury to let him travel as chaplain), and the senior surgeon villains. He, in turn, was accused of stirring up mutiny against the Europeans. These people began refusing to attend Frazer's services. Thompson wrote in alarm to the Admiralty about the growing turbulence, which he had no authority to check. He believed Vassa was deliberately fomenting

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> it, but also reported Irwin unfit for his post, neglectful of his duties. Middleton was inclined to support Vassa. Irwin hurried to London to see Samuel Hoare, a Quaker banker [who was]...Chairman of the Committee; at his representations the Treasury agreed Vassa be dismissed and the purser to the Nautilus be give charge to the stores. Vassa and twenty-three associates were put ashore. Eventually, the treasury gave him *L*50 compensation. (Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone* 18-19)

What all of these combined histories seem to convey is a sense of confusion and upheaval surrounding the planning of the "colony of freedom" mission to Sierra Leone in 1787.

In the days leading up to April 8, 1787, when they finally set sail, the mission stood with 290 black men, 41 black women, 11 black children, 70 white prostitutes who were forced on board, 6 white children, and 38 officials (the final figure of those who sailed is 411, and close to 50 died on the voyage).[9] Equiano, himself, concludes his talk about his involvement with the repatriation effort by highlighting the deplorable conditions under which the Black Poor traveled to Sierra Leone, in addition to the harsh conditions they met upon arrival. He finishes:

> Thus provided, they proceeded on their voyage; and at last, worn out by treatment, perhaps not the most mild, and wasted by sickness, brought on by want of medicine, cloathes, bedding, &c they reached Sierra Leone just at the commencement of rains. At this season of the year it is impossible to cultivate the lands; their provisions therefore were exhausted before they could derive any benefit from agriculture. (Equiano 245)

It seems this "colony of freedom" was doomed from the very beginning. Four months after arrival, 86 of the settlers died of malaria and dysentery, and the

colony itself would not last beyond 1790.[10] Alie writes, "Some of the settlers and a few of the whites sent to develop the Colony abandoned the settlement completely and took to trading in slaves" (Alie 54). The final curtain fell on the "Colony of Freedom" when the new King Jimmy, who followed King Tom, retaliated for the burning of one of the indigenous settlements under his jurisdiction by burning and destroying the colony. Perhaps this event, more than any other, signifies that the repatriation effort, far from being a homecoming of sorts, was fraught with the complexities of a return from the forced removal that characterized the exile of slavery. Repatriation was not a journey back to a place that was home, but to an African site that had to be made a home.

* * *

My final reference to Equiano will be his vision for the future of African as an economic market place after the slave trade has been abolished by European nations. I believe that we must look at Equiano's vision for Africa as the pleaful words of a free black man in the eighteenth-century, who is desperate to see the day when the institution of slavery is brought to an end. He writes:

> As the inhuman traffic of slavery is to be taken into the consideration of the British legislature, I doubt not, if a system of commerce was established in Africa, the demand for manufactures would most rapidly augment, as the native inhabitants will insensibly adopt the British fashions, manners, customs, &c. In proportion to the civilization, so will be the consumption of British manufactures...

[10] As we will see in Chapter II, the colony was resurrected under the royal charter of the British Sierra Leone Company

> It is trading upon safe grounds. A commercial intercourse with Africa opens up an inexhaustible source of wealth to the manufacturing interests of Great Britain, and to all which the slave trade is an objection...
> Population, the bowels and surface of Africa, abound in valuable and useful returns; the hidden treasures of centuries will be brought to light and into circulation. Industry, enterprise, and mining, will have their full scope, proportionably as they civilize.
> (Equiano 250-51)

Srivinas Aravamudan argues that "Equiano recommends the practical solution of global commerce and African consumption of British goods...in the manner of many mercantilist writers of the eighteenth century, from Defoe to Smith [both of whom we will explore in Chapter II], who saw global betterment through free commerce and the demand for European goods" (Aravamudan 248). However, I believe that we must complicate this issue by qualifying the matter of Equiano's racial otherness. Defoe and Smith are two individuals, who occupy positions of power because of their race and gender, unlike Equiano to whom we might warrant his acclaim to the novelty of being a black man of letters. Equiano's position is one of desperation, and while he may have a vested interest in the economic ends of abolition, we should take it as a given that the end of suffering for those he calls his African countrymen is his primary concern.

We can, however, still utilize Equiano's language to highlight the fact that although this was a repatriation movement designed to bring Black Poor of African descent back to the continent, this was very much a colonial project in every sense of the term. Akintola Wyse refers to the 1787 endeavor as "an experiment in social and cultural engineering," and that "the founders hoped that by creating the right conditions, an opportunity would be given to emancipated

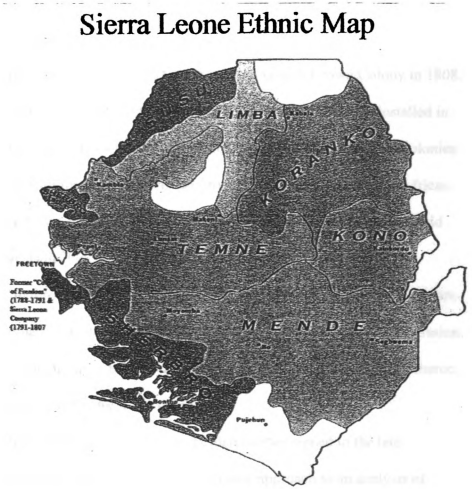
Africans settled in the [Sierra Leone] peninsula to evolve a free and self-governing black community patterned on Western civilization."[11] The idea was that these settlers, or "Black Englishmen" as Wyse calls them, would eventually be the agents of European civilization (a historical issue that I deal with in Chapter IV through *The Last Harmattan of Alusine Dunbar*). However, when we consider the concept of the colonial promotion of Western civilization in Africa, we must not forget the supposition of inequality that is inherent in African-European interactions. It is the supposition of inequality that is the underlying tenet, which guides all European colonial undertakings on the African continent.

[11] Wyse, Akintola. *The Krio of Sierra Leone: An Interpretive History,* p. 1.

Chapter I:

The Art of British-African Treaty Making and the Construction of a British Imperial State in Sierra Leone

Figure 1: Ethnic Map of Sierra Leone



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Over the course of this chapter, I plan to explore the treaties that the African indigenous of Sierra Leone made with those who would become their British colonizers over the period of 1787 to 1819 (these treaties are held within the appendix).[1] Through an analysis of these treaties, we see manifested the emergence and solidification of a modern British colonial administration that goes through a learning process, which sees Sierra Leone evolve from a supposedly benevolent "Colony of Freedom" in 1787, to a profit-driven joint stock Sierra Leone Company and colony in 1791, to an official British Crown Colony in 1808. The Crown Colony form of modern colonial administration that was installed in 1808 is the form that Sierra Leone, and indeed, all of the British African colonies would assume well into the twentieth century until the 1960's decade of African independence.[2] The evolution of colonial administration in Sierra Leone would come to serve as the blueprint for nineteenth-century British colonial administration throughout the whole of Africa. The treaties that I will explore are literary diplomatic manifestations of how this blueprint of colonial administration evolves from one of repatriation, benevolence, and freedom, to one of commerce, economic profit, and territorial acquisition.

While an exploration of African-British treaties signed in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries is a new approach to an analysis of emergent British colonialism in Africa, the underlying impetus that inspires this

[1] Over the course of this article, I utilize the Fyfe's *A History of Sierra Leone,* and *Sierra Leone Inheritance,* and Alie's *A New History of Sierra Leone*—a more condensed history of Sierra Leone created for the University of Sierra Leone system through McMillan Press in 1990. Fyfe and Alie neither speak about, nor offer an analysis of the several treaties I explore in this article, nonetheless, both scholars offer an important overview of the historical climate during the late eighteenth can early nineteenth century periods in which these treaties were signed.

[2] Sierra Leone itself officially gained its independence from Britain on April 27, 1961.

sort of archival study is not new. In 1999, Srinivas Aravamudan wrote of the *Tropicopolitan* and asserted that although we are "faced with a resolutely metropolitan eighteenth century replete with discursive, disciplinary, and nationalist reifications, *we can instead propose several eighteenth centuries animated by the agency of their differently worlded subjects"* (Aravamudan 25). Five years later in 2004, Kathleen Wilson pointed to a *New Imperial History* that could be fashioned, and emphasized that it was "energized by the political and imaginative wakes of postcolonial and cross disciplinary scholarship." We as scholars are now inspired to embark on historical analyses geared towards the recognition of "alternative modes and sources for understanding the past, to probe limits of historical knowledge, and to make the 'subaltern'—from indigenes to women, and all others rendered silent of invisible by the historical archive—'speak'" (Wilson 2). The fact that a scholarly analysis has not been undertaken of these British-African treaties signed over 200 years ago evokes the concept of colonial archive that lies silent and untapped.

Over the course of my analysis of these treaties, we will notice that the language of territorial acquisition, colonial administration, and domination of the British becomes stronger and more detailed with each successive agreement. In fact, by the time that we arrive at the *Treaty of 1819,* we will notice that the active voice of the indigenous Temne/Sherbro King Naimbanner that can be read in the *Treaty of 1788* is no longer present. Instead, we can observe that by the time we reach 1819, the art of African-British treaty making has become a matter of a dictation of terms by the British colonial administration. Over the course of the

course of this 32 year period of treaty-making between the African indigenous of Sierra Leone and British colonizers, we can see the evolution of a British colonial apparatus in West Africa that, at first, only sought to gain a foothold or launching-point in Sierra Leone, and became a colonial governmental power that came to dominate the territorial landscape in 1819.

* * *

The "Colony of Freedom" was the label given to the first settlement of Black Poor repatriated in 1787 from England to what is now Freetown, Sierra Leone. The venture was spearheaded by the English Quaker Granville Sharp and his *Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade,* under the premise of atoning for the evils of slavery by establishing an African colony to which former slaves might be repatriated. Christopher Fyfe writes that "Sharp intended the settlement to be more than a receptacle for unwanted vagrants...He looked to provide a country and a constitution. His version of current constitutional theories antedated the American: the settlers had already spent a week in Sierra Leone when the constituent convention met in Philadelphia" (Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone* 16). Therefore, the rule of law—a constitutional rule of sorts—would be at the heart of this mission on colonization, repatriation, and atonement.[3] Sharp was also quite Puritanical at heart, and intended that the colony would be founded on strict Christian principles, even going to the point of renouncing a monetary economy in favor of a system of exchange based on labor. However, it also

[3] Granville Sharp's *Short Sketch of Temporary Regulations (until better shall be proposed)*, written in 1786, offers a detailed vision of his plans for settlement.

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follows that although the African settlement was to have its own constitution, there was the implicit understanding that these Africans, both repatriated and indigenous, unlike the white forefathers who met in Philadelphia, had to be taught how to govern by white colonial overseers in order for the venture to succeed.

On April 8, 1787, the ship *Nautilus* and its Captain T. Boulden Thompson set out for the "Colony of Freedom" with 411 passengers. Fyfe writes that "Thompson's instructions were to take the settlers to Sierra Leone, acquire a settlement from the chiefs, land the stores, and stay in the river (Sierra Leone River) to help them as long as provisions and crew's health allowed." In addition, "If the chiefs refused, he was to go down the coast till he found some more accommodating" (Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone* 19). Thompson and the settlers did, in fact, meet a chief—the Sherbro/Temne Tom who was a subordinate chief to Naimbanner, who also came to see the *Nautilus*. After meeting with Thompson and the Nautilus crew, Naimbanner traveled back up the Sierra Leone River to his compound at Robana. Thompson and the settlers then proceeded to sign the original *Treaty of 1787* on June 11 with King Tom, and his subordinates Pa Bongee and Queen Yamacouba as witnesses.[4]

In 1788, Naimbanner, who never agreed to the *Treaty* in the first place declared that the settlement should be halted, which could have dealt a great setback to the efforts to establish a "colony of freedom." However, a Captain John Taylor of the ship *Mayo,* who happened to be on an independent mission in the region on behalf of Granville Sharp, took it upon himself to sign a new treaty in

[4] Pa Bongee's name can be seen on the subsequent *Treaty of 1788*, however, Queen Yamacouba's is not.

on 22 August 1788, which repudiated the former *Treaty of 1788.* It is with this *Treaty of 1787,* that we have the official beginning of the "Colony of Freedom," which was called Granville Town (and would eventually come to be called Freetown in 1791). Captain Taylor, like King Tom, was not authorized to make treaties, nor was Taylor in service of the British government. Unlike King Tom, though, Captain Taylor's agreement was accepted by his sovereign government. The rules of diplomatic discourse of the colonial treaties allow the British colonizers to place themselves in a position of flexibility, while placing the African indigenous in a position of increasing inflexibility. What he described in the *Treaty of 1788* as his Britannic Majesty's brig was in fact his own. Taylor also used the treaty-signing as an opportunity to get rid of a consignment of pistols, cheeses, satin coats and waistcoats, bottles of port, barrels of pork and a mock diamond ring, which he handed over on the settlers' behalf as price of the new grant (Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone* 22).

The determination to find a viable solution or alternative to slavery by those who spearheaded the venture to establish a colony in Africa is evident in the mission's original orders to proceed undaunted in its attempts to find a suitable location to settle. However, it also follows that although the settlement was to be a "Colony of Freedom" rooted in benevolence, there always existed an underlying economic premise as well. Christopher Leslie Brown is correct when he asserts: In key respects, the roots of the Sierra Leone settlement lay deep in the history of British enterprise in Africa. It evolved from the hopes of a persistent few who in the eighteenth-century wished to establish a more permanent British presence

along the African coast, who wanted to found colonies of settlement that promoted commercial agriculture, not merely a trade in human bodies, who aimed to enhance the states role in the management of African enterprise (Brown 263). In the end, the desire to find an alternative to the slave trade was tied to the establishment of a viable economic alternative to slavery, and this new conception was to take the form of African colonialism.

The former slave Olaudah Equiano, himself, spoke of his vision for the future of African as an economic market place after the slave trade has been abolished by European nations. I believe that we must qualify Equiano's vision for Africa as the pleaful words of a free black man in the eighteenth-century, who is desperate to see the day when the institution of slavery is brought to an end. Still, he advocates a system of colonial commerce and governance as an economically viable alternative to the slave trade. He writes:

> As the inhuman traffic of slavery is to be taken into the consideration of the British legislature, I doubt not, if a system of commerce was established in Africa, the demand for manufactures would most rapidly augment, as the native inhabitants will insensibly adopt the British fashions, manners, customs, &c. In proportion to the civilization, so will be the consumption of British manufactures...
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many mercantilist writers of the eighteenth century, from Defoe to Smith, who saw global betterment through free commerce and the demand for European goods" (Aravamudan 248). However, we could complicate this issue by qualifying the matter of Equiano's otherness, and the fact that Equiano's position could be seen as one desperate to bring and end to the suffering of those he calls his African countrymen. In the end, though, global commerce is factored in as the primary viable solution to the end of the slavery trade.

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The *Treaty of 1788*, Beginnings of Colonial Administration, and Usurpation in Sierra Leone

The discursive language in first line of the *Treaty of 1788* is a paradox unto itself that leads us to question who is dictating the terms of the exchange. It is written in first person and reads "Know all men by these present that I King Naimbanner chief of Sierra Leone on the Grain Coast of Africa by and with the consent of the other Kings, Princes, Chiefs, and Potentates subscribing hereto" (See appendix *Treaty of 1788*). We notice at first that it seems that King Naimbanner himself is the African sovereign with the authority who is granting the claim of land to the Captain Taylor and the settlers, and ultimately, the King of England. However, it is also quite curious that King Naimbanner is referred to as "chief on the Grain Coast." That he can be both a King and chief points to the ambiguity of discursive colonial discourse—an intended and constructed ambiguity designed to lessen the authority of the indigenous sovereign in contrast

to "His Britannic Majesty" George III (as he is labeled in the treaty). As the British colonial apparatus continues to evolve into the nineteenth century, we will see that this implicit usurpation of indigenous authority becomes more explicit. Alie writes that, "The power base was undercut because their sovereignty was lost to the colonial administration. They were no longer referred to as 'kings' or 'queens' but as "Paramount Chiefs" because only one queen (Victoria) ruled the Protectorate" (Alie 138).[6] Here in 1788, with the signing of this treaty and the utilization of discursive diplomatic language, we see the blueprint for colonial administration that will continue to strengthen and evolve.

Yet another important element of the *Treaty of 1788* that was to become an extremely contentious point is the fact that the land on which the "Colony of Freedom" was settled was supposedly granted to the British Crown forever. The treaty reads, "And by these present [I Naimbanner] do grant and forever quit claim to a certain district of land for the settling of the said free community to be their's, their heirs and successors forever" (See appendix *Treaty of 1788*). However, what was problematic about the terms of the agreement is that such a lifetime agreement was not possible according to Sherbro/Temne law in this Western region of Sierra Leone. "According to Temne law the land had only been leased, not sold, for land was not saleable" (Alie 63). It seems that the treaty had significantly different meanings for the two parties involved, and Naimbanner's affectual relationship with the Company would not be shared by his successors.

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[6] Alie, Joe A. D. *A New History of Sierra Leone,* p. 138. He contends that "These rulers no longer met the Governor on equal terms; instead they had to go through the District Commissioners (some of whom were young and inexperienced).

This would later lead to conflict between the Sierra Leone Company that succeeded the "Colony of Freedom" and Naimbanner's successor Bei Farma with whom the Company refused to re-negotiate the treaty (a conflict that would not end until the *Treaty of 1807* made under the watch of the British Crown Colonial authority that would officially come to power in 1808 to solidify a colonial hold on Sierra Leone).

In this analysis of the *Treaty of 1788,* [7] which was ratified by the Temne/Sherbro sovereign Naimbanner,[8] as well as the other treaties that we will later explore, I think Foucault's notion that a discursive formation defies unity and coherence is extremely important to consider. We are presented with a text that is designed to both affirm African authority in order to gain a legal foothold on the Sierra Leone peninsula, but there is also the desire to usurp indigenous African authority because of the intended designs on English expansion of so called "civilization" and economic markets. An important method for analyzing the discourse we see in the treaty is the concept that the keys to the unraveling of the discourse of the treaty may already be present within the treaty itself.[9] Whether the key lies in the center of discourse, or perhaps even an eccentric

[7] Throughout this piece, I will refer to Naimbanner as a Shebro/Temne sovereign because it is the Sherbro people who first inhabited the Bullom region in which Freetown was to be constructed prior to Temne and Mende encroachment into the area. As a result, Naimbanner is often referred to as a Temne sovereign only.

[8] I make the distinct reference to the *Treaty of 1787/1788* because the original *Treaty of 1787* was declared null and void, as it was signed by King Tom, who was a subordinate to the Sherbro/Temne sovereign Naimbanner and, therefore, had no legitimate authority to do so.

[9] I must emphasize that I do not intend to deconstruct these several treaties. However, I am creating a play on Jacques Derrida's deconstructive ideal that states, "Deconstruction may be at work, in the work, within the system to be deconstructed." He states that the cornerstones of deconstruction may "already be at work, not at the center of but in an eccentric center, in a corner whose eccentricity assures the solid construction of what it at the same time threatens to deconstruct" (From *Memoirs of Paul de Man,* 73). The idea that the key to unraveling a text may already be at work within the text is quite useful for the unraveling of the discursive language we find in these African-British treaties.

center, the inherent idea is that the keys to the unraveling of a document like the *Treaty of 1788,* is that the discourse contradicts and turns in upon itself. The *Treaty of 1788* also reminds us that, "never was it the case that the imperial encounter pitted an active Western intruder against a supine or inert non-Western native; there was always some form of active resistance," and in eighteenth-century Sierra Leone, this potential for active resistance had to, at first, be dealt with diplomatically (Said xii). The British, initially, had no choice but to recognize the sovereignty of the indigenous political system, before they could be turned into colonial subjects.

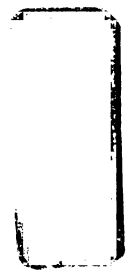
We should recognize that it is the incoherent nature of the discursive discourse within the *Treaty of 1788* that allows the British colonizers to create schemes that "give way to irreconcilable interests" and make it possible to "play different games" under the auspices of the treaty(Foucault, *Archaeology* 37). After all, consider that through this seminal treaty signed in 1788, the British have managed to convince King Naimbanner and his head men to "grant and forever quit claim to a certain district of land for the settling of the said free community to be their's, their heirs and successors forever" (See appendix *Treaty of 1788*). This very land, which is supposedly meant for the free settlers (comprised largely of the British Black Poor), will change hands and be given to the Sierra Leone Company in 1791, after which, it will finally be ceded to the British Empire herself as an official crown colony. In addition, the land that once only included the original "Colony of Freedom," would come to expand well beyond its borders in the nineteenth century to include all of present day Sierra Leone.

Foucault speaks about the nature of discursive discourse, and the fact that there can never exist a permanent theme within such a mode of discourse, and suggests that an analysis of discursive discourse "would not try to isolate small islands of coherence in order to describe their internal structure; it would not try to suspect and to reveal latent conflicts; it would study forms and divisions." (Foucault, *Archaeology* 37). He asserts that, "What one finds are rather various strategic possibilities that permit the activation of incompatible themes, or, again the establishment of the same theme in different groups of statement. Hence the idea of describing these dispersions themselves" (Foucault, *Archaeology* 37). For example, the discourse within the *Treaty of 1788* makes reference to the illegitimate *Treaty of 1787,* which it is intended to repeal and replace. It reads:

> We whose names are hereunto subscribed maketh oath that the purchase of the land, &c, made by Captain Thompson was not (to our certain knowledge) valid; it having been purchased from people who had no authority to sell the same. (See appendix *Treaty of 1788*)

The British colonizers, in this case, have no choice but to adhere to the terms set by King Naimbanner if they wish to have any hope of retaining the land on the Sierra Leone Peninsula. However, only four years later, in 1791, after the initial "Colony of Freedom" model has been abandoned in favor of the joint stock company model, the Sierra Leone Company will attempt to gain a stronger foothold in order to dictate terms and conditions that warp and bend the bounds of the *Treaty of 1788.*

It then becomes no coincidence that Naimbanner, in the treaty, is made to pledge his allegiance to the British Crown as a sort of pronouncement to the



world. The treaty reads, "And forth be it known unto all men that I King Naimbanner do faithfully promise and swear for my Chief Gentlemen, and People likewise, Heirs and Successors, that I will bear true allegiance to His most Gracious Majesty George the third, King of Great Britain, France, Ireland, &c &c &c" (See Appendix *Treaty of 1788*). This reads as a pledge of allegiance made by a King turned Chief, who *merely* rules the African Grain Coast, in contrast to a Britannic Majesty, who not only rules over Great Britain, but supposedly over "France, Ireland, &c &c &c." This agreement, in effect, lays the foundation for British colonial administration in Sierra Leone at the expense of African indigenous sovereignty.

* * *

In 1791, when the British Sierra Leone Company took control of the territory that was once named the "Colony of Freedom," the treaty agreement that was put in place during the year 1788 worked to the Company's advantage. Since the discursive language of the treaty maintains that the territory on the Sierra Leone peninsula was ceded to the British Crown forever, this meant that the British were within legal right to supplant the "Colony of Freedom" with a joint-stock company like the Sierra Leone Company. It is also interesting to note that the *1791 Report of the Sierra Leone Company* takes great liberties with embellishing the terms under which the land on the coast of West Africa was acquired. It reports that:

> [In 1787] a grant of land to his Majesty from King Tom, the then neighboring chief, was obtained for their use by Captain Thompson of his Majesty's navy, who conducted them; and then afterwards a similar grant from King Naimbanna, the King of the Country (1791 Report, p. 2).

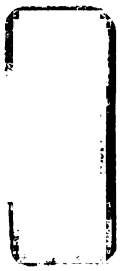
The *Report* neatly glosses over the history surrounding the *Treaty of 1787/88* that we analyzed in the previous chapter. In fact, Kup writes that Naimbanna "told Falconbridge in 1791 he had been hastily drawn into disposing of the land, which he had no right to sell, and he must get consent of all his headmen before allowing strangers even to live amongst them" (Kup 163-64). However, the *Report* states that the land had been obtained legitimately, which essentially amounts to expropriation of this land belonging to Naimbanna and the Temne and Sherbro that inhabited the region. The Report continues to read, "This land being about 20 miles square, is the same which his Majesty was enabled by the late act of parliament to grant to the Company" (*1791 Report, p. 2*).

The *1791 Report* also points out that Sierra Leone has "great and uncommon natural advantages," however, because of "its present forlorn and miserable situation" after the failed "colony of freedom," special provisions would have to be made in order to ensure the company's success (*1791 Report, p. 18*). It then goes on to read:

> The Directors...are led to observe, that it is evidently not merely a commercial factory that they have to establish, but that in order to introduce a safe trade, or any considerable degree of civilization or cultivation, it must be an especial object of the Company to provide effectully for the protection of property, and for the personal security of the settlers on their district...together with their first adventure, a sufficient strength shall be sent out for security against external violence, and maintaining domestic tranquility. (*1791 Report, p. 18*)

There are several things we see happening within this loaded passage. First, once again, there is an explicit attempt to distinguish the Sierra Leone Company model from any attempts that came before it, as an explicit plan of protection is laid out. Secondly, with this distinguishing mark or promise of providing "sufficient strength" with the "first adventure," comes the implied concept of linking successful economic trade with the stability and security of a colony. "External violence" arising from conflict between the colony and African indigenous on the outside, must be prevented from disturbing the tranquility that would exist on the inside of the company settlement. Third, we see that along with the institution of a colonial company model that has an explicit goal of commerce and economic profit and territorial gain comes in tow a much stronger form of colonial administration, whose duty is to ensure the stability of the venture at all costs.

Further separation from the failed "Colony of Freedom" venture is made when it is written that "It seems obvious both from general reasoning on the subject, and past experience, that a small and feeble attempt to set up a colony, or to begin a new trade at Sierra Leone, under all the circumstances of that place, is in no respect likely to prosper" (*1791 Report, p. 19*). The idea set forth here is that bigger not only means better, but that bigger also means increased profitability as well. "A more profitable trade is to be expected by conducting it on a larger scale, than by confining it to a narrow mercantile speculation" (*1791 Report, p. 19*). When we take these observations a step further, and take into account the prevalent negative thoughts and ideas that Europeans held about the African continent, it becomes clear that this venture, which set out to create an entire

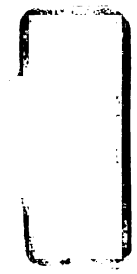


colonial system designed to support an economic system, was seen as one that was fraught with an extremely high level of risk. However, given the favorable forecast of profit potential if the company succeeded beyond its proprietors wildest dreams—a profit that came with opening an entire continent to trade—the risk was deemed well worth it.

A key reason that company directors saw the Sierra Leone model as one that would work economically, and yet another factor that would distinguish it from the past attempt, is because Sierra Leone was seen as a central point from which trade and commerce could be transacted. This, in turn, would create a centralized British economic marketplace on the African continent. The previous models and previous manner of operating was deemed highly inefficient and extremely wasteful. However, this new model of English trade in Africa would lend itself to increased profit potential:

> The expense of protection to a factory, and of demurrage to the ships waiting or trading about for the scattered produce of Africa, has hitherto been so great, that the usual advantage in the barter, which is extremely great, has perhaps been no more than what was necessary to indemnify the trader for his high charges, and leave over and above these the ordinary profit of trade.
> The advantage therefore of introducing a great degree of cultivation on one spot, of collecting a great body of consumers of British articles on the side of one river, of storing a large quantity of goods in their factory rather than a small one; the advantage also of thus providing the means of a more prompt sale, and quicker returns in the African trade than have yet been effected, must be very obvious. (*1791 Report, p. 19*)

The geographical location of Sierra Leone was a great advantage to any trading company that could successfully establish a colonial company model there. A central point of trade, on a giant African continent of "scattered" European trade



and exploration, was seen as a very feasible method of driving down the cost of commerce and increasing profit. However, the key to the success of this Sierra Leone Company model was "introducing a great degree of cultivation (meaning civilization)" to this one spot—this was essential to maintaining the stability of the commercial colonial settlement.

* * *

The Treaty of 1807 and the Shift from Joint-Stock Company to Crown Colony

The *Treaty of 1807* comes a year before the joint-stock company concept was abandoned in the region, in favor of official Crown Colony status in 1808. In the face of the instability that the Sierra Leone Company was forced to confront as a result of its conflict with the Temne, which threatened the colony and its profitability, it was ultimately decided that the tasks of colony building and administration in Africa were not jobs suited for private joint-stock companies like the Sierra Leone Company. *These tasks of colony building and administration were now deemed to be the job of the British Crown and British Government, and ultimately, the emerging British Empire.* The *Treaty of 1807* was signed at a point in time (July 1807) when the British Government was largely in control of the Sierra Leone Company, and had resolved to take full control on 1 January 1808. This action by the British government represents the solidification of the modern colonial blueprint or model of governance and administration that would be applied, not only in Sierra Leone, but throughout the whole of British Africa.

The treaty amounts to a peace agreement of sorts with the Sherbro/Temne of the region, and was designed to end all hostilities against the colony and settlement, even though no war had officially been declared. Fyfe, in *Sierra Leone Inheritance*, states that "The Temne, alienated from the Company's government, alarmed by the arrival of a garrison of soldiers, and stirred up...attacked from the west (where King Tom lived) on 18 November 1801" (Fyfe, *Sierra Leone Inheritance* 126). After this incident in 1801, such strife between the Sierra Leone Colony and the indigenous arose from time to time, and they took a toll on the Company itself, the burden of which caused the move from company to Crown Colony. Problems such as these arose without a strong indigenous figure like Naimbanner to keep the peace and settle disputes between the indigenous and Sierra Leone Company.

In *A New History of Sierra Leone,* we are told that "When Company officials refused to sign a new treaty with Naimbanner's successor, Bei Farma, [to replace the *Treaty of 1788* well after Naimbanner's death], he became angry. He and his sub-chief [also called King Tom], in alliance with Nova Scotian rebel Wansey, then proceeded to attack the Company's new fort of Thorton Hill on 18 November 1801" (Alie 62). This point of conflict involving the disputed terms of the *Treaty of 1788* some twelve years later in 1800 draws us back to the Foucauldian concept that deals with the ambivalent nature of discursive language and the fact that such dis-jointed discourse results in various material possibilities. By 1800, we see that the two parties who agreed to the *Treaty of 1788* have radically different interpretations of the terms of the treaty, which renders the

treaty acceptable to the British and unacceptable to the African indigenous (We could also safely say that both parties had different interpretations of the *Treaty of 1788* when it was first made). However, the different set of political circumstances and military capabilities result in a very different outcome from the singular diplomatic possibility that was available to the British colonizers. We are also told, by Fyfe, that during this 1800 turn of the century decade period, "The Sherbro Chiefs were drawn into war. European slave traders supplied arms, and reaped a rich harvest of slaves captured from devastated villages all over the country," so this was indeed a period of turmoil and great unrest among competing indigenous peoples as well (Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone* 96).

We are given different accounts of the circumstances surrounding the signing of the *Treaty of 1807* by Fyfe in his *History of Sierra Leone,* and Alie in his *A New History of Sierra Leone.* Fyfe writes that "King Tom and the Koya Temne remained peaceful; in July 1807 a final settlement was negotiated with them at Robis.[10] The treaty confirmed the Colony's conquest of the land west of Freetown. The Temne also gave up their enclaves in the east" (Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone* 96). However, Alie, in his new account of events published in 1991, tells us that:

> After a fierce struggle the company's forces gained the upper hand and went on the offensive. Many Temne settlements were destroyed and King Tom fled. He took refuge with Mandingo and Soso chiefs on the Scarcies where he planned another invasion, but was easily defeated. He was then persuaded by Dala Modu (a Soso chief then living just north of the Sierra Leone Colony) to give up fighting. (Alie 62)

[10] Robis is located between present day Wellington and Hastings in the Western region of Sierra Leone.

Alie finishes the episode by stating that "In 1807, the Koya Temne signed a dictated peace treaty with the British, by which they renounced all claims to the Colony land" (Alie 62).

What is clear is with the *Treaty of 1807,* "the Colony's original right to the peninsula, cession, was superseded by conquest," which means that the British Crown would now rule Sierra Leone with a firm and unchallenged grip (Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone* 96). Although the British Crown would not officially take control of the Sierra Leone colony until 1 January 1808, the British government and its military might are the force behind the *Treaty of 1807*, not the Sierra Leone Company, which would cease to exist on 31 December 1807. This is a case of mastery through military force. It is also interesting to note the treaty seems to have manifested within it the sentiment that proximity—or rather distance from the indigenous—results in a greater level of protection, and in turn a greater chance of continuity as well. Stipulation number four of the treaty reads that:

> No native town shall be built nearer to the Colony than Robiss, except Robiss, Salt Town, and Ro-Cupra; the land between Robiss and Ro-Cupra shall be left to the people of those places for their luggars. (See Appendix *Treaty of 1807*)

This essentially means that all lands to the west of the colony were to be abandoned by King Firama and King Tom. Interestingly enough, the language of the treaty hints at a sort of colonial mastery, as it specifically reads that they "hereby *surrender* to his Majesty the King of Great Britain, for the use and benefit of the Sierra Leone Company, all the *right, power, and possession of every sort and kind* in the peninsula of Sierra Leone." Here, we see that the language of territorial acquisition for the sake of mastery and dominance of the Sierra

Leonean indigenous is unmistakably stronger. Such powerful language, in this case, might also suggest a sense of urgency to capitalize on the victory over the Temne by immediately and irrevocably securing access to those natural assets important to the life of the colony. This was, in fact, the final pact that was signed before the British Crown officially took control, on 1 January 1808, of the Company which was already virtually supported by government funds (Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone* 97).[11]

The British colonial government of Sierra Leone, in 1807, found itself in the position of the party that dictates the terms of the peace settlement, as well as the party that determines the economic value of the lands and waterways that they have access to. Stipulation number seven of the treaty reads

And to prevent disputes it is hereby acknowledged that the duties payable for water are fifteen bars (each being of the full value of three shillings and four pence sterling, if paid in goods of specie) for every trading vessel that takes water, whether it takes little or much except crafts belonging to traders residing on the Coast of Africa. (See appendix *Treaty of 1807*)

What is perhaps most ironic is that a full twenty years earlier, in 1787, the British colonial settlement to establish a "Colony of Freedom" was in the position of begging and soliciting the favors of an African sovereign for the privilege of remaining on African soil. However, the circumstances in 1807 have seen the power relationship between British and African indigenous come full circle, and

[11] Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone,* p. 97. "By 1806 the Company had received *L67,000* from the Treasury. The fortifications cost about *L20,000,* the Volunteer Corps about *L3,000* a year. The government grant was swallowed up at once repaying uncontrolled expenditure."

the British colonizers now view what was once a privilege to settle the land as an inalienable right.

In the end, regardless of the ill-fated Sierra Leone Company's demise, what we find is that the discursive language contained within the *Treaty of 1788,* in turn, allowed for a wide range of free-play that enabled the British colonizers to re-animate potential material possibilities on the ground. This, in turn, enabled a shift from a "Colony of Freedom" to a joint-stock colony of commerce, profitability, and territorial acquisition, which would last until the Crown Colony came to power with the final decisive military solution and treaty of capitulation in 1807.

* * *

The Treaty of 1819 and the Era of Colonial Administration and Colony Building Builder
(*Mar Porto and Ro Bompeh respectively become Waterloo and Hastings*)

The *Treaty of 1819* comes eleven years after the implementation of British Crown Colony administration. Having arrived at a point in time when the blueprint or foundations of the modern colonial enterprise in Africa have been established, we are presented with an example of a colonial desire for not only territorial mastery and dominance, but nominal mastery of the land as well. The treaty itself only speaks of "the transfer of land" that "His said Excellency the Captain General and Governor [MacCarthy] in Chief for himself and Successors as the Governor of Sierra Leone for the time being, on the part and on behalf of His Britannic Majesty engages." However, after the signing of the *Treaty of 1819,*

the purchase of the strategically important locations of "Mar Poto and Ro Bompeh situated on the banks of the Bunch River" were to become Waterloo and Hastings respectively.[12] We might consider this an act of, or attempt at mastering the difference of a supposedly uncivilized and therefore supposedly blank African space by establishing a sense of nominal European familiarity.

In the same way we encountered the ritual of naming or renaming Naimbanner's offspring—John Henry (or John Fredrick)—earlier in this section, we see the renaming of African territory to christen it into a locus of European knowledge and familiarity. Wills writes that "This blankness signifies not merely that Europeans have not arrived but that these spaces have not arrived, a blankness of the inhabitants themselves. Africa is thus the 'Dark Continent' because of the paucity of (remembered) European contact with it." In order to remedy this territorial ailment of blankness, "They are domesticated, transformed, made familiar, made part of our space, brought into the world of European (which is human) cognition, so they can be knowable and known" (Mills 45). In the case of the *Treaty of 1819,* the African presence is recognized, however, it is recognized as an uncivilized presence that must be civilized by nominal erasure and a cultural renaming. This, in many respects, is what Governor Charles MacCarthy, saw as his major task in the colonial building of Sierra Leone.

MacCarthy came to power as interim governor in 1814 (when the previous Governor Maxwell went on leave, never to return to Africa) after being appointed Governor of Senegal and Goree Island, and was officially appointed to the

[12] These towns mark the boundaries of the sprawling present day capital of Freetown, Sierra Leone.

position of Governor of Sierra Leone in 1816 (Alie 16). When MacCarthy came to power in 1814, Freetown and the Sierra Leone colony was not marked by the thriving administration that he instilled during his tenure. "There were scarcely half a dozen stone buildings, public or private, no Governor's house, no church, no gaol, no proper public offices" (Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone* 134).[13] It was under the watch of Governor MacCarthy that Freetown and Sierra Leone went from a mere settlement to a colony with a colonial administration to match. Alie writes, "MacCarthy's governorship witnessed an increase in the quantity and quality of public buildings in Freetown. The jail was completed in 1816, the foundation stone of St. George's Church (later Cathedral) was laid in January 1817, a town hall was built...and officers' mess...a commissariat store at the wharf, and so on" (Alie 71).

Within the treaty itself, we see that MacCarthy, hoping to increase the power of the colonial administration, wishes "to strengthen and renew the former Treaties made by his Predecessors with the King and Chieftains (in this case Ka Conko), to prevent all misunderstanding which might arise from misconception as to the proper limits and boundaries of the Colony, the rights and titles of British subjects." The concept of "limits" and "boundaries" once again come into play, as they did with the previous *Treaty of 1807*. If we consider the concept of "presupposition of inequality" once again, then the term "proper" in regards to the limits and boundaries of the territory stands out. This is because there is the presupposition that the European, or British colonizer in this case, who

[13] Fyfe, Christopher. *A History of Sierra Leone,* p. 134.

supposedly exists on the positive side of the spectrum of inequality, possesses the cultural right to determine what is civilized in a supposedly uncivilized African space.

In the same styling of the terms of capitulation surrounding the *Treaty of 1807*, we see a similar declarative style within the *Treaty of 1819* as well. However, we should qualify that there does not exist the same sense of urgency that came with pressing to solidify a grip on power at the conclusion of conflict. The apparatus of colonial administration been comfortably installed, and the age of nineteenth-century colonial administration has begun. Gone is the first person dictatorial style of the African sovereign that we saw in the *Treaty of 1788* where Naimbanner pronounced "Know all men by these present that I King Naimbanner chief of Sierra Leone on the Grain Coast of Africa" (*See Appendix*). Instead, the colonial authority is the power that is *explicitly* dictating the terms and conditions of the treaty agreement and the financial compensation that will be doled out by the colonial administration now that there is a firm grip on power. The treaty reads that:

> In consideration of which transfer of Land, His said Excellency the Captain General and Governor in Chief for himself and Successors as the Governor of Sierra Leone for the time being, on the part and on the behalf of His Britannic Majesty engages, promises and agrees to pay yearly and every year to the said Pa Loudon commonly called Ka Conko (Temne leader), or to such person as may succeed him or be appointed or authorized to receive the same, the Sum of Fifty Bars in lieu of all other claims or demands of whatever nature or description. (See Appendix *Treaty of 1807*)

As a result of the treaty of capitulation that brought a so-called peace in 1807, the same year that also saw the British government assume full colonial authority,

and the strengthening of colonial power that saw MacCarthy take gubernatorial leadership, there are no reservations as to who should dictate the terms of the agreement. In many respects, the discursive language that once existed with the intent to cajole and allow room for colonial growth and territorial domination have now become less discursive and more explicit.

* * *

When we think about the history of interaction between the Sierra Leone indigenous and british colonizers, and the treaties made between then during the years 1787-1819, we should think about the evolution of the power relationship between indigenous and colonizer. Foucault speaks about the nature of power, and how discourse can be manipulated and reanimated in order to build and maintain a firm hegemonic grip on power. In *Archaeology of Knowledge,* he writes that:

> It would probably be wrong therefore to seek in the existence of these themes the principles of the individualization of a discourse. Should they not be sought rather in the dispersion of the points of choice that the discourse leaves free? In the different possibilities that it opens of reanimating already existing themes, of arousing opposed strategies, of giving way to irreconcilable interests, of making it possible, with a particular set of concepts, to play different games? (Foucault 36-37)

The treaties that we will analyze in this chapter offer the British a wide range of "dispersion" in terms of the "points of choice" on the path the British can take to gain territory and strengthen colonial administration. The diplomatic discourse of the treaties allow the British colonizers to place themselves in a position of

flexibility, while placing the African indigenous in a position of increasing inflexibility. This is the case whether is be the *Treaty of 1787,* which saw the British in a position of weakness trying to gain a foothold; or the *Treaty of 1807,* which saw the indigenous Temne surrender to the British; or the *Treaty of 1819,* which saw the British installed in a firm position of superiority and colonial administration. The "irreconcilable interests" of affirming African sovereignty, while usurping African sovereignty is made possible through the diplomatic discourse of the treaty, and it is the link between discourse and material practice that will make it possible to render African sovereignty into African colonial subjectivity.

Chapter II:

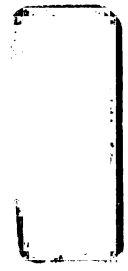
The Sierra Leone Company and its Ties to Emergent Colonial, Economic, and Moral Philosophy of the Eighteenth Century

This chapter deals with the Sierra Leone Company (1791-1807), and the emerging economic and philosophical systems that were combined to form a colonial philosophy linking European economic success with the so-called civilization of Africa, and morality or moral education in Africa. We can argue that the Sierra Leone Company project, like the "Colony of Freedom" model, which was its predecessor, was closely aligned with the abolition movement and providing a viable economic alternative to the slave trade. However, Christopher Leslie Brown, in *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism* makes an important point when he remarks that "the [abolition] had its roots in a distinct and distinctive moment in British imperial history, a moment that presented both unfamiliar challenges and novel possibilities to those preoccupied with the character and consequences of overseas enterprise" (Brown 2). The "emergence in Britain of shifting definitions of imperial purpose" and "of new ways to conceive relations among subjects of the crown, and between overseas colonies and the imperial state" were also at stake during this period of early emergent colonialism in West Africa (Brown 2).

As we read the various reports of the *Reports of the Sierra Leone Company,* in addition to the economic and moral philosophy of Adam Smith and his contemporary David Hume, we see the manner in which these new definitions of imperial purpose begin to take shape. In addition, we also come to see a strong

link manifested between discourse and material practice. There are points at which we can easily recognize the philosophies of Smith and Hume in a more simplistic and applied form within the literature of the Sierra Leone Company documents. Fittingly enough, these Company reports are broken down into subtitles or section headings that delineate the important factors for the success of the Sierra Leone Company enterprise—among them are: *Trade, Civilization, Cultivation, Morality, Education,* and *Health.* In fact, we might say that so-called *civilization* was seen as the key to maintaining the success and stability of the Sierra Leone Company, because once this supposedly unruly and savage continent was tamed, and both stable economic markets and stable trade could be established, European capital profits would increase all the more.

"The campaign for the abolition of the slave trade demonstrated and proved that civilized peoples, like the British, could achieve moral progress. British primacy in the war against barbarism reaffirmed the nation's place at the apex of refinement and virtue" (Brown 3). However, if Britain's war against the barbarism of the European slave trade placed it at the apex of refinement and virtue, then the fact that the British government granted a charter to the Sierra Leone Company to colonize and civilize what was seen as the uncivilized disorder of Africa, strengthened its position. "To be governed people must be counted, taxed, educated, and of course, ruled in regulated places" and the creation of such a regulated colonial environment was the task of the Sierra Leone Company (Said, *Culture and Imperialism* 327). The various excerpts from the *Reports of the Sierra Leone Company* that we will read and analyze throughout this chapter are

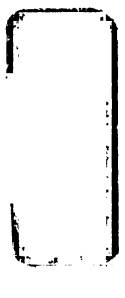


concrete examples of discourse representing the will and desire to strategically engineer a regulated colonial space. However, we should not be mistaken to suppose that the creation of this regulated colonial space was done solely to gain a national moral highground for Britain (if anything, such a moral highground would be a collateral gain). It is clear that colonies, like the one constructed by the Sierra Leone Company in 1791, were designed to create and foster new economic markets that would result in economic and territorial profit for the British nation. The regulation and sustained stability of the colony would be one of the major keys to the success of the Sierra Leone Company, and again, this is why the factors of *Trade, Civilization, Cultivation, Morality, Education,* and *Health* are of such vital importance in the company reports.

The Sierra Leone Company: Morality, Civilization, and Economics

I believe that Michel Foucault's example of the disciplinary apparatus of Ledoux's Arc-et-Senans, that is offered to us in Foucault's *Discipline and Punish,* is a very useful tool for what we see taking place with the establishment of the Sierra Leone Company colonial model. What we see in the Ledoux model that Foucault provides us with is a system of order that is strategically manufactured to create an efficiently functional and enclosed social system. Foucault writes that:

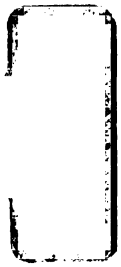
> The perfect disciplinary apparatus would make it possible for a single gaze to see everything constantly. A central point would be both the course of light illuminating everything, and a locus of convergence for everything that must be know: a perfect eye that nothing would escape and a centre towards which all gazes would be turned. This is what Ledoux had imagined when he built Arc-et-



> Sedans; all the buildings were to be arranged in a circle, opening on the inside, at the centre of which a high construction was to house the administrative functions of control and checking, the religious functions of encouraging obedience and work: from here all the orders would come, all activities would be recorded, all offenses perceived and judged. (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 173-74)

While the colonial settlement that would extend from the West African coast into the Sierra Leone interior hardly resembled a perfect circular formation, nor was it possible for a single gaze to see or a single light to illuminate everything, the matter of a functional system of penal control—or regulated colonial control in this case—is still quite valid. The matter of a centralized colonial authority or Company administration that would be responsible for maintaining order, as well as the importance of a religious apparatus to encourage obedience, work, and education, are very applicable to the regulated colonial model established by the Sierra Leone Company.

Foucault also makes an important epistemological observation when he asserts that "among all the reasons for the prestige that was accorded in the second half of the eighteenth century, to circular architecture, one must no doubt include the fact that it expressed a certain political utopia" (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*). Indeed, we must not forget that this colonial company model was a political system that was designed to create a sort of functional utopia that would change its African inhabitants supposedly for the better. The strategic design and functional form of the company colonial model, in the end, contributes heavily to the success or failure of the colony. Foucault draws from a Marxist economic model to draw a connection between discipline, surveillance, and economic profit



in a system of industrial production, and it is quite applicable to this colonial company model as well. He asserts that:

> At the scale of a factory, a great iron-works or a mine, the "the objects of expenditure are so multiplied, that the slightest dishonesty on each object would lead to a loss of capital...the slightest incompetence, if left unnoticed and therefore repeated each day, may prove fatal to the enterprise to the extent of destroying it in a very short time'...
> Surveillance thus becomes a decisive economic operator both as an internal part of the production machinery and as a specific mechanism in the disciplinary power." (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish 175*).

In the same way that institutional surveillance become central to discipline and a factory model, colonial surveillance becomes central to the functional economic and civilization model of the Sierra Leone Company.

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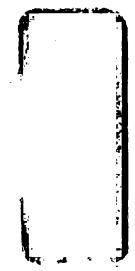
The *1791 Report of the Sierra Leone Company* states that an important tenet of the company was to create an environment with a disciplinary system in which non-whites would receive equal treatment with whites. This was a mandate of equal treatment that existed in theory; however, in actual practice, there was a supposition of inequality inherent in a colonial system that was founded on the premise of African incivility. The report reads:

> It was the object of one particular head of instruction to secure to all blacks and people of colour living at Sierra Leone, equal rights and privileges, as well as equal treatment in all respects, with white persons. The right of trial by jury will be communicated to them in common with others, and the Council are desired to allot to any black people employments suited to their present abilities...
> ...and the attention of the Council is particularly directed to the promotion of religion, and good morals, by the regular support of publick worship, the due observance of the Christian Sabbath, and also the general instruction of the people, and education of children. (*1791 Report*, p. 23)



We see the presence of the colonial penal system that is created as a "trial by jury" format, and it shares similarities with the Foucauldian disciplinary model. The fact that a legal format is to be "communicated" to the African colonial settlers suggests that this judicial system is one that is imposed by the company colonial model. The presence of the religious model is also another component of the Foucauldian disciplinary model that we see coming to pass within the Sierra Leone company model as another form of disciplinary control. The unstated and underlying premise of this idea of offering equality to blacks is that they must first be instructed and educated in order to reach the level of whites (the "uncivilized" must be wiped of "incivility"). In the end, though, the end objective of the company model is to provide a stable African market that will ensure a stabile English trade to and from Africa, and thereby, increase the economic wealth of England.

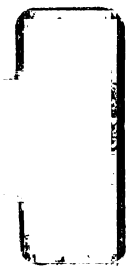
The moral construct or character of company officials who would travel to the Africa colony is of key importance in the *1791 Report of the Sierra Leone Company* because they are expected to be influential examples, who will not be impacted by the potentially "harmful" African environment. The report reads "Before the establishment could be formed and proper subordination be secured...examining, with due care the characters of the various persons, who offered to go as settlers, have all been the motives which conspired to make the directors discourage the going out of English settlers for the present" (*1791 Report,* p. 21). A common white settler, who was not of the strictest moral code,

would supposedly be at the mercy of an uncultivated African environment, an would be a weak link within the Company's disciplinary model.

The report also points to what was seen as a failure of the initial 1787 "colony of freedom"—the natural indolence of human beings with black skin. It reads, "they have also declined, for the most part, to give a passage to any black persons from hence, in consequence of their having observed that the habits of those, who have been living in London, were in general far from regular and industrious" (*1791 Report, p. 21*). Any element that could possibly jeopardize what would already be a colony of questionable morals, and therefore, a colony on the fringe, was to be excluded, be they European or non-European. The report also states, "The Directors have considered that one of the chief dangers to the whole undertaking, might be the hasty intrusion into the colony of Europeans of loose morals, idle or expensive habits, with minds of impatient subordination" (*1791 Report,* p. 21). The goal is to create a functional utopian model that will transform the character of the black inhabitants of the Sierra Leone colony.

The Company's structural model seems to be rooted in a strategy and philosophy of moral impression, and the Foucauldian concept of embedding figures of surveillance in order to construct and control a sort of disciplinary apparatus is also applicable. The idea of creating a European space or European model in African space—from buildings, to education, people and mannerisms—was part of an entire colonial architectural structure designed to affect change. Foucault writes:

> A whole problematic then develops: that of an architecture that is no longer built simply to be seen (as with the ostentation of



> palaces), or to observe the external space (cf. the geometry of fortresses), but to permit an internal, articulated and detailed control—to render visible those who are inside it; in more general terms, an architecture that would operate to transform individuals: to act on those it shelters, to provide a hold on their conduct, to carry the effects of power right to them, to make it possible to know them, to alter them. (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 21).

The altering of the human subject, or colonial subject in this case, is the paramount objective, and the implied premise is that such a change can only be affected through the altering of the physical environment inhabited by the colonial subject.

Only after a strong initial foundation has been laid by the initial wave of company officials and settlers of suppodely high moral stature, will the next wave of settlers from England be allowed to come to Sierra Leone. "Persons indeed of some property and of exemplary character who wish to settle at Sierra Leone, and working people who are used to any art or trade likely to be wanted there, will probably, after the first rainy season is over, be considered as a valuable acquisition to the colony" (*1791 Report,* p. 21). In lieu of settlers from England, the Directors of the company managed to procure former American slaves who fought for England during the American War of Independence. At the conclusion of the war, after English had lost its rights to the American colonies that became the United States, these slaves fled to Nova Scotia where promises of freedom and tracts of land went unfulfilled. Upon hearing the offer of repatriation to the Sierra Leone Colony, which also entailed an offer of land as well, a great many consented to go. These black loyalist freemen were seen as the new hope of the colony, because their work habits learned as slaves under the British colonial

system of the Americas disabused them of some of the supposedly indolent ways attributed to those with black skin. One this mater, the company report reads, "The impossibility indeed, of finding Europeans who can work in Africa in the sun, without the utmost prejudice to their health, has made the Directors conceive it their duty to discourage labourers from hence...and they trust therefore to the native labourers, or the free Americans, who...are expected immediately to arrive" (*1791 Report,* p. 21). Morality and civilization were certainly issues that the company considered important, but as we may recall from the headings under which the reports are organized, *Health* and survival of workers in the torrid zone was also an important concern as well.

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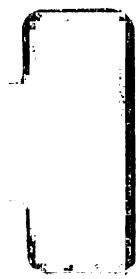
A major portion of the 1791 Report's educational overview is also dedicated to the subject of religion and morals, and a significant portion of the subject matter is dedicated to King Naimbanner, who signed the *Treaty of 1788,* and the education of his son (C.B. Wadstrom, whose *Essay on Colonization* we will read in the next chapter, tells us that Naimbanner's son took the name John Henry in honor of the Director of the Sierra Leone Company). The Report is careful to note that "The present King is of a peaceful disposition, and is generally respected and obeyed," and no doubt, this observation is placed there to allay the fears of potential investors (*1791 Report,* p. 6). However, the goal is to assure the company investors that the indigenous government, although supposedly primitive and uncivilized, is at the very least stable and reliable. In this respect,



the company report also takes care to note that "When he dies, the title is considered as elective; but his eldest son, now in England, would be likely to succeed; as the chiefs who chuse the king generally pay regards to hereditary succession" (*1791 Report,* p. 6). This ensures any potential investor that there will be a continuity in terms of succession, thereby, ensuring a continuity of goodwill towards the Sierra Leone Company.

In terms of the moral compass of the Sierra Lone indigenous, the report does the utmost to paint a picture of an uncivilized African that can only be redeemed with the aid of European instruction. It reads that:

> In point of religion and morals, the natives appear to be totally uninstructed. Perpetual feuds and hostilities seem to prevail between families and the descendants of families that have once injured one another; and to carry each other off for slaves is a common retaliation. They are generally Pagans; have no priests, no publick or private worship, nor stated religious ceremonies. (*1791 Report,* p. 7)

However, out of this picture of moral depravity, the company report presents us with a glimmer of hope in the form of the African sovereign and his son. It is written that "Both the King's son, and the king himself, appear to have the strongest desire to rescue their country from its present state of ignorance and wretchedness; and also to put an end to the slave trade" (*1791 Report,* p. 7-8). The idea is that as long as the company holds the favor of the indigenous sovereign, then the company itself has a firm foothold in the indigenous territory. Once the foothold is established, the goal then becomes to spread the colonial settlement and civilization outward across Africa from its initial roots in Sierra Leone.

Our reading of the indigenous King Naimbanner and his son can be enriched further if we consider Foucault's epistemological observation of the eighteenth century that deals with the soldier, and essentially, the re-formation of the human subject and human character to fit a desired political mold. He writes:

> By the late eighteenth century, the soldier has become something that can be made; out of a clayless form, and inapt body, the machine required can be constructed; posture is gradually corrected; a calculated constraint runs slowly through each part of the body, mastering it, making it pliable, ready at all times, turning silently into the automatism habit; in short, one has "got rid of the peasant" and given him "the air of a soldier"—ordinance of 20 March 1764. (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 135).

In the example Foucault gives us, a "peasant" is turned into a "soldier," while in the case of the Sierra Leone Company, the hope is that King Naimbanner's son and likely heir, will be turned from an supposedly uncivilized African into a refined black Britishman, who supports the Company's goals and aims.

It is quite clear that the Company officials intended to make John Henry Naimbanner an important company project—a human project of sorts—that would ensure the company had a firm foothold in Sierra Leone. The report reads:

> The General Court will no doubt approve of a resolution come by the Directors, that in consideration of the friendship subsisting between King Naimbanna and the Sierra Leone Company, the Company will take upon themselves the charge of his son's education so long as he may remain in England.
> (*1791 Report,* p. 9)

By taking the extreme measure to transporting John Henry Naimbanner to England, the company has in essence, cemented a union or effectual bond between the sovereign and company.

The report continues onward to explicitly speak about the hopes that they have for John Henry Naimbanner:

> The Directors feel great satisfaction in reflecting, that if it should please God to prolong his life, he appears likely both from his abilities and disposition, to lend the most important aid in introducing the light of knowledge, and comforts of civilization into Africa, and in cementing and perpetuating the most confidential union between the European colony and the natives of that country. (*1791 Report,* p. 9)

In spite of the benevolent tone of the language, we must not forget that this is essentially an action undertaken with a strong underlying economic premise in mind. It is taken in order to ensure the economic stability of the Sierra Leone Company.

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The Sierra Leone Company was founded with an economic premise in mind to create an efficient company business model that would succeed where the previous attempts at establishing profitable companies in African failed. The company picked up the pieces of the failed "colony of freedom" that was begun in 1787, and while the settling of a colony to which freed slaves could return seemed like an idea full of benevolence, we must not forget that the economics of the project were the driving force that moved both individuals and English government to action. Company officials believed that there was much greater profit that could be made in Africa with the abolition of slavery than what had been made through the slave trade. The company reports explicitly lay out these terms and expectations of profit potential or profit yield to investors and potential investors.

One of the distinguishing features of the Sierra Leone Company Reports that sets them far apart from the documents that we will analyze in Chapter III (like Wadstrom's *Essay on Colonization* and *Proceedings of the African Association*) is the fact that the company reports read like late eighteenth and nineteenth century public relations documents, which are designed to lure and appease investors of the company by presenting a solid strategic vision of the company's designs. The preface of the *Sierra Leone Company Report of 1791* reads:

> The most advantageous season for settling at Sierra Leone now nearly approaching, and the intelligence that was expected having been received from Mr. [Alexander] Falconbridge, Agent to the Company, who is lately arrived from thence, the Directors have thought proper to call the present court, for the purpose of laying some general information before the Proprietors, and of submitting also to their determination the proposition for raising capital. (*1791 Report Preface, unnumbered*)[1]

The emphasis placed upon the forthcoming "intelligence" from agent Falconbrige is of extreme importance because a large task in the job of gaining supporters and raising capital was to distinguish the Sierra Leone Company's colonizational model from Granville Sharp's failed "colony of freedom" that was characterized as unorganized, unprepared, and ill-conceived.

It is also interesting to note that the *1791 Report* takes great liberties with embellishing the terms under which the land on the coast of West Africa was acquired. It reports that:

> [In 1787] a grant of land to his Majesty from King Tom, the then neighboring chief, was obtained for their use by Captain Thompson of his Majesty's navy, who conducted them; and then

[1] This is taken directly from the preface page of the *1791 Report of the Sierra Leone Company*).

> afterwards a similar grant from King Naimbanna, the King of the Country. (*1791 Report*, p. 2)

The *Report* neatly glosses over the history surrounding the *Treaty of 1787/88* that we analyzed in Chapter I. In fact, Kup writes that Naimbanna "told Falconbridge in 1791 he had been hastily drawn into disposing of the land, which he had no right to sell, and he must get consent of all his headmen before allowing strangers even to live amongst them" (Kup 163-64). However, the *Report* states that the land had been obtained legitimately, which essentially amounts to expropriation of this land belonging to Naimbanna and the Temne and Sherbro that inhabited the region. The Report continues to read, "This land being about 20 miles square, is the same which his Majesty was enabled by the late act of parliament to grant to the Company" (*1791 Report,* p. 2).

The *1791 Report* points out that Sierra Leone has "great and uncommon natural advantages," however, because of "its present forlorn and miserable situation" after the failed "colony of freedom," special provisions would have to be made in order to ensure the company's success (*1791 Report,* p. 18). It then goes on to read:

> The Directors...are led to observe, that it is evidently not merely a commercial factory that they have to establish, but that in order to introduce a safe trade, or any considerable degree of civilization or cultivation, it must be an especial object of the Company to provide effectully for the protection of property, and for the personal security of the settlers on their district...together with their first adventure, a sufficient strength shall be sent out for security against external violence, and maintaining domestic tranquility. (*1791 Report,* p. 18)

There are several things we see happening within this loaded passage. First, once again, there is an explicit attempt to distinguish the Sierra Leone Company model

from any attempts that came before it, as an explicit plan of protection is laid out. Secondly, with this distinguishing mark or promise of providing "sufficient strength" with the "first adventure," comes the implied concept of linking successful economic trade with the stability and security of a colony. "External violence" from the supposedly uncivilized African indigenous on the outside, must be prevented from disturbing the tranquility that would exist on the inside of the company settlement.

Further separation from the past failed ventures is made when it is written that "It seems obvious both from general reasoning on the subject, and past experience, that a small and feeble attempt to set up a colony, or to begin a new trade at Sierra Leone, under all the circumstances of that place, is in no respect likely to prosper" (*1791 Report,* p. 19). The idea set forth here is that bigger not only means better, but that bigger also means increased profitability as well. "A more profitable trade is to be expected by conducting it on a larger scale, than by confining it to a narrow mercantile speculation" (*1791 Report,* p. 19). When we take these observations a step further, and take into account the prevalent negative thoughts and ideas that Europeans held about the African continent, it becomes clear that this venture, which set out to create an entire colonial system designed to support an economic system, was seen as one that was fraught with an extremely high level of risk. However, given the favorable forecast of profit potential should the company succeeded beyond its proprietors wildest dreams—a profit that came with opening an entire continent to trade—the risk was deemed well worth it.

A key reason that company directors saw the Sierra Leone model as one that would work economically, and yet another factor that would distinguish it from past attempts, is because Sierra Leone was seen as a central point from which trade and commerce could be transacted. This, in turn, would create a centralized British economic marketplace on the African continent. The previous models and previous manner of operating were deemed highly inefficient and extremely wasteful. However, this new model of English trade in Africa would lend itself to increased profit potential:

> The expense of protection to a factory, and of demurrage to the ships waiting or trading about for the scattered produce of Africa, has hitherto been so great, that the usual advantage in the barter, which is extremely great, has perhaps been no more than what was necessary to indemnify the trader for his high charges, and leave over and above these the ordinary profit of trade.
> The advantage therefore of introducing a great degree of cultivation on one spot, of collecting a great body of consumers of British articles on the side of one river, of storing a large quantity of goods in their factory rather than a small one; the advantage also of thus providing the means of a more prompt sale, and quicker returns in the African trade than have yet been effected, must be very obvious. (*1791 Report,* p. 19)

The geographical location of Sierra Leone was a great advantage to any trading company that could successful establish a colonial company model there (This is something that is illustrated on Wadstrom's map of Africa that I make reference to in Chapter III). A central point of trade, on a giant African continent of "scattered" European trade and exploration, was seen as a very feasible method of driving down the cost of commerce and increasing profit. However, the key to the success of this Sierra Leone Company model was "introducing a great degree of

cultivation (which also implies civilization)" to this one spot—this was essential to maintaining the stability of the commercial colonial settlement.

Also, in terms of the geography of the region, we should recall that Sierra Leone earned the title "white man's grave" very quickly and for good reason. However, it could have easily been labeled the "black man's grave" as well, given that malarial sickness and disease took its tool on the repatriated black population. Still, the Sierra Leone Company directors place the geography and climate of the region in a positive light as one that is easy to adjust to. The company report reads that "The climate may be reckoned to be much the same in point of heat, as the West Indies; but there is a very cool sea breeze in higher grounds," and that "The mortality of the settlers who went out [in 1787] has been already accounted for; and that in other cases may chiefly be traced to want of care and accommodations, and in particular, to exposure during the evening damps, and to excess in drinking, and other vices." The climate, by being compared to the West Indies, gives the impression that, since Europeans can survive in that part of the New World, they can easily survive in this part of Africa, in spite of the prevalent myths about the negative effect of the torrid zone on Europeans. In addition to "want of care and accommodations," the cases of mortality have also been traced to a convenient excuse of "drinking and excess vices," which speaks of moral depravity. Indeed, this is an important public relations move designed to attract investors for a company that purports to be a beacon of civilization in Africa.

The report continues on to state that "The Directors on the whole have been led to judge, from every information they have received, that the climate of

Sierra Leone is by no means unfavourable to the natives themselves, and no otherwise to Europeans than other climates of the same latitude" (*1791 Report,* p. 5). In a display of the type of idea exchange that took place in terms of exploration, philosophy, and economics, we even come to see that the report also utilizes Matthews' *A Voyage to Sierra Leone,* in which Matthews emphasizes "that Sierra Leone, if properly cleared and cultivated, would be equal in salubrity, and superior in cultivation, to any of the islands in the West Indies" (*1791 Report,* p. 5).

However, on the initial 1787 settlement of Sierra Leone, Christopher Fyfe tells a very different story of what awaited the settlers in 1787, and of course, these were the same geographical circumstances that would await the settlers of 1791 as well. Fyfe tells the story of Henry Smeathman, an amateur botanist, who visited the Banana Islands of the coast of Sierra Leone in 1771. Fyfe writes:

> Hard pressed by creditors, he (Smeathman) wrote to the Committee for the Black Poor in February 1786...A year before, he had told the committee investigating a possible convict station in West Africa that convicts would die there at a rate of a hundred a month. Now he painted a land of immense fertility, perfectly healthy for those who lived temperately, where the soil need only be scratched with a hoe to yield grain in abundance, where live stock propagated themselves with a rapidity unknown in a cold climate....he stressed the commercial advantages of a settlement which would repay initial outlay by opening new channels of trade. (Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone* 15)

The reality is that, on many levels, we see the same thing happening in 1791 that happened already in 1787, in terms of the gross embellishment and misrepresentation of the fruits that Sierra Leone had to offer. However, we might also argue that the key difference between the ventures of 1787 and 1791 is that

the latter colonial project was far better prepared financially than the former. Still, it's safe to say that the Directors of the company knew that they would be sending many human beings—particularly black human beings—to their deaths across the ocean.

In the end, though, whether it was said in truth, or whether it was offered as a benevolent guise of charity in order to mask a risky, and some might argue, careless, economic venture, the Directors leave us with these worlds in the postscript:

> [Africa is] a market, indeed, to the demands and extent to which it is difficult to assign a limit. But the benefits Africa was to derive from this connexion are still more important: the light of religious and moral truth, and all the comforts of civilized society. To insure the attainment of these benevolent purposes, it was necessary for the Company to be possessed of a tract of land in Africa. (*1791 Report,* p. 29)

Again, I think it is important to view these connections that the Directors make between economics and benevolence, and especially the idea of putting charity before monetary gain here in this case, in the light of the public investor relations scheme necessary to promote a budding company's colonial endeavors.

Emerging Colonialism and the Connection to Eighteenth-Century Economic and Moral Philosophy

"By mid-eighteenth century, what mattered to the British was that theirs could and was seen to be an empire of trade rather than an empire of dominion" (Brown 155). Therefore, looking at the Sierra Leone Company Reports in the light of late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century economic

philosophy, particularly when that philosophy is reflected in the works of Adam Smith, is extremely useful for this chapter that looks at the evolution of the British imperial purpose after the slave trade in West Africa. After all, Smith had much to say on the history of European trading and economic endeavors on the African continent. However, it is also important to consider the moral philosophy of the age when dealing with the economic ideas of Europeans regarding the African continent. Foucault, in *Discourse on Language,* speaks of a "will to knowledge," which is "reliant upon institutional support and distribution, [and] tends to exercise a sort of pressure, a power of constraint upon other forms of discourse" (Foucault, *Discourse on Language* 219). The concept of "will to knowledge" coupled with the applied pressure of "institutional support and distribution" is an example of the link between material practices and discourse. This is an important socio-economic link to consider when we think about the way that economic philosophy and moral philosophy work in conjunction with the evolving sense of imperial purpose for an emerging British empire.

Smith, before producing his *Wealth of Nations* in 1776, crafted his treatise *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* seventeen years earlier in 1759, which is commonly read differently and held apart from *Wealth of Nations* because of the different subject matter—economics versus morality—that each text focuses upon. The reality, though, is that in order to understand Smith's economic theory in relation to Africa, and by extension, the Sierra Leone Company's underlying premise of linking *Trade, Civilization, Cultivation, Education, Morality, and Health,* it is important to understand his theories on morality as well because they

go hand in hand. More often than not, the African continent, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, was viewed as a place where morality and humanity did not exist, and could not exist without implementation by the efforts of Europeans. This, in turn, created a theoretical dynamic in which the establishment of morals through civilization and the implementation of a disciplinary system of regulation, similar to what we see in the Sierra Leone Company, went hand in hand with any potentially fruitful economic model.

Donald Winch, in *Adam Smith: Scottish Moral Philosopher as Political Economist,* writes about the rift that occurred between moral philosophy and economic philosophy in the latter portion of the eighteenth-century. Winch writes:

> Several influential schools of thought converge in the belief that the advancement of economics as a science—a science capable of delineating 'economy' as a self-regulation realm—required the separation of its subject matter from the extraneous considerations embodied in moral philosophy. (Winch 92)

However, if this separation between moral philosophy and economic philosophy did in fact occur, such a separation did not take place when Europeans applied the theories that arose from a combination of moral and economic philosophy to the emerging colonial project in Africa. In fact, we should even make the argument that in the case of Africa, such intertwining of morals and economics became stronger as we see in the *Reports of the Sierra Leone Company.*

Winch wisely brings Smith's moral philosophy into play with his economic philosophy, and more importantly, the concept of how high philosophy was translated into simple applicable form. "If we wish to understand the strategy of science and persuasion employed by Smith when addressing legislators, and

the rationale for the anti-utopian approach to policy that he adopted, we have to turn to his work as a moral philosopher" (Winch 94). Having made that point, we should turn to a passage from Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments,* which on many levels, literally operates along the polar tropes of "civilized nations" and "barbarous nations" (both terms that Smith utilizes). Through such an example, it will become clear why it becomes impossible to conveniently separate Smith's economic philosophies and theories from his moral philosophy.

Smith, speaking on the nature of so-called civilized nations versus so-called barbarous nations writes:

> Among civilized nations, the virtues which are founded upon humanity, are more cultivated than those which are founded upon self-denial and the command of the passions. Among rude and barbarous nations, it is quite otherwise, the virtues of self-denial are more cultivated than those of humanity... (Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments* 239)
> Every savage undergoes a sort of Spartan discipline, and by the necessity of his situation is inured to every sort of hardship. He is in continual danger...
> A savage, therefore, whatever be the nature of his distress, expects no sympathy from those about him, and disdains, upon that account, to expose himself, by allowing the least weakness to escape him. (Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments* 240)

According to Smith, the savage nation—by which he means the natives of Africa, North America, and other non-European regions of the world—is not one that values principles of humanity. Smith continues that "The heroic and unconquerable firmness, which the custom and education of his country demand of every savage, is not required of those brought up to live in civilized societies" (Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments* 242). If anything, the *self denial* that Smith speaks of is a denial of humanity and human passion that is characteristic of the

civilized European. It then follows that beings, who have grown accustomed to *continual danger*, and who have grown accustomed to expecting *no sympathy* from others, cannot be morally trustworth. This, in turn, means that Africa poses a great economic risk to those investors and entrepreneurs, like those who funded the Sierra Leone Company, who seek to open up this new and potentially fruitful economic market. Hence, the need for the establishment of a heavily regulated colonial space in Africa, that is designed and engineered to affect change within the uncivilized inhabitant and uncivilized space.

When we couple Smith's thoughts on Africa that we see in *Wealth of Nations* with the previous passage, the connection between economics and morality becomes even clearer. He writes, "All the inland parts of Africa, and all that part of Asia which lies any considerable ways north of the Euxine and Caspian seas...seem in all ages of the world to have been in the same barbarous and uncivilized state in which we find them today" (Smith, *Wealth of Nations* 31). Considering that such a statement about savages, both in Africa and Asia, comes to us from an economic treatise like *Wealth of Nations,* it becomes prudent to link Smith's economic theory with his moral philosophy. We even find that Africa's geographic landscape is painted in a sort of unmanageable light, given that "There are in Africa none of those great inlets, such as the Baltic and Adriatic seas in Europe....and the great rivers of Africa are too great a distance from one another to give occasion to any considerable inland navigation"[2] (Smith, *Wealth of Nations* 32). In addition to the African indigenous that would supposedly

[2] We will soon see, through the Sierra Leone Company Reports, that one of the reasons Sierra Leone was valued is precisely because of the inlets that led to the African interior.

contribute to increased economic risk, the land itself is also framed as a sort of geographic economic risk.

Some 15 years after the publication of *Wealth of Nations,* the Sierra Leone Company was formed with a very different view on the navigating the risks of the untamed African continent. The premise is that the favorable geographic location of Sierra Leone on the African coast means that the risk can be mitigated quite dramatically. The *1791 Report of the Sierra Leone Company* reads that

> Besides trading to Sierra Leone for the immediate productions of that country, it appears also, that a coast and river trade, and, through the rivers, an important inland trade, may easily be established by means of small vessels calculated for that purpose: These might deposit at Sierra Leone productions of Africa, brought from other parts. The coast of Africa, neighboring to Sierra Leone, is more intersected with rivers navigable for small craft, than any other portion of it whatsoever: by which circumstance an extensive commerce might be greatly facilitated. (*1791 Report,* p. 12-13)

Given these supposedly inherent negative factors of the African continent's unmanageability, we gain a greater understanding of why a centralized colonial settlement on the coast of West Africa in Sierra Leone was such a very attractive prospect.

* * *

Although the Sierra Leone Company's vision of establishing a company model in Africa was not unique unto itself, what should become clear about the company is that it sought to create a civilizational model around the company itself, which was extremely unique. This sort of civilizational company model,

that created a regulated colonial space, would supposedly provide the stable foundation necessary for economic success, that would, in turn, supposedly transform the savagery and indolence that Europeans attributed to Africa in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Brown writes that

> In key respects, the roots of the Sierra Leone settlement lay deep in the history of British enterprise in Africa. It evolved from the hopes of a persistent few who in the eighteenth-century wished to establish a more permanent British presence along the African coast, who wanted to found colonies of settlement that promoted commercial agriculture, not merely a trade in human bodies, who aimed to enhance the states role in the management of African enterprise. (Brown 263)

In fact, it is interesting to note that this vision for a British Company on the West Coast of Africa was something that proponents of British commerce advocated for well over a century before the Sierra Leone Company came to pass.

One of the more famous proponents of this idea was Daniel Defoe, himself, who called for a governmentally sanctioned company in West Africa some 80 years before the founding of the Sierra Leone Company. Defoe's piece, published in 1711, was entitled *An Essay Upon the Trade to Africa, In order to set the Merits of that Cause in a True Light and Bring the Disputes Between the African Company and the Separate Traders into a Narrower Compass.* Defoe produced this piece because in his words, "the trade [to Africa] itself appearing then in its infancy, to be a most profitable, useful, and absolutely necessary branch of our commerce in order," and "that so great an advantage should not be lost to the nation" (Defoe, *An Essay Upon Trade* 5). The problem at hand was that independent traders to Africa were flooding the market and undercutting the profits of the British African Company, which had an official charter from the

English government. While Defoe saw competition as a necessary factor of commerce, the problem with such competition in terms of the trade to Africa was that if such competition drove the officially sanctioned African Company under, then a consistent and reliable trade to Africa would be lost to the English nation.

Interestingly enough, reliability of trade for the supply and production of manufactured good was not the only reason Defoe was concerned about the stability of the Sierra Leone Company. The supply of African human cargo was also of great concern to Defoe because they contributed to the emerging commercial strength of England. Defoe spells out these concerns quite clearly when he writes:

> As there is no obligation to any man to trade longer than advantage prompts him to it; so the Separate Traders never yet offer'd, nor can they bring in a number of men that would be personally bound...
> This leaves the trade in such an uncertainty, that no dependence can be proposed, either for the encouragement of our manufactures, or the supply of negroes to our colonies. (Defoe 42)

Defoe also shows great concern about the economics of slavery and the slave trade as they both relate to the emerging economic success of England. He argues that:

> There can be no security obtain'd from these free traders...as to the number of negroes they shall yearly supply our plantations...as by their means the price of negroes has been brought from 20 to 40, and 45*l* per head, to the great oppression and discouragement of the plantations. (Defoe 43)

It is also interesting to note that Defoe says nothing about the inferiority of the African human cargo—this is a notion that is already conceptually and philosophically understood. What is most important here is the stability of English

trade to Africa, and Defoe believes it is the company model that will "give real and sufficient security to the nation to preserve the trade by obliging themselves in the forfeiture of their charter, or such penalties as the government shall think reasonable" (Defoe 45). Because they are accountable to no one, the independent traders, in the case of the trade to Africa, would be a weak and unreliable link for the England.

Smith also had a fair amount about to say on the issue of slavery and economics, however, it seems that he did not see eye to eye with Defoe's view. It seems that Smith's conceptions of economics and the immorality of transporting human cargo went hand in hand. This inclination to single out slaveholders for censure reflected a long-standing tendency among some in Britain to cast the enslavement of Africans as a colonial innovation wholly unrelated to the needs and values of the more civilized metropolis, as a consequence, instead, of choices made by degenerate Britons. Smith, for example, famously tarred colonial slaveholders in 1759 as "the refuse of the jails of Europe" who through their deeds and manners had forfeited a place in polite society. These "wretches," wrote Smith, "possess the virtues neither of the countries which they come from, nor those which they go to. Fortune never exerted more cruelly her empire over mankind, than when she subjected those nations of heroes," the peoples of Africa, "to the levity, brutality, and baseness" of British Americans (Brown 115).

While later on, we will see that Smith valued the company model, and even more specifically, the joint stock company model, he did not place great economic value in slavery. At one point, Smith argues that "The wear and tear of

a slave it has been said, is at the expense of his master; but that of a free servant is at his own expense" (Smith, *Wealth of Nations* 113). Smith posits this hypothetical point as a strong possibility that points to the economic inefficiency of forced servitude. However, he continues to build upon this initial point, and assert his position when he writes, "It appears, accordingly, from the experience of all ages and nations, I believe, that the work done by freemen comes cheaper in the end than that performed by slaves. It is found to do so even at Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, where the wages of common labour are so very high" (Smith, *Wealth of Nations* 113).

What is more telling about the economic model that Smith envisioned in relation to torrid zones, and Africa in particular, is the manner in which he envisioned trade would elevate the level of those natives who inhabited the regulated colonial space. Smith asserts that:

> Commerce and manufactures gradually introduce order and good government, and with them, the liberty and security of individuals, among the inhabitants of the country, who had before lived almost in a continual state of war with their neighbors, and of servile dependency upon their superiors. This, though it has been the least observed, is by far the most important of all their effects. Mr. Hume is the only writer who, so far as I know, has hitherto taken notice of it. (Smith, *Wealth of Nations* 520)

Again, we see the link between economic philosophy and moral philosophy taking place here. Smith's model is designed to gradually introduce order and good colonial government, and has similarities to the model presented in the Sierra Leone Company documents. This colonial model does not mirror that of the factory of Defoe's age, which stands individually in the midst of a torrid zone with factory defenses and fortifications. It is a new post-enlightenment model that

creates a colonial settlement around a factory model, and is intended to spread well beyond the bounds of the said factory itself. It is also important to note that Smith makes reference to his colleague Hume. I label this reference to Hume important because we must realize that these ideas were not conceived in philosophical vacuums, nor did they remain in isolated vacuums after their philosophical conception (In the next chapter—Chapter III—we will even come to see that the idea exchange is quite global in nature). There is an interplay of ideas that takes place between philosophers like Smith and Hume; between theories of economics, anthropology, etc., and the institutions like the Sierra Leone Company that put them into practice. This interplay exemplifies the relationship between discourse and material practice.

* * *

While I don't wish to turn this chapter into a full analysis of late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century philosophers, I think it important to turn to Smith's close colleague David Hume, and in particular, his essay *On Commerce.* Although he is known more as a humanist, Hume displays a keen eye for foreign commerce and what it can do for an emerging nation. He writes:

> The same method of reasoning will let us see the advantage of foreign commerce, in augmenting the power of the state, as well as the riches and happiness of the subject. It encreases the stock of labour in the nation... Foreign trade, by its imports, furnishes new materials for new manufactures; and by its exports, it produces labour in particular commodities, which could not be consumed at home. (Hume, *Political Essays* 101)

Hume, here, is looking at commerce on a global scale that carries beyond the borders of any individual state. If we take this concept of foreign trade a step

further, and place it in the context of the Sierra Leone Company (1791-1807), the goal then becomes dominance by the mother country in terms of trade. While Knud Haakonssen wisely points out that "Hume grew apprehensive of traditional colonialism in the form of owning foreign lands" and that he believed "colonies were to be treated as partners in exchange and had to be granted corresponding freedom," we must also remember that such a model only applied to a colonies such as those in North America occupied by Europeans.[3] The implication is that such a model of colonial partnership does not apply to the supposedly uncivilized indigenous of Africa[4] (Hume, *Political Essays* 82).

Globally speaking, it is no coincidence that when looking at the global scope of things, Hume points to China "which is represented as one of the most flourishing empires in the world," only to point out that "it has very little commerce beyond its own territory" (Hume, *Political Essays* 102). Nor is it coincidental that he points out, "the poverty of the common people in France, Italy, and Spain, is, in some measure owing to the superior riches of the soil," which basically means that they are not compelled to engage in manufacturing and foreign trade to on a scale to which the British have risen (Hume, *Political*

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[3] Ed. Knud Haakonssen. Hume, David. *Political Essays.* (Intro xxv) This actually comes from the extensive introduction that the editor Haakonssen provides on the works of Hume.

[4] In His treatise *Of National Characters,* Hume specifically points to the African, and speaks of "our colonies, [where] there are negro slaves dispersed all over Europe, of whom none ever discovered any symptoms of ingenuity." He momentarily seems to redeem himself when he writes, "though low people, without education, will start up amongst us, and distinguish themselves in every profession. In Jamaica, indeed, they talk of one negro as a man of parts and learning." However, Hume then dashes these potentially positive thoughts about the mental capacity of the African when he writes, "It is likely he is admired for slender accomplishments, like a parrot, who speaks a few words plainly."[4] It seems that Hume sees no potential in terms of the mental capacity for the African, and I believe these are philosophical thoughts that we should keep in mind as we continue to analyze the Sierra Leone Company documents on education and civilization.

Essays 103). In laying out this treatise on commerce, Hume also lays out a formulaic reason for British international superiority, as well as the inferiority of other supposedly civilized nations that might potentially lay claim to the title of superior civilization. After all, "If we consult history, we shall find, that, in most nations, foreign trade has preceded any refinement in home manufactures, and given birth to domestic luxury"(Hume, *Political Essays* 102).

Perhaps the most telling part of Hume's philosophy on the supposedly uncivilized world that, like Smith's moral philosophy, should be read in conjunction with Hume's economic philosophy, also comes to us from his treatise *Of Commerce.* He begins which the comparative question:

> What is the reason, why no people, living between the tropics, could never yet attain to any art or civility, or reach even any police in their government, and any military discipline; while few nations in the temperate climates have been altogether deprived of these advantages? (Hume, *Political Essays—Of Commerce* 104)

Hume's question can certainly be read as one that is rhetorical, and it is no coincidence that it comes to us in the form of treatise on commerce. The lack or art essentially translates into a supposed lack of ingenuity, while the lack of *police in their government* translates into a sort of simplistic and uncultivated nature.

Hume gives us the answer to his rhetorical question, and it is safe to say that what he presents as a probable answer, is in fact, is part of Hume's global vision of the world. He writes:

> It is probable that one cause of this phaenomenon is the warmth and equality of the weather in the torrid zone, which renders clothes and houses less requisite for the inhabitants, and thereby remove, in part, that necessity, which is the great spur to industry and invention...

> Not to mention, that the fewer goods or possessions of this kind...the less necessity will there be for a settled police or regular authority... (Hume, *Political Essays—Of Commerce* 104).

Hume links this so-called "phaenomenon" of indolence and incivility to the geography of the torrid zone itself. Such a geographical climate, in the eyes of Hume and his contemporaries—and given what we have observed in the *Reports of the Sierra Leone Company*—does not lend itself to productive economic commerce and economic success unless it is transformed into a regulated colonial space.

It is this connection between civilizational morals and economic success, in addition to the fact that they are colleagues, that should cause us to think of Hume and Smith in a similar light. In fact, Winch writes that "Lack of generosity clearly does not describe Smith's attitude to Hume...even so, Smith spoke more loudly and frequently in praise of Hume as philosopher and historian...than he did of Hume as an economic writer" (Winch 98).

The Joint Stock Company, Risk Management in the Torrid Zone, and the Profitability of Civilization

I think that it would be prudent to lay out a more thorough idea of the manner in which a joint stock company operated, and why such a model would be the preferable choice to manage the risks of colonizing African space. Smith points to the dramatic differences between the nature of what he calls the *regulated company* and the more preferable joint stock company. He remarks that "Regulated companies...though they had frequently supported public ministers, had never maintained any forts or garrisons in the countries where they traded;

whereas joint stock companies frequently had" (Smith, *Wealth of Nations* 935). This fact alone makes the joint stock company more apt to be a model that lends itself to economic stability and regularity of trade. Protection of trade is of the utmost important in the torrid zone, and the management of risk in this respect must not be taken for granted.

Smith goes on to clarify his stance, which in many ways, mirrors Defoe's assertions as to why the company trader is more favorable than the independent trader in terms of reliability and vested interest. He points out that "the directors of a regulated company have no particular interest in the prosperity of the general trade of the company, for the sake of which forts or garrisons are maintained," and that "The decay of that general trade may even frequently contribute to the advantage of their own private trade" (Smith, *Wealth of Nations* 935). However, in contrast, "The directors of a joint stick company...having only their share in the profits which are made upon the common stock committed to their management, have no private trade of their own" (Smith, *Wealth of Nations* 935-36). In the end, because the interest of the joint stock company shareholder lies primarily in the economic success of the company itself, there can be no conflict of interest. Furthermore, because the nature of the joint stock company, in terms of risk management, is such that the risk is spread among the shareholders themselves, this means that the risk is shared and managed among a joint group of holders. Smith also points out that "The directors of a joint stock company have always the management of a large capital," which is another great advantage (Smith, *Wealth of Nations* 936).

Smith goes on to speak of the history of English companies in Africa. At the time that *Wealth of Nations* was written and published, the *African Company* was the sanctioned English company that handled the trade. However, Smith goes on, at length, to speak of the Royal African Company—the very same company for which Defoe made a very strong case in *An Essay Upon the Trade to Africa* that we explored earlier. He writes:

> The Royal African Company, the predecessors of the present African Company, had an exclusive privilege by charter, but as the charter had not been confirmed by act of parliament, the trade, in consequence of the declaration of rights, was soon after the [Glorious] revolution, laid open to all his majesty's subjects. (Smith, *Wealth of Nations* 942)

It seems that Smith points to the same flaw that Defoe also saw as a shortcoming—the lack of official governmental sanction, in turn, allowing a company to have exclusive rights to a certain territorial trade.

Smith goes on to point out that the African Company's "stock and credit gradually declined," and that "In 1712 [the year after Defoe's piece was written], their debts had become so great, that a particular act of parliament was thought necessary" (Smith, *Wealth of Nations* 942). The nightmarish economic scenario unfolds as Smith writes that "In 1730, their affairs were in so great disorder, that they were altogether incapable of maintaining their forts and garrisons, the sole purpose and pretext of their institution," with Parliament having to provide the necessary allotment of ten-thousand pounds per year for maintenance (Smith, *Wealth of Nations* 942). This scenario of being unable to financially provide for the upkeep and maintenance of defense fortifications in the supposedly hostile torrid zone proved to be one of the last death blows to the stability of the African

Company. In 1732, the African Company went bankrupt, and was dissolved by an Act of Parliament, and the forts and factories on the continent were handed over to the Royal African Company, which was a regulated company. This was the final predecessor to the Sierra Leone Company civilizational model, which was the fifth British company to operate on the African continent, as Smith writes that "Before the erection of the Royal African Company, there had been three other joint stock companies successively established, one after another, for the African trade. They were all equally unsuccessful" (Smith, *Wealth of Nations* 943). The Royal African Company would turn out to be a failure, much like the other three attempts before it. However, the Sierra Leone Company would prove to be more of a successful model, specifically because it was not merely a company, but also a civilizational project that sought to engineer a controlled colonial environment. Indeed, the Sierra Leone Company provided the blueprint for the nineteenth-century British colonial model. We might even argue that the colonial apparatus was what bolstered the company's success—through means of education and diplomacy, the company was able to create an African environment in which many indigenous would come to identify with its economic purpose (Like King Naimbanner and John Henry Naimbanner, whose case we explored in Chapter I). In the end, though, the reality is that colonies could only be adequately maintained by a mother country or state, and maintenance of the Sierra Leone Company colonial apparatus proved too much to financially bear. As a result, the company would come to be absorbed by the British state as an official British Crown colony in on 1 January1808.

The final significant portion of Smith's *Wealth of Nations* (1776) that I will point to speaks of the status of European possessions in both Africa and the East Indies. While highlighting that natives in Africa and the East Indies were difficult to displace territorially because they were shepherds, as opposed to the hunters of North America, he compares these company ventures within the torrid zone to the successful colonial model employed in the Americas. Smith emphasizes the great disparity in terms of success that favors the colonial model. His analysis points out that:

> Though the Europeans possess many considerable settlements both upon the coast of Africa and in the East Indies, they have not yet established in either of those countries such numerous and thriving colonies as those in the islands and continent of America. (Smith, *Wealth of Nations* 805).

He then writes, "The genius of exclusive companies...is unfavorable, it has already been observed, to the growth of new colonies, and has probably been the cause of the little progress which they have made" (Smith, *Wealth of Nations* 805-06). He then goes on to say that "The Portugueze carried on the trade both to Africa and the East Indies without any exclusive companies...[and] bear some faint resemblance to the colonies of America, and are partly inhabited by Portugueze who have established there for generations" (Smith, *Wealth of Nations* 806). The American model is held as the pinnacle model specifically because they were colonial models, instead of company models. Smith parallels the Portuguese with the American example to show that American style colonialism could work in Africa as well, and that in term of economics, this model would be the most efficient and profitable model for the English.

* * *

By the time that we arrive at the *Sierra Leone Company Report of 1796,* there has been a shift in company policy and company language because of an attack on the colony in 1794 by the French, who all but destroyed the colonial progress made there. However, the report takes care to state that:

> The disadvantages under which the Sierra Leone Colony has laboured, have been, in many respects, peculiarly great; and the expenses attending its institution have been proportionately considerable; nevertheless, every year's experience seems to have added to the probability of its establishment and future prosperity, and to have afforded fresh proof of the practicality of cultivating and civilizing the Continent of Africa. (*1796 Report,* p. 14-15)

The major setback of the French invasion and destruction of the colony is framed as an event that can be overcome with perseverance and wise fiscal management. The company's accomplishments are also presented as great steps on the path to a brighter economic future in Africa, which will translate into increased profit. In order to further allay the fears of investors, the company officials take measures "to reduce within narrow limits the whole amount of the risk which the Company was about to incur in Africa; and consequently to contract, in some measure, their speculation in trade, as well as the expenses of their establishment" (*1796 Report,* p.5).

On the subject of civilization of the blacks of the colony, the report also makes sure to highlight the supposedly good progress towards civilization of the Nova Scotian repatriates, who were former slaves turned British loyalists in the American war for independence. The report reads that

> The enthusiasm that had prevailed among the Nova Scotians is thought also to have abated, their minds are said to have become more enlightened, and their morals to have improved...[and that] Many Nova Scotians have been employed as apprentices under English masters and artificers, and have advanced in the knowledge of more common European arts. (*1796 Report,* p. 12)

The goal is to present evidence that the regulated colonial environment, which the Company has engineered, is affecting the black inhabitants for the better. We are presented with elements—advancement in "European arts" and moral improvement—that will bolster the chances for the economic success of the colony. The end goal of the directors is to present a picture of a colony that has restabilized itself after the French attack.

The company report also speaks of the fear and terror that the repatriated Nova Scotians experienced at the hands of the French attack on the colony. This is used as yet another public relations moment for the company to tell investors what they want to hear—reports of movement inland, and the expansion of the colonial settlement. It reads:

> Many Nova Scotians had been induced, through terror inspired into those who lived nearest the coast, by the French depredations, to retire further into the country, and to enter upon the cultivation of many distant farm-lots...[and that] The produce already growing on some of the farms has been represented, by persons who have come over to England, as extremely valuable. (*1796 Report,* p. 9-10).

The report also lays out a plan to encourage further settlement inland, again offering the image of a move further inland into the African interior, and that "a few premiums of forty dollars each" have been offered to the prospective settlers in order to under take such a move inland. Offering up a picture of a budding

colonial settlement to investors is the prime goal of these company reports, and anything that offers an image of a economic windfall of profit is worthy as news.

By the time of the *Sierra Leone Company Report of 1801,* we are presented with another cause for alarm, for which another diplomatic attempt at public relations is needed in order on quell the fears of potential investors. In addition, with the imminent arrival of 600 Maroons, due to be repatriated from Jamaica, it was important to provide an official update that assured the colonial venture was not a powder keg waiting to explode. The report opens with the following:

> It appears from these accounts that the unruly spirit of the settlers, which for some time before had been gradually encroaching on the limits of the Company's authority, had at length broken forth into open revolt. But as this event is in itself an interesting one, and as it may also be productive of very important effects on the future prosperity of the Company's establishment, the Directors propose to take a retrospect of the circumstances which have led to it. (*1801 Report,* p. 1)

The report then goes on to speak of the past hardships the company has endured, including an account of the French attack on the colony. Again, this is a public relations move designed to bolster faith, and offer the image of a company that is resilient and resourceful in dealing with the tests rendered by the African continent and its futile resistance against civilization.

The report also speaks about the gripes of the black African settlers against the company. It reads that "One great complaint has been the high price of European goods: little consideration being had to the difference necessarily occasioned by a state of war, the circumstances of goods being dearer at Sierra Leone than they used to be at Halifax." The report also pointed to the fact that the

settlers complained of the rents they were forced to pay in Sierra Leone, and petitioned heavily for what the report calls "quit-rents." The Company presents the settlers' request as irrational report and states, "This by their acceptance of the original terms held out to all settlers they had bound themselves to pay" (*1801 Report,* p. 7).

After presenting this colonial background of unruly black settlers that posed a threat to company profits and company stability, as well as the moral and civil education of these blacks, the Company points to the new *Sierra Leone Company Charter of 1800,* which was approved by parliament and the King. The report explicitly states:

> Influenced by these considerations, the Directors made an application to His Majesty in July 1799, for a Charter of Government, which should convey to them, a clear, formal, well-grounded authority, to maintain peace of the settlement, and execute the laws within the Company's territory.
> (*1801 Report,* p. 7)

In addition to emphasizing that there will be "a small military force" for protection of company assets, the report also takes great care to mention that the new charter has been patterned along the same lines as that of the more economically successful East India Company. This means that there would be "the erection of courts of judicature...with this difference, that the trial by jury is secured to the inhabitants of Sierra Leone, in civil as well as criminal cases." (*1801 Report, p. 9*).

* * *

In the end, the venture of managing an entire colonial settlement in Africa was a task that would prove too burdensome for an individual joint-stock operation like the Sierra Leone Company. The task of establishing and maintaining a regulated colonial space was a task that would be passed onto the British Imperial state and the British military in 1808, with the dissolving of the Sierra Leone Company, which would become the African Institution of London. Still, the underlying colonial premise of the Sierra Leone Company still remained, and the modern colonial blueprint had been fashioned for nineteenth-century imperialism: creating an economic model that was based on the idea of creation a civilization to support and bolster this economic model was still the goal. In addition, what would also remain is the relationship between emerging colonial economic discourse and colonial material practice, that we see exemplified in the company documents, as well as the philosophy of figures like Smith and Hume.

Chapter III:

The Evolution the Linear Progress Model, Scientific Anthropology, and the Colonial Project in West Africa

In this chapter, I will focus on the manner in which the enlightenment philosophy of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries gives way to a pseudo science of an observational and anthropological nature. You will recall that in Chapter II we explored the manner in which evolving economic theory contributed to the emerging British colonial project of the later eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Here in Chapter III, I intend to look at the ways that an emerging anthropological science, and emerging pseudo-scientific methodology were bolstered by the likes of individuals like the German Johann Blumenbach, who wrote his famous *On the Natural Varieties of Mankind* in 1775; the Swede C.B. Wadstrom, who wrote *An Essay on Colonization Particularly Applied to the Coast of West Africa* in 1794; and the Englishman Sir Joseph Banks, who made his name by participating in the *Endeavor* voyage of Captain Cook in the South Pacific from 1768 to 1771, and was to be come a great proponent of African exploration[1] (Burns 16). The late eighteenth century also gave rise to what I will dub "the age of the pseudo scientific institution" like the African Association of London, which was founded out of a gentlemen's Saturday dinner club 1788, and the more prominent and organized African Institution of London, which was established in 1807 (the 1807 date is extremely significant because it is the year that the Sierra Leone Company was disbanded and taken over by the British government, in addition to the year the African Institution was created).

[1] Some seven years later, in 1778, Banks was elected President of the Royal Society.

It is also quite important to emphasize that the economic aspect we dealt with in Chapter II still remains quite important and connected to our subject matter here in Chapter III. If anything, through the documents we explore in this chapter—*Reports of the African Institution, Reports of the African Association,* Wadstrom's *Essay on Colonization,* and Blumenbach's scientific anthropological treatises—we will find that when economics and science are brought together in an emerging colonial project, as they are during this age, they are combined with the hope that both fields will enhance one another. In fact, more often than not, the great hope is that scientific discovery will lead to enhanced economic profit or profit potential as the result of a greater amount of knowledge about the African continent itself. In the end, the desire for scientific knowledge of the African continent—be it anthropological, geographical, etc—seemed to be highly valued regardless of the national origin from whence it came. In the European contexts, certainly this was a period of strengthening nationalism and competition between emerging national characters, however, when it came to scientific or pseudo-scientific information that might potentially help a European continent tame and reap the fruits of the African continent, national competitors became scientific allies in a quest to increase an ever expanding web of European knowledge about Africa.

The Early Modern Episteme and the Science of Limited Sight and Ordering

Michel Foucault, in *The Order of Things,* posits the argument that the natural sciences of the Early Modern era took on a subjective quality that cannot

be detached from the equally subjective biases of the period. This translates into a science of biases that tends to lean in the favor of European cultures, and against non-European cultures. Perhaps Said puts it best when he remarks that "No one has ever devised a method for detaching the scholar from the circumstances of life, from the fact of his involvement (conscious or unconscious) with a class, a set of beliefs, a social position, or from the mere activity of being a member of society" (Said, *Orientalism* 10). Therefore, when we read the works of Wadstrom, Blumenbach, or the *Reports of the African Institution of London,* we should not lose sight of the eighteenth and nineteenth century episteme to which they belong. It is prudent to approach them much like we did with the works of Adam Smith and the *Sierra Leone Company* in the previous chapter—with the awareness that these scholars and institutions are a product of the period in which they existed.

What is evident, as we read the works of Wadstrom, Blumenbach, and the *Reports of the African Institution,* is a thirst for knowledge of the non-European Other, and particularly in this case, Africans and the African continent itself. This demand for knowledge takes the form of a science or pseudo-science whose task it is to investigate the unknown regions of the world inhabited by non-Europeans. However, while a thirst or demand for knowledge about the non-European Other is one of the driving forces behind these scientific or pseudo-scientific investigations, it is not the only impetus. This drive for knowledge also carries with it an overwhelming desire for an ordering of the non-European world (in this case Africa), so that it might fit *comfortably* into the European schematic of world order.

We might label this impetus for gaining knowledge about Africa and ordering the African world, as a desire to render comfortable and orderly that which is deemed uncomfortable, disorderly, and anxiety-provoking. Foucault asserts that "The center of knowledge, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, is the table" and that "the Classical episteme can be defined in its most general arrangement in terms of the articulated system of *mathesis,* a *taxinomia,* and a *genetic analysis"* (Foucault, *The Order of Things* 82). In many ways, when we look at the work of Wadstrom, Blumenbach, and the *Reports of the African Institution,* we are presented with projects that are attempting to frame or fit Africa and Africans into a convenient taxonomic table that will render it easier to consume by European audiences.

The eighteenth and nineteenth century science pseudo-science of exploration and anthropology that we examine in this chapter is emblematic of a quest to construct a progressive rubric of order that places the European at the pinnacle of this order. "The sciences always carry within themselves the project, however remote it may be, of an exhaustive ordering of the world; they are always directed, too, towards the discovery of simple elements and their progressive combination" (Foucault, *The Order of Things* 82). However, we will see here that, as we saw in Chapters I and II, in a progressive system or taxonomic table, if the European side of the table represents "progress," then the African side of the table represents the antithesis of this notion of "progress." The construction of such a skewed table must involve the a cultivated act of "un-seeing" or rather, the creation of blindspots, in order to mask that which does not cohere to the

progressive world view that a scientist or pseudo scientist—like Wadstrom, or Blumenbach, etc—is attempting to create. "To observe, then, is to be content with seeing—with seeing a few things systematically. With seeing what, in the rather confused wealth of representation, can be analyzed, recognized by all, and thus given a name that everyone will be able to understand: 'All obscure similitudes,' said Linnaeus, 'are introduced only to the shame of art'" (Foucault, *The Order of Things* 146). This Foucauldian vision of a science that is systematically created and formulated in order to form a coherent table or coherent world-view is key for our analysis of the eighteenth and nineteenth century materials we explore in this chapter.

Whether we are dealing with Wadstrom's *Essay on Colonization,* which attempts to paint a picture of a colonial alternative that will replace the slave trade; Blumenbach's *On the Natural Varieties of Mankind,* which paints an ordered world-system of creation; or the *Reports of the African Institution,* which gathers information about the African continent from as many sources as available, the key idea to remember is that these scientists and explorers were engaged in the act of constructing limited and systematically structured world-views. Foucault writes:

> Displayed in themselves, emptied of all resemblances, cleansed even of their colours, visual representations will now at last be able to provide natural history with what constitutes its proper object, with precisely what it will convey in the well-made language it intends to construct. This object is the extension of which all natural beings are constituted—an extension that may be affected by four variables only: the form of the elements, the quantity of those elements, the manner in which they are distributed in space in relation to each other, and the relative magnitude of each element. (Foucault, *The Order of Things* 146)

It is no mistake that the focus of Foucault's passage regarding the construction of a scientific or pseudo-scientific analysis is centered upon language, or the precise construction of descriptive language. It follows that when we analyze the eighteenth and nineteenth century documents we see in this chapter, what becomes evident is that the precise construction of language allows the explorer or anthropologist one to render visible what one wants to render visible, and mask what one wants to mask. "By limiting and filtering the visible, structure enables it to be transcribed into language. It permits the visibility of the animal or plant to pass over in its entirety into the discourse that receives it" (Foucault, *The Order of Things* 147). In essence, Foucault offers us the eighteenth and nineteenth century formula for creating a world view of the African continent.

C.B. Wadstrom and the Science of Cartography, Exploration, and Colonization

Initially, upon seeing Wadstrom's name in this section on cartography, exploration, and colonization, it might seem misplaced his *Essay on Colonization* here, as opposed to the previous chapter, especially because Wadstrom seems to be a strong advocate of the British Sierra Leone Company that I focus heavily upon in Chapter II. Wadstrom copies heavily, word for word at some points, from the various *Reports of the Sierra Leone Company* that were released prior to the publication of his *Essay* in 1794. However, while it is true that Wadstrom's project focuses on the economic profit potential of West Africa (and the African continent as a whole), it is, more importantly, also borne out of an anthropological and geographical exploration to West Africa that ended in the year 1788. One of

Wadstrom's key traveling partners was "Dr. A. Sparrman, known to the public by his voyages to the Cape of Good Hope, and round the world with the celebrated [Captain] Cook."[2] Shortly after his expedition, and a debriefing by the British Parliamentary Privy Council, Wadstrom published a very small tract called *Observations on the Slave Trade in a Voyage to the Coast of Guinea* (1789), and he establishes his credential as a staunch abolitionist who abhors the evils of slavery. However, it is his massive two-part *Essay on Colonization,* occupying over 600 pages, in which we see Wadstrom's vision for a world void of slavery, and what he believes can be a great boon for the civilization of Africa and European commerce. A substantial knowledge gain and sharp learning curve about the African continent is an important key to the potential civilizational and economic success Wadstrom envisions.

As we move through Wadstrom's *Essay,* we will notice that Wadstrom takes on a sort of pseudo-anthropological study of Africa and Africans along the way. Indeed, behavior analysis and modification of the Africa and Africans seems to be a large part of his agenda, because it is these modifications that will lead to the so-called advancement of Africa and the expansion of European commerce and profits; and this is why his *Essay* also reads like an anthropological study. Before even considering what Wadstrom writes in his *Essay,* I think it is important to consider the visual picture that he paints of for his reader. When we focus upon the visual picture that Wadstrom constructs for us, we should consider what Foucault means when he asserts that in the eighteenth and nineteenth

[2] Wadstrom, C.B. *Essay on Colonization Particularly Applied to West Africa.* This can be found on Introduction page numbered i.

centuries, "sciences always carry within themselves the project...of an exhaustive ordering of the world" and that "they are always directed...towards the discovery of simple elements and their progressive combination" (Foucault, *The Order of Things* 82). The title *Essay on Colonization* itself suggests that there is a linear sequence of civilizational "progress" that exists, and that while Europe lies at one end—the positive end—of the linear sequence, Africa exists at the other negative end of the linear sequence. It then follows that colonization, itself, is the only means through which Africa could possibly reach the height of European progress. The anthropological study that Wadstrom embarks upon in his *Essay on Colonization* might be characterized as an attempt to create an exhaustive study of West Africa, and the Sierra Leone region in particular, because it is only through gaining firm knowledge of the continent that Europeans might come to dominate Africa for profit.

* * *

The map that Wadstrom crafts for his *Essay on Colonization* speaks volumes and creates the same visual image of a potentially fruitful African landscape that Wadstrom seeks to create in his *Essay.* The implied idea is that the African continent requires is European ingenuity to render it economically and civilizationally productive. As we can see in the upper right hand corner of Wadstrom's map, the full heading reads *Nautical Map Intended for the use of Colonial Undertakings on the W. Coast of Africa from Lat 5.30 to Lat 14.N but More Particularly those of Sierra Leone and the Island of Bulama* (See Figure 2 on page 105). We can also see that Wadstrom takes special care to write that the

map is *"Respectfully Dedicated to the Humane and Disinterested Promoters of Those & Similar Establishments."* The claim of "humaneness" and "disinterest" is in keeping with the tone of benevolence that Wadstrom's hopes to convey throughout the *Essay.*

Wadstrom also takes much care to emphasize this tone of benevolence in a special advertisement included at the conclusion of Part I of his *Essay.* He states:

> It would give the author great pain, if in delivering his free, but conscientious, opinions on subjects so very interesting to humanity, his language should unfortunately be misunderstood, especially so misunderstood, as to suggest the repetition of Colonial attempts, on principles, merely pecuniary, mercantile, or in short, mercenary. His meaning is to reprobate such principles... The period indeed seems fast approaching, if it has not yet arrived...when persons of property, discarding all commercial maxims, and adopting those of benevolence, which is but another word for true policy, will successfully labour to reconcile self interest with the interests of mankind. (Wadstrom, *Essay on Colonization, Part I* 197)

While understanding, like Adam Smith, what economic benefits can be reaped from the African continent, Wadstrom moves beyond purely economic terms in hopes of supposedly aligning "self-interest with the interests of mankind." It is here that the scientifically anthropological mode of thinking takes hold. In theory, by coming to understand a continent and its inhabitants, as one would understand scientific subject matter, a colonial project could learn to manage, if not control, the environmental variables of Africa that would lead to economic success.

In addition to the *Advertisement,* the fact that Wadstrom also inscribes on his map, a dedication to the "promoters of those and similar establishments," points to the global nature of Wadstrom's colonial vision that we will speak of later on. It is important to note here in 1794, some 91 years before the infamous

Berlin Conference[3] of 1885, where European nations met to literally and figuratively carve up the African continent, we see a significant collaboration (albeit in the case of 1794, a quest for knowledge of Africa) of a similar nature between European nations that cuts beyond national boundaries. It is interesting to note the map, itself, is created for promoters of "similar establishments," and that the specific promoters that we see multiple nationalities represented on Wadstrom's map: Sweden (Wadstrom himself), England (the 1794 path of explorers Watt and Winterbottom are pointed out), France (both Madagascar and the African map of Pierre D'Anville are represented), and the Netherlands (Biorn, Esq. Governor of the Danish settlements is mentioned on the map).

If we draw our attention back to the upper right hand corner of the map, we see another image that is representative of Wadstrom's vision (*See figure 2 on page 105*). There are two distinct landmasses that are separated by a channel of water that stands in the middle. It is easily discernable that the landmass on the left hand side, complete with a black male figure clothed in only a loincloth, represents Africa. The white female figure, who is standing fully-clothed on the opposite landmass, represents Europe. The hand that the European female figure (almost resembling a "lady liberty" or "lady civilization" of sorts) is extending, across the channel, towards the black male figure represents the gift of European civilization that Wadstrom envisions being bestowed upon Africa. The benevolent figure of Cupid is also seen hovering above lady of civilization and the European landmass, and moving in the direction of Africa across the channel.

[3] The Berlin Conference opened on November 15, 1884 and lasted until February 26, 1885.

Figure 2: Map of Africa from C.B. Wadstrom's *Essay on Colonization*

It is also no coincidence that instruments of land cultivation, like a shovel, lay at the feet of our "lady of civilization." In stark contrast, however, the black figure across the channel stands with his feet chained, and looks across eagerly awaiting the gifts of European civilization. The landmass on which he stands is represented as one that is teeming with vegetation or unkempt bush, as well as an exotic palm tree in the distant background.

I think it quite important to point to the female figure that stands on the shore, extending her hand to the male African figure. We should take note that there are no distinguishing characteristics that mark the female figure as English, nor French, nor Swedish. She simply stands as a European figure, upon the European shoreline, extending the supposedly exclusive gift of European civilization. Wadstrom's map presents an image of a European cooperative union—white skin color and the civilizational traits that are supposedly exclusive to this pigmentation, is the unifying factor. In fact, the caption below the map speaks to this pan-Europeanism, since we see that several contributers from European states are mentioned:

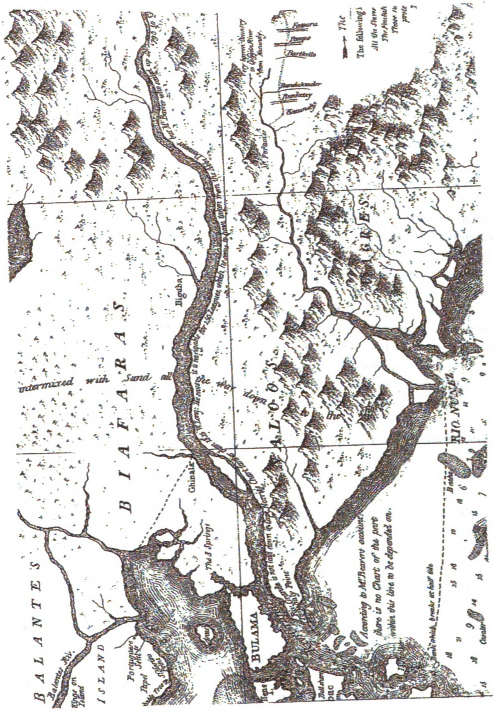
> This chart has been drawn from the most authentic charts, maps, and descriptions of the coast, viz: those of D'anville, Bellin, Adanson, Denmanet, Desmarches, Norris, Matthews, & Sr. Geo. Young, and from conversations with respectable persons who have resided on the coast, particularly—Biorn Esq. Governor of the Danish Settlements, H.H. Dalrymple Esq., Dr. A. Afzelius, an eminent Botanist, employ'd by the S. Leona Co...as also from many observations & draughts of the Editor [Wadstrom] & information acquired by him, during a voyage performed in years 1787 & 1788 by order and at the expense of their late Majesties the Kings of Sweden & France. (*See figure 3 on page 107*)

Figure 3: Map of Africa from C.B. Wadstrom's *Essay on Colonization*

As we will see, throughout the materials we encounter in this chapter, when it comes to scientific information—whether geographical, anthropological, etc—the boundaries of competitive national zeal collapse because this is a continental effort to cultivate the African continent for the benefit of Europe itself.

Another distinguishing feature of Wadstrom's map is the detailed information about the landscape, particularly in terms of the navigability of the rivers going inland, as well as the coastal tides. For instance, if we look to the center of the map, a large detailed drawing of the River Grande can be seen (*See figure 4 on the next page 109*). When we look at the western part of the river towards the mouth, we will notice the caption enclosed by the dotted semicircle that lies south of the mouth. It states that "according to Mr. Beaver's account, there is no chart of the part within this line to be depended on," meaning that there exists a *significant knowledge gap* that could be potentially threatening to any inland trade that utilizes the River Grande. In addition, if we follow the track of the river from west to east, we notice the caption that reads, "Riv Grand is not laid down in Capt Norris' chart farther that 13 (degrees), 15' W. Long: He says it is navigable for 150 leagues, which seems to have taken from Abbe Denament, but Mr. Beaver who sailed up in 1793 to Ghinala thinks that it cannot be navigated so high. It is laid down here from Bellin" (*See figure 4 on page 109*). Indeed, the River Grand, because of its favorable size, and with it, the ability to accommodate merchant vessels for purposes of trade, made it geographically favorable.

Figure 4: Map of Africa from C.B. Wadstrom's *Essay on Colonization*



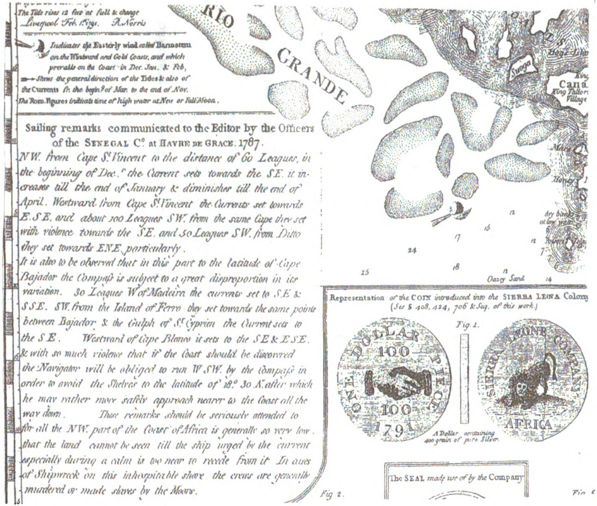
That the island of Bulama, which lies at the mouth of the river, is also another favorable geographical factor since it can be used as a colonial staging area in the same way that Goree Island was once used as a staging area for the slave trade.

Yet another important piece of navigational information can be seen if we look at the left edge of the map where, towards the center, we see the heading *"Sailing remarks communicated to the editor by the officers of Senegal C at Harve De Grace. 1787"* (*See figure 5 on next page 111*). Most importantly, it reads:

> Westward of Cape Blanco it (the current) sets SE & ESE & with so much violence that if the coast should be discovered the navigator will be obliged to run WSW by the compass in order to avoid the shelves to the latitude of 18 (degrees), 30 N after which he may rather more safely approach nearer to the coast all the way down. *These remarks should be seriously attended to for all the NW part of the coast of Africa is generally so very low that the land cannot be seen till the ship urged by the current especially during a calm is too near to recede from it. In cases of shipwreck on this inhospitable shore the crews are generally murdered or made slaves by the Moors* (*See Figure 5 on page 111*).

Wadstrom's contribution to the growing collective European pool of information about Africa is indicates the trope of fear of the unknown that the continent holds for the European imagination. The geography is to be feared because it both literally and figuratively creeps upon unsuspecting navigators. The hope is that strengthening knowledge of the seascape of the region will abate the dangers of African geography. Even still, the Moors that inhabit that particular region of coastal Northwest Africa are not presented as subtly as the geography we see on the map. The "shore" is characterized as inhospitable, and the trope of the murderous African Moor is evoked.

Figure 5: Map of Africa from C.B. Wadstrom's *Essay on Colonization*



The Tide rises 12 feet at full & change
Liverpool Feb. 1. 1791. R. Norris

Indicates the Easterly wind called Harmattan on the Windward and Gold Coasts, and which prevails on the Coast in Dec. Jan. & Feb,

Shews the general direction of the Tides & also of the Currents fr. the begin.g of Mar. to the end of Nov.

The Rom. Figures indicate time of high water at New or Full Moon.

Sailing remarks communicated to the Editor by the Officers of the SENEGAL C.o at HAVRE DE GRACE. 1787.

N.W. from Cape S.t Vincent to the distance of 60 Leagues, in the beginning of Dec.r the Current sets towards the S.E. it increases till the end of January & diminishes till the end of April. Westward from Cape S.t Vincent the Currents set towards E.S.E. and about 100 Leagues S.W. from the same Cape they set with violence towards the S.E. and 50 Leagues S.W. from Ditto they set towards E.N.E. particularly.

It is also to be observed that in this part to the latitude of Cape Bajador the Compass is subject to a great disproportion in its variation. 30 Leagues W of Madeira the currents set to S.E & S.S.E. S.W. from the Island of Ferro they set towards the same points between Bajador & the Gulph of S.t Cyprien the Current sets to the S.E. Westward of Cape Blanco it sets to the S.E & E.S.E. & with so much violence that if the Coast should be discovered the Navigator will be obliged to run W.S.W. by the Compass in order to avoid the Shelves to the latitude of 18.° 30 N. after which he may rather more safely approach nearer to the Coast all the way down. These remarks should be seriously attended to for all the N.W. part of the Coast of Africa is generally so very low that the land cannot be seen till the ship urged by the current especially during a calm is too near to recede from it. In cases of Shipwreck on this inhospitable shore the crews are generally murdered or made slaves by the Moors.

Representation of the COIN introduced into the SIERRA LEONA Colony
(See § 408, 424, 706 & Seq. of this work.)

A Dollar containing 400 grain of pure Silver.

The SEAL made use of by the Company

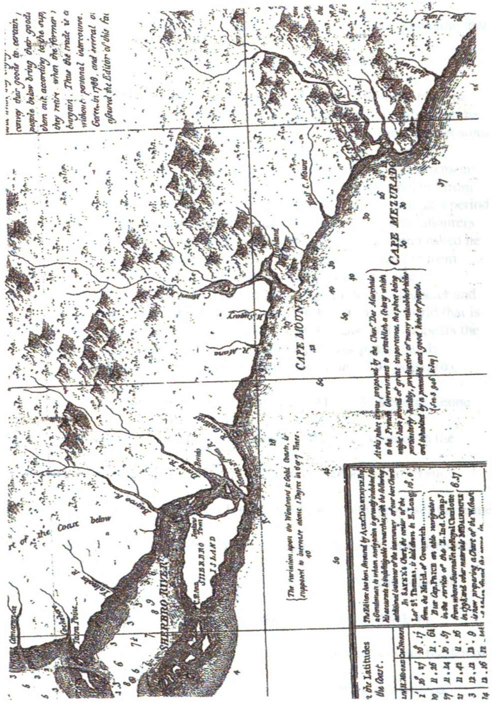
At the bottom right hand corner of the map in the southwest corner, we come upon Cape Mezurado, which has a river by the same name that flows inland towards a small mountain range. It is interesting to note that the caption at the river's end, attributed to the Cheval Des Marchais, reads "All this part abounds with gold." At the mouth of the River Mezurado, it is written:

> At this place it was proposed by the Chev Des Marches to the French Government to establish a colony which might have proved of great importance, the place being particularly healthy, productive of many valuable articles and inhabited by a peaceable and good kind of people (*See figure 6 on page 113*).

The interesting thing about this caption is that the geographical and anthropological language used here, which speaks of "healthy land" and "peaceable people," is similar to that which is said of Sierra Leone itself. Indeed, the fact that gold is present in the region also provided great impetus for Chev De Marches' proposition.

The final significant part of Wadstrom's grand map that I will point to is actually a map of the African continent produced by the Frenchman Pierre D'anville. Wadstrom takes care to note that the shaded portion of D'anville's map in the Northwestern portion of Africa covers the extent of his (Wadstrom's) own map.

Figure 6: Map of Africa from C.B. Wadstrom's *Essay on Colonization*



The most significant portion of D' anville's map that I will point to for my purposes here lies in the southeast corner of the map just below Madagascar (*See figure 7 on page 115 and figure 8 on page 116*). There we see a heading that reads *Hints for Colonizing Madagascar,* and underneath it reads:

> The editor (Wadstrom) has been consulted about some plan for providing the unfortunate French emigrants who, if an asylum be not soon prepared for them, are likely to become more burdensome that the loyalists were to Great Britain, after the American Revolution. There are indeed several obvious and urgent reasons for relieving the neighboring countries, especially England from the expence of maintaining this numerous body of men, at a period when many industrious tradesmen, manufacturers, and labourers are so much distressed. As the editor's opinion has been asked he will venture to suggest that they might be encouraged to form themselves into a colony. It appears to him that the Isle of Madagascar would be found more congenial to the character and constitution of Frenchmen than any other part of the world that is not already claimed or occupied by Europeans; and it appears the native princes would readily sell to a pacifick people lands sufficient for such an undertaking (*See Figure 8 on page116*).

The repatriated blacks that were transported by the newly formed Sierra Leone Company in 1791 were former slaves who fought against the colonies in the American War of Independence, and at its conclusion, fled to Nova Scotia. Wadstrom, with the help of Frenchman Pierre D'anville's map, proposes the same sort of solution to the French, for their own "African problem." It also becomes quite clear in this passage that what lies at the core of these African colonial ventures bent on repatriation is not genuine benevolence, but instead, an overwhelming desire to relive the mother country of a black or African burden of sorts. In doing so, the mother country is also intent on creating a colonized civilization in the form of a black colony that is, in many ways, linked and dependent on the metropole for trade, while also creating profit for the metropole.

Figure 7: Map of Africa from C.B. Wadstrom's *Essay on Colonization*

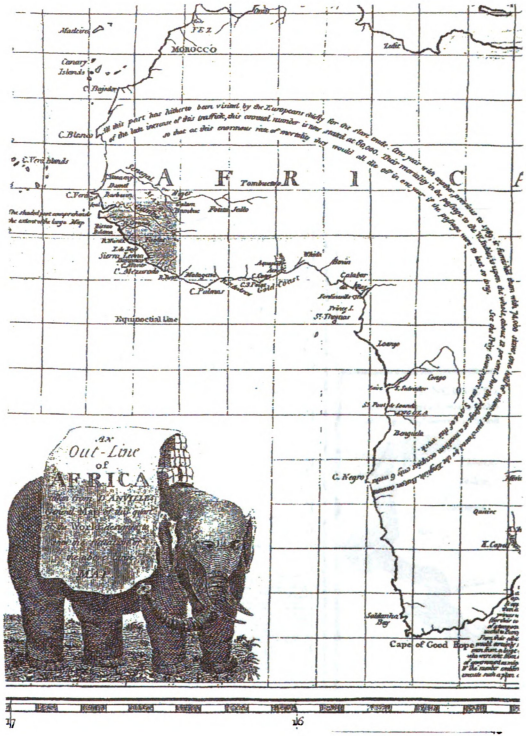
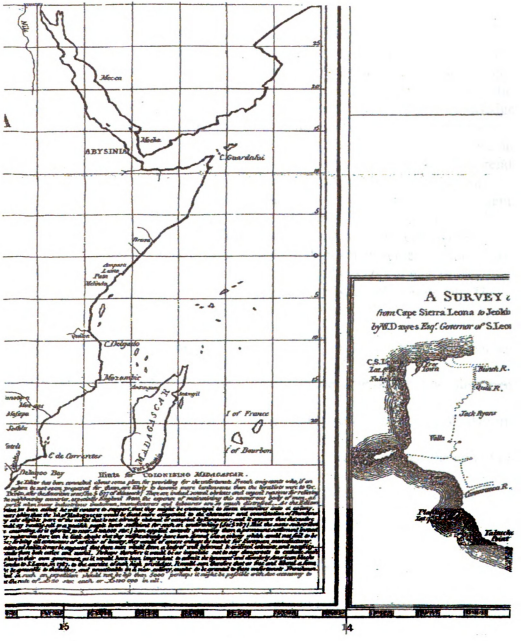


Figure 8: Map of Africa from C.B. Wadstrom's *Essay on Colonization*

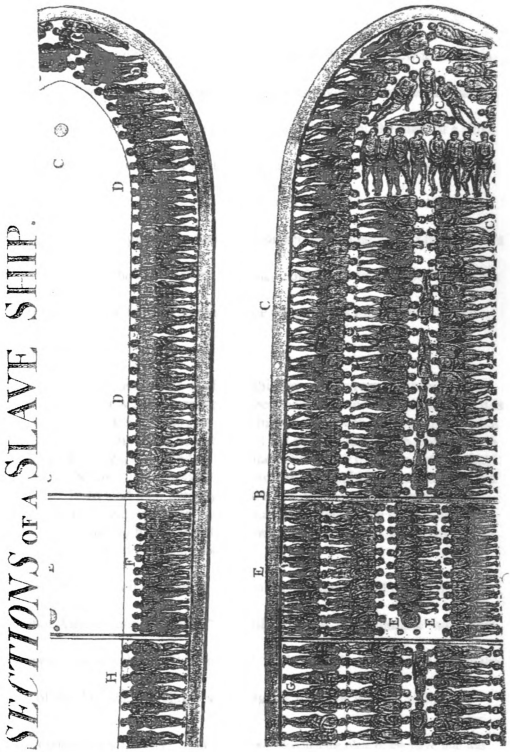


In the end, it becomes clear that the geographical and anthropological focus within the archival documents explored in this chapter utilize, not only take stock and categorize an African continent, but also create a proto-colonial portrait or blueprint, by utilizing sciences of geography and anthropology focus, to determine what shape the non-European world should take.

> Natural history did not become possible because men looked harder and more closely. One might say, strictly speaking, that the Classical age used its ingenuity, if not to see as little as possible, at least to restrict deliberately the area of its experience. Observation, from the seventeenth century onward, is a perceptible knowledge furnished with a series of systematically negative conditions. Hearsay is excluded, that goes without saying; but so are taste and smell, because of their lack of certainty and their variability render impossible any analysis...which leaves sight with an almost exclusive privilege, being the sense by which we perceive extent and establish proof... (Foucault, *The Order of Things* 144).
> This area [of visibility], much more than the receptivity and attention at last being granted to things themselves, defines natural history's condition of possibility, and the appearance of its screened objects: lines, surfaces, forms, reliefs. (Foucault, *The Order of Things* 145)

To build upon Foucault's assertion, Natural history, or the anthropology that we see in Wadstrom's *Essay on Colonization* did not become possible because men looked harder and more closely, it became possible because men like Wadstrom, Blumenbach, or the men of the *African Institution* chose to impose the conditions of possibility for non-European space (in this case Africa). These men and institutions of Europe took it upon themselves to define the conditions of possibility. I think that Akintola Wyse puts it best when he writes, "It (Sierra Leone) was meant as an experiment in social and cultural engineering: the founders hoped that by creating the right conditions, an opportunity would be

Figure 9: Map of Africa from C.B. Wadstrom's *Essay on Colonization*



given to emancipated Africans settled in the Peninsula to evolve a free and self governing black community patterned on Western civilization" (Wyse 1).

* * *

Wadstrom, in many ways, takes abolitionist rhetoric to a new level in his *Essay on Colonization,* because he not only calls for abolition, but he advocates a colonial solution in West Africa. He includes, with the *Essay,* the plate of a slave ship (See figure 9 on previous 118), that diagrams in detail the inhumane and cattle-like manner in which slaves are stowed on a ship for transport to the New World.[4] However, it is quite clear that abolition serves as a launching point for his vision of the benefits the colonization of Africa could hold for Europe. Wadstrom takes great care to establish his premise at the outset of his introduction to the *Essay.* He writes:

> The reader has no doubt, by this time, discovered that this person who now addresses him is a zealous friend to the Africans. But it is presumed that his zeal is not inconsistent with sober truth; and that friendship with the Africans is not incompatible with friendship to the Europeans, and all mankind. The author has ever thought that the most likely way to promote the civilization of mankind, would be to lead their activity into the cultivation of their country... Thus cultivation and commerce established upon right principles, rendering the mind active, would early dispose it for the reception of pure moral instruction...[5]

Wadstrrom labels himself a "zealous friend of the Africans" and makes it a point to stress that Africans and European "friendship" is not "incompatible" since that both comprise that which he calls "mankind." While Wadstrom acknowledges the humanity of the African, and chooses to integrate Africans into his vision of

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[4] Wadstrom explains, on p. 197 of the *Essay on Colonization* that the plate of the slave ship was given to him by the Committee of the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade.

[5] Wadstrom, C.B. This can be found within the Introduction of *An Essay on Colonization* on the page numbered iii.

"mankind," he chooses to do so by placing African and Africans at the lower rung of a linear progressive order. In many ways, this brings us back to Foucault's idea of natural history and "what constitutes its proper object" and the idea that a visual representation of this "proper object" will be conveyed in the "well made language" constructed by the natural historian (Foucault, *The Order of Things* 146). What we will come to see is that Wadstrom, through his pseudo-anthropological and pseudo-scientific discourse creates a sort of scientific method or mode of analysis that he uses to create a visual picture of the Africa that he sees, and the African that he envisions if his colonial vision is enacted.

Wadstrom utilizes this pseudo-scientific method in an attempt to refute the idea that African are incapable of being raised to levels of cultivation and civilization from the supposedly low depths of humanity that they occupy. He remarks that:

> The opposers of the colonization of Africa would have it believed, that the natives are incurably stupid and indolent: but I have in my possession the means of proving the contrary; for on a question put to me in a committee of the British House of Commons, I offered to produce specimens of their manufactures in iron, gold, fillagree work, leather, cotton, matting, and basket-work, some of which equal any articles of the kind fabricated in Europe, and that with proper encouragement, they would make excellent workmen. (Wadstrom 14)

In the face of claims against African humanity, Wadstrom gives what he believes to be concrete and unmistakable proof of African industriousness.

Foucault makes reference to the four variables that the natural historian seeks out in order to create a portrait with regard to the construction of an object of study. He labels them: "the form of the elements, the quantity of those

elements, the manner in which they are distributed in space in relation to each other, and the relative magnitude of each element," all of which are utilized to create the portrait that fits the desired ends. Wadstrom both concentrates on the manner in which detractors of Africa manipulate these elements for their own purposes, while he also utilizes these elements for his own ends of building a case of colonization of Africa. He writes:

> Climate, diet, occupation, and a variety of other less considerable causes contribute their share to the general effect [of the character of nations]. It is not, however, by abstract reasonings alone, on the separate or combines influence of those causes that the character of a nation can be ascertained; but actual observations on their genius and conduct must be attended to. Such observations cannot be too numerous; nor can general conclusions be too cautiously drawn from them. (Wadstrom 9)

Wadstrom then offers a critique of what he sees as biased accounts that have been offered by detractors of the African continent. One might even say that he criticizes them on the heavy presence of bias and lack of a pseudo-scientific analysis that Wadstrom himself seems to employ. He asserts, "The accounts of African governors and other slave merchants, have been but too implicitly followed by authors of no small note, who were never in Africa, and who did not suspect the writers they quoted were interested in misleading them" (Wadstrom 9)

Wadstrom continues to offer a defense of Africa and Africans based on the linear model of progress, and speaks about education and civilizing in pseudo-anthropological terms as they apply to European and African relations. He writes that:

> Societies may be divided into the civilized and the uncivilized; and the duties of the former to the latter are similar to those of parents

> to children; for uncivilized nations, like children, are governed by their affections, their understanding being uncultivated.
> If we feel within ourselves a principle which teaches us to seek our own happiness in that of our offspring; ascending from particulars to generals, we shall find, that civilized nations ought, for their own advantage, sincerely to promote the happiness of the uncivilized.
> As the tutelage of children is a state of subjection; so it would seem that civilized nations have perhaps some right to exercise a similar dominion over the uncivilized, provided that this dominion be considered and exercised as a mild paternal yoke.
> (Wadstrom 19)

That Wadstrom is advocating abolition is not in doubt, however, the irony is that the very same linear vision of progress and civilization that some use to justify the enslavement of Africans, is the same linear vision of progress that Wadstrom utilizes to justify colonization of Africa. The key difference is that the harsh and violent yoke of slavery is to be replaced with a milder paternal colonial yoke. The model of East-West relations that Edward Said offers in Oriental might be a fitting one here, as he remarks that "The West is the actor, the Orient a passive reactor. The West is the spectator, the judge and jury, of every facet of Oriental behavior" (Said, *Orientalism* 108). Europe is placed in the seat of human progress and humanity as a whole, while Africa is presented as the passive subject that must be analyzed and inevitably reconstructed and refashioned through the colonial system.

This notion of a model of linear progress is especially important to remember as we turn to the anthropological science of the German Johan Blumenbach in the next section. There is the shift from the unscientific and extremely reflexive humanist philosophy, to the supposedly scientific anthropological philosophizing of Blumenbach, who actually makes it a point to

recognize the humanity of the Africa (albeit at the supposedly most underdeveloped rung of human existence in a progressive order).

The Anthropology of Blumenbach and the Perfectability of Africans

Daniel Chodowiecki's artistic rendering the "African or Ethiopian variety" of human beings from Johan Blumenbach's "Five Varieties of Mankind," done in 1790, speaks volumes about the image of Africa through European eyes during this period. Blumenbach's *Division of Mankind into Five Principal Races* comes to us from section XII of his *Contributions to Natural History.* He builds upon the original system of four varieties of man laid out by Carrolus Linnaeus, but proceeds to add a fifth race—*The Malay.* Foucault uses the label "science of order" to describe the taxonomic endeavors that Blumenbach and his contemporaries engaged in. "Taxinomia...treats the identities and differences; it is the science of articulations and classifications; it is the knowledge of beings" (Foucault 81). Foucault also suggests that "Taxonimy establishes the table of visible differences" and that when "confronted by genesis[6], taxonimy functions as a semiology confronted by history. It defines then, the general law of beings, and at the same time, the conditions under which it is possible to know them." (Foucault, *The Order of Things* 81-82). The taxonomic approach operates under the inherent premise that there is a genesis from which a progressive order can be constructed, and this in turn, means that a constructed and concocted order of human progression can be deduced as well.

[6] Foucault asserts that genesis presupposes a progressive series of order.

Blumenbach specifically states that "no other definite boundaries can be drawn between these varieties, especially if, as is but fair, respect is had not only to one or the other, but also to the peculiarities of a natural system, dependent upon all bodily indications alike" (Blumenbach, *Contributions to Natural History* 303). The indication is that all varieties of human beings, in spite of their differences in pigmentation, are similar to one another in the physical sense. Bluembach lays out these five categories and definitions:

> 1. *The Caucasian Race.* The Europeans, with the exception of the Lapps, and the rest of the true Finns, and the western Asiatics this side the Obi, the Caspian Sea, and the Ganges along with the people of North Africa. In one word, the inhabitants of nearly of the world know to the ancient Greeks and Romans. They are more or less white in colour, with red cheeks, and, according to the European conception of beauty in the countenance and shape of the skull, the most handsome of men.
>
> 2. *The Mongolian.* The remaining Asiatics, except the Malays, with the Lapps in Europe, and the Esquimaux in the north of America, from the Behring's Straits to Labradour and Greenland. They are for the most part of a wheaten yellow, with scantly, straight, black hair, and have flat faces with laterally projecting cheek-bones, and narrowly slit eyelids.
>
> 3. *The Ethiopian.* The rest of the Africans, more or less black, generally with curly hair, jaw-bones projecting forwards, puffy lips, and snub noses.
>
> 4. *The American.* The rest of the Americans; generally tan-coloured, or like molten copper, with long straight hair, and broad, but not withal flat face, but with strongly distinctive marks.
>
> 5. *The Malay.* The South-sea islanders, or the inhabitants of the fifth part of the world, back again to the East Indies, including the Malays, properly so called. They are generally of brownish colour (from clear mahogany to the very deepest chestnut), with thick black ringleted hair, broad nose, and large mouth. (Blumenbach, *Contributions*...303-04)

When we read the categorical definitions of the five varieties, we see that the descriptions are virtually all ethnographic, and deal primarily with physical appearance only. In fact, the only point at which Blumenbach slips in terms of his objectively scientific analysis comes when he self-reflexively remarks that the Caucasian variety is "the most handsomest of men."

Said peaks about this type of scientific gaze of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that operates on a linear progressive model, which places non-European human beings at the lower rung of the human species. He writes that

> A more knowledgeable attitude towards the alien and erotic was abetted not only by travelers and explorers but also by historians for whom European experience could profitably be compared with other, as well as older, civilizations. That powerful current in eighteenth-century historical anthropology, described by scholars as the confrontation of the gods, meant that Gibbon could read the lessons of Rome's decline in the rise of Islam, just as Vico could understand modern civilization in terms of the barbaric, poetic splendor of their earliest beginnings. (Said, *Orientalism* 117)

We could say that the scientific anthropological gaze of Blumenbach, which enabled him to place human beings into varying taxonomic rungs of progressive levels, meant that he and his contemporaries like Wadstrom, institutions like The African Institution and Sierra Leone Company, could scientifically justify the use of colonialism to raise the level of humanity of Africa and African. It also offers a sort of scientific grounding for usurpation of land and creation of colonial territory. "Throughout the eighteenth century, simple comparativism was the early phase of the comparative disciplines (philology, anatomy, jurisprudence, religion)" and to add to the parenthetical list that Said constructs here, I would

also add the emerging colonial system that would lead to colonial enterprise of the nineteenth century (Said, *Oriantalism* 117).

If we look closely at the reproduction of Chodowiecki's plate, we again see the figure of an African male dressed only in what amounts to a holding sack for his genitals (less forgiving than Wadstrom's depiction we saw earlier), while holding an oar. Lying in front of this male figure is a female figure, who is reclining upon the bare ground, utilizing a clump of earth as a makeshift pillow to elevate herself (*See figure 10 on page 127*). She is also clothed in a loincloth and remains bare-breasted and suckling a baby, while a younger male figure is knelt and toiling away beside her. In the background, there are various figures in dugout canoes who are engaged in fishing activities. However, I think that the most interesting feature upon which to concentrate in this plate is the African landscape itself, because its depiction says much about prevalent European thoughts about Africa and Africans. The landscape is presented as a sort of untamed and unkempt bush with a small hut lying in the background. Indeed, we might also suggest that the clump of earth that the female figure uses as a sort of furniture piece speaks volumes as well. The landscape presents the image of an unindustrious people who have not learned how to tame the earth, but have instead supposedly become subjugated by the African landscape itself.

If we compare the African figures with the two other plate depictions that are represented—the Caucasian or white variety, and the Mongolian or Yellow variety—we immediately notice the dramatic differences in terms of landscape alone. The male and female Caucasian figures are depicted indoors, reclining in a

Figure 10: Map of Africa from C.B. Wadstrom's *Essay on Colonization*

beautifully carpeted Ottoman-type furniture piece, while the Yellow or Mongolian variety of human beings is situated in a garden or sanctuary-like setting. The landscape is presented as well-kempt, and the male and female figures are presented as genteel. David Bindman remarks, "In the end, Europeans and Caucasians are for Blumenbach simply the most beautiful peoples, and in their whiteness preserve a potential for moral purity" (Bindman 201). However, as we will see later in this chapter, his scientific anthropological study also caused him to believe in the humanity of the African, where philosophers like Kant, Hume, and Rousseau could not. Blumenbach believed that, in spite of the black skin of the African, which supposedly rendered them inferior, the human status of the African could still be raised.

In fact, from his *Contributions to Natural History,* Blumenbach, in the section entitled "Of the Negro in Particular" writes:

> "God's image he too," as Fuller says, "although made out of ebony." This has been doubted sometimes, and, on the contrary, it has been asserted that the negroes are specifically different in their bodily structure from other men, and must also be placed considerably in the rear, from the condition of their obtuse mental capacities...
> I am acquainted with no single distinctive bodily character which is at once peculiar to the negro, and which cannot be found to exist in many other and distant nations; none which is in like way common to the negro, and which cannot be found to exist in many other and distant nations... (Blumenbach, *Contributions*... 305)

Blumenbach's analysis of the African was based, not on a reflexive philosophical premise, but instead, on a scientific method, which caused him to understand that all men were created equal in the physical sense. It then follows that the aspects of

civilization and mental conditioning became the more important factors for a scientist like Blumenbach.

In his analysis of the Negro from his *Contributions to Natural History*, Blumenbach also goes on to list examples of black men and women who have supposedly risen out of their state of incivility. In addition to his own scientific analysis, he points to actual examples, and unlike the philosopher Hume who equated the achievement of the nergo to the achievements of a parrot, Blumenbach seems to be much more generous in his treatment. He writes:

> I possess some annals of a Philadelphian calendar, which a negro there, Benj. Bannaker, had calculated, who had acquired his astronomical knowledge without oral instruction, entirely through private study of Fergusson's works...
> Negroes have also been known to make very excellent surgeons. And the beautiful negress of Yverdum, whom I mentioned, is known far and wide in French Switzerland as an excellent midwife, of sound skill, and of a delicate and well-experienced hand. I omit the Wesleyan Methodist preacher, Madox, and also the two negroes who lately dies in London, Ignatius Sancho and Gustavus Vassa, of whom the former, a great favorite both of Garrick and Sterne, was know to me by correspondence. (Blumenbach, *Contributions*... 310)

It is also interesting to note the wide national array of the examples that the German Blumenbach draws from. The scientific quest for knowledge pushes him beyond his own German boundaries so that he may draw upon American, British, and French cases of Negroes who have supposedly achieved a sort of enlightenment. Blumenbach finishes his commentary on the Negro by asserting that "There is no so-called savage nation known under the sun which has so much distinguished itself by examples of perfectability and original capacity for scientific culture, and thereby attached itself so closely to the most civilized

nations of the earth, as the Negro" (Blumenbach, *Contributions*... 312). It is this pseudo-scientific concept of the perfectability of the Negro, which speaks of a sort of scientific human conditioning, that will drive the emerging colonial mentality that we see in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

It is also important to note that another key distinction separating the taxonomic science of Blumenbach from the philosophy of Kant, Rousseau, and Hume, is that he refuses to label man, whether European or African, as an animal (even a highly advanced animal). In fact, when we read his scientific treatise *On the Natural Varieties of Mankind* (1775), the first section is entitled "Of The Difference Of Man From Other Animals," and makes it a point to separate the two categories through means of rational science. He writes:

> *Difficulty of the subject.* He who means to write about the variety of mankind, and to describe the points in which the races of men differ from each other in bodily constitution, must first of all investigate those differences which separate man himself from the rest of the animals. (Blumenbach, *The Natural Varieties of Mankind* 163)

What is intriguing is that in order to separate man from man, or human from human, Blumenbach first distinguishes human beings from animals themselves. This, in turn, establishes a new premise that even the basest and most uncivilized of humans can no longer be equated with animals. No matter what the level of civility, they are still deemed human. While this may not exactly be labeled a triumph for humanity, it is still a giant leap from the self-reflexive philosophy that cast non-Europeans into the category of inhuman simply based on non-white skin color alone.

This notion of Blumenbach's scientific progressiveness is perhaps another reason why I have turned to this 1865 edition of *The Anthropological Treatises of Johann Fredrich Blumenbach.* This edition includes a *Memoir of J.F. Blumenbach,* written in 1840 by Karl Marx, who praised the late Blumenbach for his courage to assert science in place of self-reflexive humanistic philosophy. Marx writes that Blumenbach "asserted the claims of human nature, as such, to all the privileges and rights of humanity, for, without denying altogether the influence of climate, soil, and heredity, he regarded them in their progressive development, as the immediate consequence of civilization and cultivation" (Marx 9). Marx points boastfully to Blumenbach's scientific commitment to the concept of human social conditioning and the idea that human beings, no matter what his variety or race, were a product of a their surrounding environments.

Indeed, this concept of social conditioning, "progressive development," and civilization is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it was a concept that scientifically asserted the humanity of Africans, and non-Europeans, once and for all. This was certainly another strike against slavery and the slave trade. However, on the other hand, it was a concept that was essentially a vote for the end of slavery in favor of a colonial model of sorts based on social and civilization conditioning. Marx continues his praise of Blumenbach's scientific progressiveness and states:

> At a time when the negroes and the savages were still considered as half animals, and no one had yet conceived the idea of emancipation of the slaves, Blumenbach raised his voice, and showed their physical qualities were not inferior to those of the Europeans, that even amongst the latter themselves the greatest

> possible differences existed, and that opportunity alone was wanting for the development of their higher faculties. (Marx 9)

By 1840, when Marx's *Memoir of J.F. Blumenbach* was published, the modern colonial era was well on its way (let us remember that Sierra Leone had become an official Crown Colony in 1808), and this concept of an African continent that was "wanting for the development of higher faculties" was, for the most part, readily accepted.

Furthermore, when Marx writes that "listeners came to him from all parts of the world," and that "with a letter from Blumenbach, a man might have traveled in all the zones of the earth," it speaks to the international scope of his reach (Marx 24). Science caused international boundaries to collapse, if only in the circumstances involving the quest for scientific knowledge. However, it also reminds us that traveling and exploring, in this age, were not taken lightly at all. Such travels were considered important acts of scientifically geographical and anthropological information gathering, and it also becomes clear that travelers had an unwritten pan-European responsibility to contribute to the greater collective pool of knowledge.

The Pan-European Scientific Connection, Blumenbach and Banks, and The African Association and its Commitment to the Science of Africa

I think that it would be fitting to begin our discussion of the African Association of London with Blumenbach's *Introductory Letter to Sir Joseph Banks,* which is contained in his 1775 edition of *On the Natural Variety of Mankind.* As I mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, Sir Joseph Banks had

made a reputation for himself by participating in Captain Cook's *Endeavor* voyage in the South Pacific from 1768 to 1771. He was an "explorer, collector, and president of the Royal Society for more than four decades, [and] dominated the public face of late-eighteenth and early nineteenth-century English science" (Burns 16). He was also a founding member of the African Association of London in 1788. Bank's friendship with George III, King of England from 1760-1820—a name with which we have become familiar through the treaties in Chapter I—also enabled him to have a great degree of leverage in terms of influence and explorational activity. In addition, as an example of the international reach of science during the age, "His diplomatic nature and French respect for him enabled Banks to maintain scientific communication between the two countries during the Revolution and Napoleonic wars" (Burns 17). Therefore, it is no surprise that we would find the German Blumenbach here dedicating this edition of his text to the international figure Banks. In fact, "Banks himself was a great admirer of Linnaeus, employing Linnaean binomial nomenclature and classifying plants by the Linnaean 'sexual system' (Burns 16). This Linnaean system is the very same upon which Blumenbach based his own scientific system of progressive order.

Blumenbach, in his *Introductory Letter to Sir Joseph Banks*, sings the praises of Banks. He states:

> There are many reasons, illustrious Sir, why I ought to offer and dedicate to you this book, whatever it may be worth...
> For many years past you have spared neither pains nor expense to enrich my collection of the skulls of different nations with those specimens I was so anxious above all to obtain...
> And besides, when I visited you in London about three years ago...you gave me the unrestricted use of all the collections of treasures relating to the study of Anthropology, in which your

> library abounds... (Blumenbach, *The Anthropological Treatises of Johann Friedrich Bluembach* 149).

All of these measures Blumenbach credited as helping him "to proceed to the recasting of my book, and am bold enough to say, now it has been amplified in so many ways," and it is this sort of pan-European commitment to science that drove and bolstered scientist like Blumenbach and Banks, but also scientific and explorational institutions like the African Association and African Institution.

Eighteenth and nineteenth-century scientists like Blumenbach and Banks were men, who were committed to a view of the world that is "global and reconstructive; it represents...the nineteenth-century predilection for the rebuilding of the world according to an imaginative vision [like that which we see in Wadstrom's work], sometimes accompanied by a scientific technique [like that which we see in Blumenbach's work]" (Said, *Orientalism* 114). Blumenbach, Wadstrom, and their contemporaries were committed to notion that there existed a progressive order of the world, and it follows that these eighteenth and nineteenth century scientists designated themselves as the ones who were to decipher, discover, and construct this world order. "The great mutations of science may well sometimes be seen to flow from some discovery, but they may equally be viewed as the appearance of new forms of the will to truth" and as Foucault suggests, "this will to truth, like other systems of exclusion, relies on institutional support; it is both reinforced by a whole strata of practices such as pedagogy—naturally—the book system, publishing, libraries, such as the learned societies of the past (of which the African Association and African Institution are included)." Foucault continues to assert that it is "even more profoundly accompanied by the

manner in which knowledge is employed in a society, the way in which it is exploited, divided and, in some ways, attributed" (Foucault, *Discourse on Language* 218-19).

In many ways, if Blumenbach represents the scientist of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, who toiled away in the laboratory, then a man like Banks represents the institutional representative or patron, that disperses, legitimates, and encourages the scientific worker. Regardless of their positions, they all might be characterized as men of eighteenth and nineteenth century science. Blumenbach speaks of Banks' voyage with the Captain Cook, which brought Banks and Cook fame. He remarks:

> After your three-years' voyage round the world, illustrious Sir, when a more accurate knowledge of the nations who are dispersed far and wide over the islands of the Southern Ocean had been obtained by the cultivators of natural history and anthropology, it became very clear the Linnaean division of mankind could no longer be adhered to (Blumenbach, *The Athropological Treatises...* 150).

Indeed, this praise is not to be taken lightly, and it again evidences the existence of a sort of pan-European informational network. In the same way that Blumenbach's scientific treatises heavily influenced a European scientific community, the voyage of Captain Cook did the very same. It also served to launch Banks into a position of prominence as well.

* * *

While I intend to concentrate a large part of my attention upon the African Institution of London, specifically and especially because of its founding upon the heels of the Sierra Leone Company's demise (in favor of an official British Crown Colony in Sierra Leone), I deem it important to pay the Association due attention here in this section. Interestingly enough, the full name of the Association was *The Association for Promoting the Discovery of the Interior Parts of Africa,* and it began as a Saturday dinner club that met at St. Paul's Tavern off Pall Mall in London. Editor Robin Hallet writes that "Its twelve members were to immortalize themselves by resolving on 9 June 1788 to form their Club into an Association," and that "The most distinguished among them was Sir Joseph Banks, now for ten years President of the Royal Society and one of the best-known men in Europe" (Hallet 13). Perhaps one reality to keep in mind is that this eighteenth and nineteenth century era is one in which European gentlemen held meetings in such gentile settings, and made decisions that would affect humanity over half-a-world away. This was a group of wealthy men who, inspired by scientific curiosity, collectively pooled together to meet the cost of sending adventurous travelers to Africa for the sake of discovery.

The *Plan of the Association,* which is included in the first release of *Proceedings of the Association for Promoting the Discovery of the Interior Parts of Africa* (1790), spells out its desires that lay rooted in curiosity (be it scientific or not) and adventure. It reads:

> Of the objects of inquiry which engage our attention the most, there are none, perhaps, that so much excite continued curiosity, from childhood to age; none that the learned and unlearned so equally wish to investigate, as the nature and history of those parts

> of the world, which have not, to our knowledge, been hitherto explored. To this desire the Voyages of Captain Cook have so far afforded gratification, that nothing worthy of research by Sea...remains to be examined; but by land, the objects of Discovery are still so vast, as to include at least a third of the habitable surface of the earth...and almost the whole of Africa [is] unvisited and unknown (*Plan of the African Association* 3).[7]

The unknown parts of the globe, and the African continent in particular, are not only presented as objects that are "unvisited and unknown," but what is also implied is that by coming to "visit" and "know" these unexplored territories, such knowledge will constitute a sort of possession and ownership. Knowledge will open the doors to increased European activity, be it economic, scientific, and adventurous.

If we recall back to Wadstrom's map that we began with, the rivers and tributaries that flowed inland from the West Coast of Africa were quite important, and were laid out in detail. Again, here in the *Plan of the Association*, we see that one of those rivers, the Niger, is mentioned and given a degree of importance. The *Plan* reads:

> The course of the Niger, the places of its rise and termination, and even its existence as a separate stream, are still undetermined. Nor has our knowledge of the Senegal and Gambia rivers improved upon that of De la Brue and Moore; for though since their time half a century has elapsed, the Falls of Felu on the first of these two rivers, and those of Baraconda on the last, are still the limits of discovery. (*Plan of the African Association 7*)

We should recall that although knowledge of the extent of these rivers is desirable for the sake of scientific and adventurous discovery, these river pathways were also desirable for commercial purposes as well. It's another example of the

[7] "Plan of the African Association." *Proceedings of the Association for Promoting the Discovery of the Interior Parts of Africa,* p. 3.

manner in which science and economics are intertwined during this eighteenth and nineteenth century period.

> The proprietors of the *African Association* present the European's lack of knowledge about the African continent as both a challenge and a mark of shame for an enlightened age.
> Certain however it is, that, while we continue ignorant of so large a portion of the globe, that ignorance must be considered as a degree of reproach upon the present age.
> Sensible of this stigma, and desirous of rescuing the age from a charge of ignorance, which, in other respects, belongs so little to its character, a few individuals, strongly impressed with a conviction of the practicability and utility of thus enlarging the fund of human knowledge, have formed the Plan of an Association for Promoting the Discovery of the Interior parts of Africa. (Plan of the African Association 7-8)

These men of the *Association* took their task of obtaining knowledge of Africa as seriously as the impending age of colonialism would of possessing, taming, and "civilizing" the continent. What this *Plan of the Association* represents is the power of an idea, and the powerful impact that such ideas would have upon the humanity of the African continent that had been objectified in non-human terms.

By far, the most famous explorer that the *African Association of London* sent out in the name of science and discovery was Mungo Park. In fact, C.B. Wadstrom, at the conclusion of *Part I* of his *Essay on Colonization,* ends with a section called *New Plan for Exploring Africa, w*hich is dedicated to the mission of Park and his companion Willis. Wadstrom writes:

> I have just been informed that the gentlemen of the African Association of London, persevering in their design of exploring the interior parts of that continent, which reflects so much honour on this age and nation, have equipped two vessels, for a new expedition, which now wait for convoy; and they are generously assisted by the British government, with the sum of *L*6000 sterling. The persons appointed to carry this plan into execution, are a Mr. Park, who is a good natural historian, and a Mr. Willis, on whom

> His Majesty, on this occasion, has been pleased to confer the rank of consul.
> Mr. Park will endeavor to penetrate the River Niger, or to the city of Tombuctoo. I have been told farther, that the chiefs of the country are to be engaged to assist in the undertaking...
> (Wadstrom 195-96)

Hallet writes that Mungo Park's exploration "gave the Association a boost: between 1799 and 1802 there were 35 new members" (Over the forty-three year existence of the Association, there were 212 subscribing members). However, he also remarks that "thereafter numbers began to fall rapidly" and that by "1810 the membership of the Association stood at 75, of whom only 24 could be reckoned 'original subscribers'" (Hallet 24).

The African Institution Takes Up the Task of the Sierra Leone Company in the Name of Science, Exploration, and Discovery

In the final portion of this Chapter III, I turn my attention to the African Institution of London because, as the heading above suggests, it was an institution designed to pick up where the Sierra Leone Company, discussed in Chapter II, left off when the Company had been taken over by the British government as an official Crown Colony. However, the key difference between the demised *Company* and the new *Institution* is that the official task of setting up a colony had now been assumed by the British government itself, leaving the *Institution* to exploration and the gathering of information. This meant that the Institution had full leave to divert its energy and resources to what it had developed as its new task at hand. In the first *Report of the African Institution* released on 15 July 1807, it reads:

> As we neither propose to colonize, nor to trade on our own account, how, it may be asked, can we materially contribute to the civilization of Africa? We answer, by the same means, in part, which are found necessary or useful for the promotion of agriculture, and for the encouragement of useful arts, or other patriotic and benevolent improvements, even in this enlightened country...
> We hope also to find enterprising and intelligent men, who will explore the interior not merely to gratify curiosity, but to obtain and disseminate useful knowledge, and to open sources of future intercourse. But information must be also diffused, and the spirit of commercial enterprise excited, at home, in order that individuals may be prompted by self-interest to aid us in the most effectual manner. (*1807 Report of African Institution* 45-46)[8]

In many ways, the plan of the African Institution trumped the plan of the African Association especially because of the fact that its goal was to not only send explorers to Africa in the name of science and information gathering, but like the Company, establish institutions (to borrow the name) that would make a lasting impact upon Africa. The task of colony building was to be left to the British government itself, and the Institution would utilize the colony not only for its own ends, but to also promote so-called civilization and enlightenment in Africa.

This task of bringing so-called civilization and enlightenment to Africa is an issue that Christopher Leslie Brown explores in *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism.* The African Association, like its predecessor the Sierra Leone Company, framed its mission in the form of anti-slavery rhetoric that promoted the colonization, exploration, and commercialization of Africa in place of the slave trade. These endeavors of colonization, exploration, and commercialization were frame in terms that emphasized they were latently being

[8] *Report of the Committee of the African Institution* (15th of July, 1807), p. 45-46.

undertaken for European benefit, but most importantly being undertaken for the benefit of Africa and Africans. Brown writes that:

> The influential John Seeley acknowledged in his widely read *Expansion of England* of 1883 [that] Britain, unlike the others (European nations), acted nobly. "We published our own guilt, repented of it, and did at last renounce it." That view, that insistence on the selfless quality of British actions, that record of redemption for past wrongs, took on special importance... In this environment, the history of antislavery provided a compelling origin story for modern empire as well as ideological defense. It displayed Britain as the purveyor of civilization, justice, and order. It established the British state as concerned historically with the welfare of the African peoples, even, it was noticed, at a cost to itself. (Brown 8)

The supposed "repentance" for the wrongs of slavery that Seeley noted, was done in part, through the actions of institutions like the Sierra Leone Company, the African Institution, and the Crown Colony that would be instituted in 1808.

We should also keep in mind that Britain also had in its favor the fact that it was they who effectively "put an end to the Dutch legal slave trade" as Pieter C. Emmer suggests. He writes that "Their occupation of the Dutch West Indian possessions during the course of the Napoleonic wars made Surinam, Berbice, Essequibo, and Demerara, as well as the Antillian islands subject to that famous decision of the British Parliament in 1806, which prohibited the slave trade in newly conquered West Indian possessions" (Emmer 179). The reality is that in the case of abolition, Britain was seemingly ahead of the European pack. In fact, it was not until 15 June 1814 "right after the formation of the new Kingdom of the Netherlands, [that] an order in council was issued that made illegal any slave trade organizing in Dutch ports" (Emmer 179). In the case of France, Serge Daget writes that "After three years of delays the first French abolition law was

promulgated without discussion on April 15, 1818," and that "Nine weeks later the royal ordinance of June 24 instituted a French naval squadron to suppress the slave trade on the coast of Africa" (Daget 194). The fact that Britain was the first European nation to supposedly repent for the wrongs it committed in carrying on the slave trade served as a weapon of moral ideology, which gave Britain a sort of moral highground, that it would use to defend its colonial purpose. The institutional backing of an African Association, African Institution, and eventually, an Official Crown Colony only served to bolster this ideological stance.

Like the African Association, the awesome size of the task that lay ahead was not lost upon the African Institution at all. In fact, the *1807 Report of the African Institution* presents the greatness of this task as a sort of challenge that must be met:

> A Plan which proposes to introduce the blessings of civilized society among a people sunk in ignorance and barbarianism, and occupying no less than a fourth of the habitable globe, holds forth an object, the contemplation of which, it will be allowed, is sufficient to warm the coldest, and fill the amplest mind...
> But it should be remembered, that the most striking changes have often been produced in the characters and fortunes of nations, by means apparently very inadequate. There have been critical opportunities, in which the combined efforts of a few private men, or even the energies of a single mind, have sufficed to effect great revolutions... (*1807 Report of the African Institution* 11-12)

That these men, who have founded the African Institution and laid out its plan of action, believe the task before them is great is evident; and that these men also believe in their own supposed greatness and superiority is also equally evident. We must make not mistake that the task at hand is to subdue and take the African

continent, and it seems that science coupled with a colonial project has been deemed the most suitable method for doing so.

* * *

It is interesting to note that, in the initial *1807 Report of the Institution,* we see the shades of anthropological science that resemble what we see in the scientific treatises of Blumenbach. We also see that, in many ways, these very same sciences of anthropology and social conditioning are used to both defend the humanity of Africans as well the mission of the Institution. The *1807 Report* chastises those who defend African captivity:

> The people amongst whom we would endeavor to introduce the blessings of civilized life are a race very distinct in bodily appearance from all others; and are represented by many, as not less distinguished from the rest of mankind by the inferiority of their intellectual powers, and by their moral depravity. "Upon them," it is alleged, "the sun of science might for ever beam in vain; and even the humble arts, which form the exterior comforts of civilized man, would in vain be offered to these coarse and fierce barbarians. They are fit only for the yoke of a laborious and endless bondage." (*1807 Report* 17)

The *Report* paints a portrait of the denigrating argument used against Africans, not only in order to justify African captivity, but to also argue against the mission of the African Institution, as well as its predecessor, the Sierra Leone Company.

However, the defense that we see in the *Institution Report*, is a defense that utilizes both logic and scientific anthropology to state its position. We should also consider that this rigorous defense of the Negro is not done primarily in the

name of Africans and Africa, but it is also done in the name or defense of the Institution and its mission. The retort against its criticizers reads:

> But before we admit the justice of a representation so degrading to the character of the negro race, it will be proper to inquire who are their accusers, and what is the evidence on which charges are founded.
> The portrait of the Negro has seldom been drawn but by the pencil of his oppressor, and has sat for it in the distorted attitude of slavery. That there have been found in him such vices as in all ages and countries have been the fruit of private bondage, need not be denied: but that these have been much exaggerated by prejudice and contempt, and still more by policy and party spirit, is no less certain. (*1807 Report* 17-18)

The Institution Report paints the denigrating picture of Africa and Africans as one that has been contrived and concocted by those who have something to gain by keeping Africans in bondage. "The portrait of the Negro has seldom been drawn but by the pencil of his oppressor," and the Institution has knighted itself with the task of undoing the damage that has been done by slavery, in favor of a colonial system that promotes so-called civilization.

Perhaps the most interesting defense of the negro and the Institution's mission in Africa (particularly because of the connections to Blumenbach and Park), comes when the *Institution Report* utilizes Mungo Park's account from his *Travels in Africa* in order to bolster its position. Quoting Park himself, it states that:

> Nothing is wanting to this end but example to enlighten the minds of the natives, and instruction to enable them to direct their industry to proper objects. It was not possible for me to behold the wonderful fertility of the soil; the vast herds of cattle, proper both for labour and food; and a variety of other circumstances and agriculture; and reflect, withal, on the means which presented themselves of a vast inland navigation; without lamenting that a country, so abundantly gifted and favoured by nature, should

> remain in its present savage and neglected state. Much more did I lament, that a people, *of manners and dispositions so gentle and benevolent,* should either be left, as they are now, immersed in the gross and uncomfortable blindness of pagan superstition. (*1807 Report* 33-34)

Park's pseudo-anthropological gaze, demonstrated here, is used to present a picture of Africa that is similar to that which we see in the scientific treatises of Blumenbach. The anthropological premise of social conditioning for the purposes of behavior modification of the African is being theorized by Park. The Negroes that Park makes reference to here are not presented as animals or animalistic, but instead as "a people of manners and dispositions so gentle and benevolent" who must be saved from an uncivilized and pagan state of existence.

However, the interesting twist of the African Institution's mission lies in the fact that the business of religion is labeled expressly forbidden territory. This is an important public relations measure designed to gain as much support for the Institution as possible by eliminating the threat of European competition from the religious missionary realm. The idea was that these would-be competitors would, instead, become allies and proponents of the Institution's mission:

> To prevent misconception concerning the views and measures of the African Institution, it may be proper, in the very first instance, to declare, that it is the Society's fixed determination not to undertake any religious missions, and not to engage in any commercial speculations. The Society is aware that there already exist several most respectable institutions formed for the diffusion of Christianity, and means not to encroach on their province. (*1807 Report* 3)

Indeed, I would label this the Institution's attempt at playing the smart politics of avoiding the engagement of competition, as this is a point in time when the numbers of those who hope to make a stake in Africa is rising.

* * *

That the African Institution saw itself as the successor of the Sierra Leone Company has already been established. However, the *1807 Report of the African Institution* pays much attention and much homage to the Sierra Leone Company as its predecessor. Far from labeling the Company a failure, the *Report* praises its efforts. It states, "In no other part of the world, since the value of colonial commerce and the expense of colonial establishments have been known, have men associated to settle in an uncivilized country upon terms like these" (*1807 Report* 38). The uniqueness and boldness of the Company's project is not lost at all, and because of this, the Company's endeavors are also presented in a benevolent light as well. "In attempting to found a new colony, which, if successful, was to give this country great commercial advantages, the Company took upon itself the whole charge of the civil government, of the public works, and of the military defense of the settlement. At the same time, not part of the possible profits was secured exclusively to itself" (*1807 Report* 38).

The Sierra Leone Company is presented as a great success—a private joint-stock company that took upon itself the task of colony building and civilizational engineering that would benefit the British nation. It is also depicted as a private enterprise that bore the burden and literally and figuratively held firm to its obligations in Africa for as long as it could, until it could bear the financial weight no longer. As for the Company's achievements:

> In their Colony, now about to be taken over under the immediate care of the Government, there is a basis upon which we may

> proceed to at once build. In that centrical part of the great African Continent, schools may be maintained, useful arts may be taught, and an empourium of commerce be established, by those whom our patronage may animate, or our information enable, to engage in such undertakings. There native agents may be found, and the African languages acquired. From thence, travelers may diverge on their journeys of discovery; and there the scattered rays of information from the interior may be collected. (*1807 Report* 38).

Instead of depicting it was a failed endeavor, the demise of the Sierra Leone Company, and the undertaking of its colony as an official Crown Colony, is depicted as the impetus to the African Institution's creation. In addition, while the Company's meager resources could only provide limited protection for the Company's ventures in Africa, the abundant resources of the British government and British military provided a degree of security the Company could never achieve, as well as stability for the Institution to conduct its business.

* * *

Being in a position as a nation that promoted abolition and that established a colony of freedom enabled England and the African Institution to place itself on a sort of moral high-ground. We should not lose track of this global eighteenth and nineteenth century reality when looking at the various *Reports of the African Institution* that mention the subject of efforts taken to affect the cessation of the slave trade. For instance, in the *Report of 1813, The Seventh Report of the African Institution,* there is a letter included under the heading "Extract from Vice Admiral Stopford, to J.W. Croker, Esq. dated on board His Majesty's Ship Lion, in Table Bay, 6th March 1812." The Admiral writes:

> In my letter to you, I stated, that I had detained the Portuguese ship Restourador, from Mozambique to Rio Janiero, with a cargo of slaves consisting of four hundred and fifty, which ship had put into Table Bay for a supply of water: she has, by a decree of the Court of Vice Admiralty, been ajudged a Droit of Admiralty, and the Blacks made over to the captors. The opinion of the Judge on this occasion, was entirely determined by the inspection of the printed papers relative to the Portuguese Slave Trade, forwarded by Mr. Barrow on the 2d May, in which it appears that none but the Portuguese built vessels were allowed to carry on the Slave Trade, and the Restourador was proved to have been built in America. (*1813 Report of the African Institution* 38)[9]

In yet another account from the same letter, the Admiral writes:

> Another cargo of these Blacks has lately been sent to the Cape by Captain Lynne, of His Majesty's sloop Eclipse; one hundred and forty-five of these people were taken by him off Port Louis, in a vessel of forty tons burden. These were also said to be property of the French inhabitants of Tamatave...[10] (*1813 Report* 39)

In both of these accounts, the determination of the nationality of the particular slave ships is of vital importance. Not only is there the pride in the benevolent mission of benevolent abolition that is at stake, but also the pride of acting as a sort of sea-faring international police force whose task is to keep Britain's fellow European nations in check.

The Admiral, in this letter, makes a show of the international will of Britain as the emergent sea-faring and colonial superpower of the nineteenth-century. The letter also shows the manner in which the African Institution worked to promote its interests by working in league with the British government in the mother country:

> An English merchant vessel, called the Snake, having lately arrived from England, I received by that opportunity, from the Secretary of the African Institution, a copy of the Act of

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[9] *Report of the Committee of the African Institution* (24th of March, 1813), p. 38.
[10] *Report of the Committee of the African Institution* (24th of March, 1813), p. 39.

> Parliament, of 14th May, 1811, imposing fresh penalties upon dealers in slaves. I have therefore communicated to Governor Farquhar my intention to seize every vessel so employed, after the 1st of January, 1812, and have give the necessary orders to the ships upon the station.[11] (*1813 Report* 40)

This assertion of will by the Admiral, through this enforcement of the Act of Parliament, is not to be taken lightly at all. We should look at it as a key component of the construction of a colonial system in Africa. English policy is laying the foundation for what it hopes will be a stable colonial system by putting a stop to the slave trade, which results in the forcible removal of African from Africa, in turn, causing instability within the continent itself.

What's even more interesting to note is that some 11 years later, the *1824 Report of the African Institution (The Eighteenth Report),* reads at the very start that "In compliance with an Address moved by Mr. (William) Wilberforce, a large mass of papers on the subject of the Foreign Slave-Trade was laid before Parliament"[12] (*1824 Report* 1). Britain keeps track of the legal stance of foreign nations on slavery and the slave trade. In turn, this gives Britain and its Parliament even greater power and leave to determine how to proceed when directing British ships patrolling the high seas. We see several examples of this in *The Eighteenth Report:*

> **Netherlands**—The last Report contained an additional Treaty, signed at Brussels on ther 31st of December 1822, for more effectually suppressing the Dutch Slave-Trade. Its provisions are highly important, giving our cruisers a right of seizing Dutch ships, not only when they have slaves actually on board, or when they have landed them in order to elude capture, but when they are found, within certain limits, with an outfit and equipment which shew them to be intended for the Slave Trade. Much of the

[11] *Report of the Committee of the African Institution* (24th of March, 1813), p. 40.
[12] *Report of the Committee of the African Institution* (11th of May, 1824), p. 1.

> correspondence between our Government and the Court of the Netherlands is occupied with the subject...respecting the Government of Surinam, in preventing the fraudulent introduction of slaves into that colony.[13] (*1824 Report* 1-2)

It's quite interesting to note the spirit of cooperation between the Dutch government and the British governments, who are both commercial and colonial competitors. In fact, Emmer writes that "on May 4, 1818, the two countries signed a separate bilateral treaty abolishing the slave trade and providing for the establishment of two Anglo-Dutch (mixed) courts, as well as for a special Dutch and English naval squadrons, to suppress the slave trade" (Emmer 179). In some ways, the international bridge of communication and diplomacy that science builds between nations is the similar sort of bridge that we see being constructed on the behalf of the strengthening international abolition movement.

However, it is also interesting to note the attitude taken towards the matter of the rogue French slave traders and their insistence on carrying on a trade in African slaves, even after France abolished the slave trade in 1818 and instituted its own squadron to suppress the slave trade in the same year of 1818 (Daget 194). Seemingly more important, I believe, to the African Institution here is the denial or lack of respect for British authority on the high seas. The *1824 Report* reads:

> **France**—It can be shewn that from the single port of Nantz no fewer than thirty slave-ships were fitted out, in the course of only a few months of the year 1823, openly, with scarcely an attempt at concealment, and with the full knowledge and participation of multitudes in that port?...
> Suffice it to say, that slave ships under the French flag still actually swarm upon the African Coast; that they carry on their trade with perfect impunity, being visited even by French cruisers without molestation; and that, in consequence of their immunity from British capture, they not only protect extensive interests properly

[13] *Report of the Committee of the African Institution* (11th of May, 1824), p. 1-2.

> French, but shelter the criminal adventurers of other nations from detection and punishment.
> These things have been brought under the attention of the French Government, in all their horrid and disgusting detail, and the French Slave-Trade still proceeds as actively as before.[14]
> (*1824 Report* 20-21)

We can safely reason that the issue here is not only the slave trade, but more importantly, British authority and power over its European competitors. We might even say that the slave trade and abolition, in many ways, acts as a sort of proxy for the international competition for power that we see being enacted here.

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It is also interesting to point out that, in the *Institution Reports,* although religion is off limits in terms of the *Institution's* official mission, the reports themselves still contain information about the social condition that religion is supposedly meant to provide to native Africans. In another example from the *1824 Report,* we have an account written by a Quaker named William Singleton. The heading reads: *The following notices respecting Sierra Lone have appeared in a small pamphlet, written by a Quaker of the name of William Singleton, who visited Africa as a Missionary in 1821.* From this account we see that religion, institutional schooling, and industry all go hand in hand within this emerging colonial system. For instance:

> **26th 3d month**—This morning, visited the schools in Freetown; present one hundred boys, fifty girls. Several of the first class read very well in the Bible and the Testament. The mode of teaching is

[14] *Report of the Committee of the African Institution* (11th of May, 1824), p. 20-21.

> the Bellerian, or Madras system. All the children clothed and clean; most of them neat, some fine.
> **27th 3d mo.**—Yesterday Capt. Grant promised me a letter of introduction to G. Nylander, superintendent of Kissey town; and at six this morning, I found the Captain in the piazza at government house, with the letter ready. He sent a Krooman with me as a guide...
> The superintendent received me respectfully and kindly, but could not shew me the schools, because it was the quarterly meeting day, and he, with the schoolmaster, must attend at Freetown.
> He gave me a grammar and vocabulary of the Bullom language; and informed me, that he has translated into the same tongue, the Four Gospels. The Gospel of Matthew is printed.
> George Caulker,[15] a native man of rank, is translating into another dialect of the Bullom, some parts of the Scripture. Dined with G. Nylander at government house. Capt. Grant says, trade is increasing at Sierra Leone, especially in timber; and that morals are improving. An agricultural settlement would be of great service there.[16] (*1824 Report* 202-03)

I think it quite interesting to note that young girls are not excluded from the social conditioning of colonial education, as there are "one hundred boys" and "fifty girls" present. The gender inequity—quantity of males double the number of females—cannot be overlooked. Still, simply the fact that there are females present in an educational setting, at a time when a majority of European women are denied education themselves, says quite a great deal about the importance of social conditioning to the colonial system. This implies that implementing the social conditioning model central to the success of the colonial system was far more important than instilling the gender distinctions and biases that were commonplace in England.

We should also note that far from only tending to the social conditioning of the repatriated Africans, who would come to be called Krio, the indigenous

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[15] One might notice the similarity in surname between George Caulker and my own, as he is my ancestor.
[16] *Report of the Committee of the African Institution* (11th of May, 1824). p. 202-203.

themselves are to be educated as well. An effort is made to translate the Bible into the languages of the Bullom region, and the indigenous themselves (George Caulker—an indigenous Sherbro Bullom) is utilized as a part of this project of social conditioning in order to gain the greatest possible receptivity from the indigenous population. Again, this is another example of the extent to which social condition and social engineering was favored as an extremely important piece of the colonial project—efforts were made, not only to teach the English tongue, but to learn the indigenous language as well.

In addition to the discourse of social conditioning, the discourse of geographical discovery and exploration is represented in the *Report of 1824* as well. It includes an interesting narrative, under the heading "Information Respecting the Interior of Africa," of a Tartar explorer, who was discovered living among the natives of the Cape Coast. What's even more interesting is that this piece had been taken from the *Sierra Leone Gazette* (8 March 1823), which if we recall from Chapter II, was established by the Sierra Leone Company in 1795 as a disseminator of colonial information and propaganda. The account reads:

> For several weeks previously to the 1st of June last, reports were prevalent among the natives of the Cape Coast, that some Europeans had arrived at Coomasie, the capital of Ashantee; little or no credit was attached to them; but on that day, to the surprise of every person connected with that place, messengers arrived from the King, escorting an elderly White man, clothed in an old uniform of the African Company. The circumstances could not fail to excite a considerable degree of curiosity; and this was materially increased when it was ascertained that he had traveled all over so great a portion of the African Continent, as from Tripoli to Cape Coast. Unfortunately, the excitement proved greater than the means of gratification...for the ignorance of the language spoken by the individual in question has precluded the possibility of obtaining satisfactory information, which a long residence in the

> country must have enabled him to afford; and which, it is to be hoped, will yet be gained...should no mishap occur to him previous to his reaching England.
> It has been with much labour and difficulty that even a few confused circumstances, in addition to the names of places on his route, have been elicited; the only communication with him being through the medium of a boy, who speaks the Marawah or Houssa language, of which the other obtained a smattering while in the interior....The traveler's name is Wagree. He is a Tartar. (1824 Report of African Institution)

His nationality is of little consequence, and greater importance is place upon the unknown information on Africa that the Tartar possesses, particularly in the name of science and discovery. The case of a white man—a European—who had wandered the interior of the African continent is an extremely appealing specimen for a body like the African Institution, in very much the same way that Mungo Park was decades earlier. The Tartar is essentially treated as an object or vessel that holds desirable information about the African continent. His worth is valued in relation to the information that he holds, and even before the human vessel of African knowledge is transported to England, every attempt is made to acquire as much information from him as possible.

Of perhaps the most useful information that this the account of the Tartar contains is the information he provides relating to Timbuktu and the River Niger—two extremely important African objects of European desire. The first, because it represents the pinnacle lost African city of riches—almost like an African Atlantis, and the second, because it represents a water path that possibly leads deep into the heart of Africa. Frank T. Kryza, in *The Race for Timbuktu* (2006), writes that:

> Timbuktu was a powerful idea as much as a place, its texture and weave to be shaped by each man who heard the tale. To popes and kings who needed money and reinforcements, it was the mythical kingdom of Prester John to merchants it was a great center of commerce with streets paved with precious metal and gemstones embedded in every wall; to politicians, it was the capital of a great Central African Empire; and to scholars it was a place of learning whose priceless manuscripts would solve the mysteries of the age.[17]

It, therefore, makes much sense that an account of Timbuktu would be a valuable object of desire in this account. Nor is it any coincidence that the description of Timbuktu spans seven full pages of the report.

The Report itself states that these descriptions were the best they could muster from the Tartar, given the "defective method of communication":

> Timbuctoo he represents as a large town, much larger than Cape Coast, and much larger than Coomasie; the houses far better and more regular. It has one long street intersected by others, but not very regular. The houses are built of mud. The house in which he lodged, belonged to the Sultan Mohammed, who had seven houses superior to those of his subjects: It was two stories high, and had several apartments on the ground floor, occupied by attendants...[18] (*1824 Report* 214)
>
> The Sultan is fat, stout, and good looking, having a few gray hairs in his beard; and is a peaceable good man; he is a Musselman, and dresses handsomely in the Mohammedan style...
>
> The king's wives wear a lower cloth, fastened round them, and another thrown over their bodies; these are generally white, but the lower one sometimes blue. Indeed, he says, coloured clothes are rarely to be seen: white and blue are the prevailing colours, varying in their quality according to the station of the wearer...[19] (*1824 Report* 215)
>
> Musquets are also to be seen in the possession of many persons of note, but they are not common. The value of a very common musquet is ten dollars; of a long gun sixteen dollars: the latter guns are used for killing elephants. He says the hunters go on foot to search for the herds—watch for aim; and, if the shot does not take

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[17] Kryza, Frank T. *The Race for Timbuktu,* This passage can be found within the introduction on the page numbered xvii.

[18] *Report of the Committee of the African Institution* (11th of May, 1824). p. 214.

[19] *Report of the Committee of the African Institution* (11th of May, 1824). p. 215.

> immediate effect, the hunter climbs a tree for safety, and watches the animal.[20] (*1824 Report* 216)
> The principle foods of the people consist of poultry, the flesh of cattle. Goats, and sheep, and of fish, which they have various modes of dressing, boiling, frying, &c. He has seen some fish brought into the market for sale, fried...
> The rich people use spooks and forks: he has seen there some spoons made of gold, some of silver, and some of iron: they also use plates. When questioned how they got them, his reply was, that they were brought by the traders, and they got them "Gibralt." The common people use their fingers, and eat out of wooden bowls. [21] (*1824 Report* 217)

The information relayed in this account of what the Tartar saw in Timbuktu, again, in many ways, is similar to the anthropological gaze of Wadstrom and Blumenbach, with which they details the traits of a given subject. The selection of information provided is also quite predictable in many ways, as details are provided on "how they live," and "how they eat," and "what they eat' and "what they wear," and even "how many wives the king has." The information provided is designed to satiate readers of the *African Institution Reports,* who desire information of the unknown interior of Africa, and especially the city of object of Timbuktu, which was steeped in legend.

In the account containing the debriefing of Wagree, the Tartar possesses information concerning the treasured Niger river. The hope, for eighteenth and nineteenth century European enthusiasts of Africa, was that the Niger River would flow far into and even beyond the heart of Africa. Included in a separate section that comes after the actual relation of the account is a section labeled "Notes on the Travels of a Tartar." Wagree's account is taken as pure fact, and used to refute an early traveler by the name of Adams, because Wagree's account

[20] *Report of the Committee of the African Institution* (11th of May, 1824). p. 216.
[21] *Report of the Committee of the African Institution* (11th of May, 1824). p. 217.

seems to match the account offered by Leo Africanus, in addition to the Moors of Ashantee:

> No. 1—From what Wagree relates, it would appear that Adam's assertion, that there is a "considerable navigable river close to the city (Timbuctoo)," must be incorrect. Between Wagree's Account and that of Leo (Africanus), there is a considerable degree of coincidence: Leo places Timbuctoo at the distance of twelve miles from the Niger; Wagree says, it is three hours' walk from Timbuctoo to Kaberah (on the Mazzr, a branch of the Barneel or Niger, but not navigable), and three hours more from Kaberah to the junction of the Mazzr with the main stream of the Barneel. That Wagree's information on this point is correct, there can be little doubt, for he illustrated it by a rude sketch.
> No. 4—It is a curious fact, that the hypothesis which favours the discharge of the waters of the Niger into the Nile of Egypt, should be in measure confirmed by Wagree without his being led to this point further than his being asked if he knew where they each disembogued...The report made to Mr. Hutchinson, when resident at Ashantee, by the Moors there, was, that the Quollah was the Niger, and the Niger was the Nile of Egypt; that they, the Moors, knew it by that name from Jinne to a far way in the country of the Arabs, where it assumed the name Bar-al-Nil.[22]
> (*1824 Report* 223-24)

Desire for a greater pool of knowledge about the African continent, and in this case, the famed Niger River, means that information from virtually any source is prized and valued—be it an Englishman, a Tartar, an Ashantee Moor, or even an early account handed down in the Renaissance from Leo Africanus.

* * *

In the end, the desire to amass as great a pool as possible of scientific knowledge of the African continent—be it anthropological, geographical, etc—seemed to be highly valued, regardless of the international source from whence it came—be it a Tartar, the British, a Swede, or Frenchman. The eighteenth and

[22] *Report of the Committee of the African Institution* (11th of May, 1824). p. 223-224.

nineteenth centuries can certainly be characterized as a period of strengthening nationalism and competition between emerging nations and national characters, however, when it came to scientific or pseudo-scientific information that might potentially help European allies tame and reap the fruits of an African continent, competitors became scientific allies in a quest to increase an ever expanding web of European knowledge about Africa.

Chapter IV:

The Last Harmattan on Alusine Dunbar, Historiography of the Archive, and the Postcolonial Present

That I should include a historical novel of fictional African literature, written in 1991, as part of a project that deals with the analysis of eighteenth and nineteenth century archival texts, and specifically about the evolution of colonialism in West Africa, and Sierra Leone in particular, is of great significance. This is meant to demonstrate that the study of this archive that comes to us from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries has just as much to do with the present postcolonial era that we live in, as it does with those past centuries that we utilize the archive to study. Syl Cheney-Coker, in *The Last Harmattan of Alusine Dunbar,* takes on the role of a teacher, who constructs an interpretative history of Sierra Leone and the establishment of the British colonial system in West Africa. Cheney-Coker, through his text, also offers us a unique lens through which we might read and re-read the archival materials—*i.e. treaties, reports, essays, etc*—that we have explored in the previous three chapters that span from the eighteenth to nineteenth centuries.

The idea that the study of an archive, used to register a record of the past, has everything to do with our present era, and that a postmodern African novel could enable us to engage and enhance the understanding of an archive, has everything to do with the fact that history is a constructed entity. I believe that a useful approach is offered by Edward Glissant in *Caribbean Discourse*, where he analyzes and constructs an understanding of the dis-jointed history of the Caribbean Black Atlantic. The notion of a fragmented history characterized by

ruptures and fissures can also enrich the way we might view the archival analyses in the past three chapters. Glissant points to:

> A history characterized by ruptures and that began with a brutal dislocation, the slave trade. Our historical consciousness could not be deposited gradually and continuously like sediment, as it were, as happened with those peoples who have frequently produced a totalitarian philosophy of history, for instance European peoples, but came together in the context of shock, contraction, painful negotiation, and explosive forces. This dislocation of the continuum, and the inability of the collective consciousness to absorb it all, characterized what I call nonhistory. (Glissant 61-62)

I should qualify that Glissant distinguishes the postcolonial experience in African countries from the experience in the Caribbean when he states that "the ancestral community of language, religion, government, traditional values—in brief, a worldview—allowed these peoples...the patience and the self-confidence created by such a cultural hinterland" (Glissant 62). However, one of the many key unifying factor that renders Glissant's theoretical approach quite useful for a study of the African archive and history is the fact that both in the Caribbean and West Africa, we are dealing with "a history characterized by ruptures and that [perhaps did not begin with, but includes] a brutal dislocation, the slave trade."

When Glissant asserts that, "Our historical consciousness could not be deposited gradually and continuously...as happened with those peoples who have produced a totalitarian philosophy of history," this also refers to an important reality that applies to West Africa as well. Glissant's thoughts on historical consciousness also offer a way to approach the first three chapters of this project that deal with the evolution of British colonialism in Sierra Leone and West Africa, as a significant part of these chapters are rooted in colonialism that began

with the repatriation of African slaves in 1787. We might also characterize the analyses of the British-African treaties, the Sierra Leone Company documents, etc, as the study of those peoples who attempted to impose a course of history upon those peoples of West Africa who were thought to be void of civilization and history. On the notion of this history characterized by ruptures and fissures, Glissant also remarks that "the converging histories of our peoples relieves us of the linear, hierarchical vision of a single history that would run its unique course" and that "the depths are not only the abyss of neurosis but primarily the site of multiple converging paths" (Glissant 66).

The African novelist, as well as the archival scholar, holds an important place in this revival of historical memory, the revisiting of history, and the construction and piecing together of these histories that tell the story of multiple converging paths.

> The past to which we were subjected, which has not yet emerged as history for us, is...obsessively present. The duty of the writer is to explore, to show its relevance in a continuous fashion to the immediate present. This exploration is therefore related neither to a schematic chronology nor to a nostalgic lament. It leads to the identification of a painful notion of time and its full projection forward into the future...That is what I call a prophetic vision of the past. (Glissant 63-64)

This notion of the writer or novelist as an explorer, who shows the relevance of a fragmented history to an audience of the "immediate present," is precisely the reason that I turn to *The Last Harmattan of Alusine Dunbar.* Cheney-Coker constructs a vision of African history, spanning from 1787 to the 1960's decade of African independence, that is neither chronologically nor historically correct (in terms of hierarchical history). However, the key to the novel is that many relevant

thematic tropes can be found within the historical vision that he constructs—among them, the evolution of British colonialism in West Africa, and Sierra Leone in particular.

The historical thematical constructions are what allow us to read them in conjunction with the archival documents, such as those we have explored in chapters I through III of this project. "History as a consciousness at work and history as lived experience are therefore not the business of the historian exclusively" (Glissant 65). *This notion of history as a lived experience is especially key because it means that we, as scholars, can engage in our own construction of history that allows us to arrive at a point of relevant understanding of historical events.* In many ways, this has been my project in the first three chapters of this project, and is also part of my analysis in this chapter as I proceed with my reading of Cheney Coker's novel of historical fiction.

The Last Harmattan of Alusine Dunbar has a trajectory, which proceeds from the seminal *Treaty of 1787/88* that we explore in Chapter I, which might be regarded as the beginning of the colonial state in Sierra Leone, all the way to the decade of the 1960s in which Sierra Leone and several other African nations would emerge from colonial rule. It is a text that carries the label "a novel of magical vision"[1] because Cheney-Coker constructs a history of Sierra Leone (which Cheney-Coker has renamed Malagueta for the pepper that is common to the Sierra Leone region), and over the course of the novel, the history is sometimes related in mythical proportions. These are historical events that have

[1] Cheyney-Coker, Syl. *The Last Harmattan of Alusine Dunbar.* This label "a novel of magical vision" is actually included on the front cover page of the 1990 Heinemann Edition.

already been forecast or foreseen by the novel's mystic character Sulaiman the Nubian (also known as Alusine Dunbar), whose "aging was of a kind that had escaped the rages of time and chronological oblivion," and whose "eyes were clear and kind like the great marabout's" (Cheney-Coker 19). Glissant offers us a way of understanding the fictional character of Sulaiman the Nubian, who prophesizes the history of Malaguetta. He writes that "myth disguises while conferring meaning, obscures and brings to light, mystifies as well as clarifies and intensifies that which emerges" and that "Myth is the first state of a still-naïve historical consciousness, and the raw material for the project of literature" (Glissant 71). We see, early on in the novel, that in the text, Sulaiman, speaks of Malagueta and remarks, "This place has the devil of a name"—a double entendre that refers to both the fire-like pepper itself and the historical events that will engulf the land (Cheney-Coker 19).

Sulaiman then proceeds to paint a prophetic picture of Malaguetan history that, in many ways, mirrors the history of Sierra Leone, but is also melded with mythical fiction in order to encapsulate the wide-ranging historical events into a more manageable form for the epic novel of historical fiction. Cheney-Coker gives the name Kasila to the the Sierra Leonean land of the indigenous Temne and Sherbro, where the 1787 British settlement laid its roots. The mystic Sulaiman forecasts for the people of Kasila that:

> "One day a great disaster will take place here, and many years after that, black people from across the sea, who will be speaking a barbarous language, will come here with their wayward manners." He told them that although Almoravid diviners had come to Kasila before him and had blessed the place and driven out all the djinns, there was nothing to save it from the plague of those people. But

> the citizens of Kasila were not to worry, because although the foreigners would control the place for one hundred and seventy-five years, and would establish a most spurious society with laughable manners, and would for a while live under the impression of being in control of their destinies, they would in the end be pushed aside by the "tumultuous onslaught of the soapstone people." (Cheney-Coker 19)

It is interesting to note that the hope of an African colonial settlement for English Black Poor in Sierra Leone, which Olaudah Equiano speaks about in the passage we analyzed in the introduction to the project, is contextualized as a "great disaster" by the mystic Sulaiman. The African homecoming that many of the Black English settlers foresaw is viewed by Sulaiman as an invasion or encroachment of sorts, which adds to the complexity of Sierra Leonean history. Perhaps the most eerie part of the prophecy speaks of the approaching colonial period in which "they would live under the impression of being in control of their own destinies," but in the end, would be "pushed aside by the tumultuous onslaught of the soapstone people." The experiment in cultural engineering, to which Akintola Wyse makes reference, is also contextualized as an effort to "establish a most spurious society with laughable manners." It is especially here that we come to see the cultural rift between the Black English settlers and the indigenous of Sierra Leone.

Another effective way of looking at Cheney-Coker's is offered by Gikandi's in *Reading the African Novel,* where Gikandi expounds on the nature of the novelistic discourse. He refers to narratives as "real or implied communication from author to audience: What is communicated is story, the formal content element of narrative; and it is communicated by discourse, the formal expression

element."[2] Once we have established this, what then becomes important here is "the functioning of the African novel as an instrument of understanding on the individual and socio-cultural levels." Perhaps the most important thing to remember in terms of the manner in which Cheney-Coker melds the historical realities of Sierra Leone with the mythical and fictional history of Malagueta, is that the novel is "the process of form recreating reality in the terms set by authorial consciousness, constituting a world which might resemble external reality, but is also the novelist's own universe."[3]

* * *

When we reconsider Naimbanna's ratification of the *Treaty of 1788,* that we explored in Chapter I, and that the construction of fictional historical events surrounding the signing of the treaty are prophecized by Sulaiman the Nubian as the coming of "black people from across the sea" with "wayward manners," Cheney-Coker offers an enriched manner of interpreting and understanding the historical event. Cheney-Coker constructs a scene in which Sebastian Cromantine, one of the leaders of the community of repatriated Africans, is mysteriously lead in a trace-like state to a site where the first King of Kasila's house stood (the first King of Kasila is Cheney-Coker's representation of King Naimbanner). He writes:

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[2] Gikandi, Simon. *Reading the African Novel.* This passage can be found on the introductory page number x. Intro p. x

[3] Gikandi, Simon. *Reading the African Novel. This* passage can also be found on the introductory page number x.

> Something like an eagle's talon lashed out and smashed the mirror of his confusion and Sebastian perceived the twelfth realm of reality and the unambiguous certainly of the globe that was this big house. It was the house of the first king of Kasila who had initially welcomed them. The realization that he had come to the place of his former anxiety and of how he must have struck the king as being unfit for life in the new country brought him back to why he had gone for a walk in the first place...
> He was going to make a bust of the king, because he felt that his destiny had been circumscribed by the proverbial meaning of the return of the prodigal son. (Cheney-Coker 141)

Sebastian Cromantine, at this moment, is moved to create a bust in order to honor the "first King of Kasila," which takes on a certain air of ancestral reverence for a father who welcomed his sons and daughters home who to Africa from exile across the Atlantic. Cheney-Coker writes that "He tried to sculpt him as he had seen him that day, reverent and dignified, surrounded by his courtiers, with the high forehead which was like a dome of great wisdom. Sebastian remembered that his eyes had been clear and kind, despite an unmistakable look of authority" (Cheney-Coker 141).

Within the novel, there is mention of neither the *Treaty of 1787,* which was nullified, nor the *Treaty of 1788,* which replaced it. The historical details that involve the Sierra Leone Company or Naimbanner's son John Henry Naimbanner are also unmentioned. However, even without these details, we gain a sense of the role that Naimbanner played as one who allowed the repatriated black Africans from England to remain in the Sierra Leone "Colony of Freedom" where they might construct a new chapter of history for themselves. When we compare this passage from *The Last Harmattan of Alusine Dunbar* with the communiqué that Naimbanner sent to Granville Sharp, that we analyzed in Chapter I, the relevance

of the historical moment (to borrow Glissant's language) is highlighted. Naimbanner, through his interpreter Abraham Elliot Smith, who also happened to be a repatriated Africa, wrote:

> It has been told that these people (the free settlers from England) would in time drive me by force of arms, back in the country, and take my ports from me. I have received several accounts, from factories and captains of ships, against the settlement, which I took no notice of, as I conceived it was, in my opinion, spite or envy that they had against their living in the country; but have served them in any little request they asked of me, and have endeavored to keep peace between them and my people, and also among themselves, by settling a great many disquiets between them. It was a pleasure to do it, as I thought they would become useful to us all in this country, by teaching us things we know not. And again I must let you know, that if there were no other reason for wishing for the welfare of the settlement, I should do it, that there might be a stop put to the horrid depridations that are so often committed in this country, by all countries that come here to trade.[4]

With the help of his translator, Naimbanner frames himself as a peacemaker who resolved "a great many disquiets between" the indigenous Africans and the black settlers from abroad. When we read the fictional scene from the novel in conjunction with Naimbanner's communiqué from the archive, we are presented with a portrait of historical consciousness (as Glissant suggests) that arises out of the depths of a fragmented and fissured history. The result is a very relevant image of historical consciousness that is brought to light and enriched through the joining of historical fiction and the archive.

* * *

[4] This communiqué can be located in *The1791 Sierra Leone Company Report.* Naimbanner later goes on to speak of his son John (named after the director of the Sierra Leone Company), who was to be taken to England for educational purposes. More will be said about this in the subsequent chapter on the Sierra Leone Company.

Cheney-Coker also utilizes the concept of a fragmented and fissured history whose teleology must be re-constructed, and he does so at the very beginning of the novel. *The Last Harmattan of Alusine Dunbar,* which revolves around the turn of historical events that began in 1787, actually begins with a fictional scene that starts out in the 1960s decade of African independence. In many ways, the reader is made aware that the political turmoil of the Sierra Leone coup in the 1960's, which forms the backdrop that the opening scene is presented against, is not disconnected from the historical events of 1787 or the history of slavery and repatriation. The scene opens with General Tamba Masimiara sitting naked in an old slave dungeon, now adapted as a colonial prison cell, after a failed coup attempt that he undertook for the good of Malagueta. Cheney-Coker writes that the General "thought about the series of events that had led to his moving against the corrupt government in Malagueta" (Cheney-Coker vii). Perhaps the greatest irony is that this scene, occurring in a slave dungeon, over 150 years after the settlement of Malagueta by English Black Poor, finds the General in a very similar place where his forefathers might have found themselves before they were shipped to the new world. The General "scrutinized his new home—a grim colonial dungeon where, in centuries past, the blood of his countrymen and – women had mixed with their own excreta and vomit, before they were transported across the treacherous sea" (Cheney-Coker vii). The greatest difference, in this case, is that the General has been imprisoned and sentenced to death by his own

countrymen in a Malagueta that is no longer prey for slave-traders, nor a British colonial possession, but now an independent African nation.

Cheney-Coker paints a very unflattering picture of the political circumstances in which the newly independent Malaguetan nation finds itself. He makes it a point to emphasize the good intentions with which the General undertook his subversive actions:

> General Masimiara began to reflect on the future of his country, which was in the hands of the worse bunch of cutthroats that had ever rules the place, and where members of the aristocracy spent countless hours conjuring the magic of their illusions about the power of God to change the place. (Cheney-Coker vii)
> He was not a politician, nor did he have any intellectual pretensions about how to solve all the problems of Malagueta. But in twenty-five years as a soldier, the last five as army commander during the reign of a despicable government that had embarrassed him by jailing its critics and hanging some of its opponents, General Massimiara had wondered at the docility of the people, at their ability to receive the endless instruments of pain. (Cheney-Coker vii-viii)

Cheney-Coker paints a picture of the denial of a dream of justice and national unity that came with the dawn of African independence, not only in Malagueta (Sierra Leone), but for every other African nation that achieved independence in the 1960's as well. So when the General makes coup plans in order to "rewrite that terrible history begun in 1787," he is doing so out of a desire to not only "rewrite" the past, but erase it and start a new political reality.

The Last Harmattan and the Sierra Leone Election Crisis of 1967

The introductory scene with General Tamba Masimiara is based on the events surrounding the election crisis of 1967. It involved the two main rival

Sierra Leonean political parties, the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) and their candidate Albert Margai, and the All People's Congress (APC) and their candidate Siaka Stevens. The negative outcome of this election crisis, and Siaka Stevens's rise to power along with the APC, was what would eventually lead to the establishment of a one-party state in Sierra Leone. I believe that Glissant's approach to history, as an entity that must be constructed and re-constructed to achieve significant relevance and meaning, would be useful for reading and analyzing the scene from the novel and the actual historical event. He writes that "the writer must contribute to reconstituting its tormented chronology: that is, to reveal the creative energy of a dialectic" (Glissant 65).

General elections were scheduled in Sierra Leone for March 1967 under the pre-existing two-party state; however, on February 9 of that same year, the reigning Prime Minister, Albert Margai, announced that plans for a military coup had been unearthed, and that he had appealed to Guinea's Sekou Toure for assistance and protection. Eight military officers were relived of their duty, and Force Commander Lt. Col. John Bangura was arrested and imprisoned. These were the conditions of turmoil under which the March 17, 1967 general elections were held, and the chaos was to continue well after the elections. Two days prior to the elections on March 15, a state of emergency was declared in all districts of the provinces outside of the Freetown Western area.[5]

At the height of election turmoil on March 20, 1967, it was broadcast that the SLPP and its leader Albert Margai was in a draw with the APC and its leader

[5] Daramy, Sheikh Batu. 38-44. Daramy offers a very detailed overview of the events leading up to, during, and after the 1967 general election chaos.

Siaka Stevens. It was at this point that Sierra Leonean Governor General Sir Henry Lightfoot Boston invited Stevens and Margai to Fort Thornton, Freetown to persuade both of them to work out a compromise solution. Interestingly, Cyril Foray's account states that the "Governor General was so impressed by Stevens' arguments in an APC memorandum [that] he took care to inform Margai that he had no intention of reappointing him Prime Minister" (Foray 26). While Gershon Collier writes that "Sir Henry-Lightfoot Boston, the distinguished Creole Governor-General, constantly exposed to Creole pressures and influence, resolved the deadlock in favor of the APC" (Collier 64). While another account from Daramy states, "That night, certain influential persons paid, what the Governor-General's secretary, O.P.A. Macaulay described at the first treason trial in Sierra Leone as, a 'social visit'" (Daramy 45). Certainly, these three accounts offer us varying pictures of what occurred behind the scenes during the election turmoil.

What we know for certain is that the Governor-General, on the morning of March 21, 1967, appointed Siaka Stevens as Prime Minister. After that factual certainty, we are again presented with different portraits of what occurred. One account given by Foray reads, "Barely had Stevens been sworn in as Prime Minister when Force Commander Brigadier David Lasana (upon whose character General Tamba Masimiara is based), on Tuesday afternoon, March 21st, declared martial law, imposed a dusk to dawn curfew...and put the new Prime Minister Stevens...with a few party stalwarts under house arrest" (Foray 26). However, Daramy writes that "the Governor-General invited Brigadier David Lasana to the State House and told him he had decided to appoint Siaka Stevens as Prime

Minister" (Daramy 45). Afterwards, he writes, "Lasana informed the Governor-General that the country was on the brink of civil war and that he should postpone the appointment to enable him to deploy his soldiers to cope with civil disturbances which he said, had already started" (Daramy 45).

After the swearing in ceremony, Lightfoot-Boston gave Thomas Decker, then Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, an official press release that was to be announced on SLBS—The Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service. Instead of doing so, Decker brought the document to General Lasana, who then declared Martial Law at 5:55 on March 21, 1967. In this declaration, he stated:

> We are now operating under Martial Law to protect the constitution and to maintain law and order (following) wide-spread rumor put out by the APC that Governor-General has appointed Mr. Siaka Stevens as Prime Minister. I want to assure the public that if this rumor is true, it is unconstitutional because the results of the election have not yet all come in.[6]

Two days after Lasana's implementation of Martial Law, Major Charles Blake made an announcement on the SLBS, and declared that several senior military officers had decided to relieve Lasana of his duties for what they saw as an attempt to impose Albert Margai on the country. Then almost immediately afterwards, the National Reformation Council or NRC was formed, which was comprised of various national interests. It then formed a Civilian Rule Committee or CRC, which was determined to hold elections anew, which in its eyes, would mean that power would indeed be in the hands of a true representative civilian government. Increasingly though, a widening gap came to exist between the

[6] Daramy. 46. Again Daramy gives a very detailed account of all that transpired during the election turmoil of 1967.

military government and the civilian government, which continued to widen until there was a bloodless military coup on April 18, 1968. After the coup, Siaka Stevens was invited to return from Guinea, where he sought protection, and was installed as the new Prime Minister of Sierra Leone.

The installation of Stevens as Prime Minister began the very fast decline of hopes for a democratic Sierra Leone. An example of this steep decline came in September 1970, when M.S. Forna and M.O. Bash Taqi, who were respectively Ministers of Finance and Development, resigned to form the United Democratic Party or UDP. However, efforts to jumpstart this new party to offer opposition to the APC were crushed when their leaders and several of their supporters were arrested and jailed by the APC government under the provisions of the state of emergency, which granted it widespread powers.

For his part in the events, Commander Lasana "together with other top civil servants and some politicians, was tried for treason...and sentenced to death," which means that the scene constructed in *The Last Harmattan,* in which General Tamba Massimara sits in an adapted prison cell, is one that is pulled directly from historical records (Shrimpton and Sulayman xiii). This melding of historical narrative and historical fiction creates an enriched perspective on the events surrounding the election crisis of 1967. We come to see that the *The Last Harmattan's* fictional character Massiamara, like the historical figure Lasana, was using his military power in an attempt to safeguard a fledgling democracy in Sierra Leone. Cheney-Coker constructs *The Last Harmattan's* historical fiction out of the historical archive, which allows him to construct a teleology that links

twentieth century events in Sierra Leone to the seminal eighteenth century events that set them into motion. He constructs this teleological connection by beginning the novel at a pivotal moment in the 1960s, shortly after Sierra Leone has emerged from British colonialism, and then shifting back the novel's narrative back to the seminal eighteenth-century moment in 1787 where British colonialism was planted in Sierra Leone. Cheney-Coker allows us to see that this pivotal moment in Sierra Leonean history, which signals the death of democracy in the 1960's, was over 150 years in the making.

The Last Harmattan and the 1787 "Colony of Freedom"

Cheney-Coker, in his re-construction of the events that took place in 1787, recreates the historical circumstances in order to give the Black Poor settlers, who are being repatriated to Malagueta, a distinct face and story. His portrait of historical fiction presents the initial settlement as one that is distinct from the "colony of freedom" model envisioned and established by Granville Sharp and his compatriots. While Colonel Boulden Thompson is still present as the captain who transports the initial wave of Black Poor, he is given a unique role and a story that serves its own purpose in *The Last Harmattan*—a story of an attempt at salvation and redemption for past wrongs. A separate and unique story is also crafted to tell the experience of the Black Poor in Cheney-Coker's Malagueta, who in reality, were transported from England to the Sierra Leone "Colony of Freedom" in 1787. However, in Cheney-Coker's textual construction, these Black Poor were left to their own devices after being repatriated by the British. The British only re-appear

after the initial wave of repatriated Black Poor have made their lives in Cheney-Coker's Malaguetta after the original settlement is destroyed by the indigenous Africans—which, in itself, highlights the cultural differences between the settlers and indigenous. As a result of this artistic license that he takes with the history of Sierra Leone, we are presented with a fictional historical narrative that allows us to understand the socio-cultural and colonial complexities that are involved in both repatriation and colonialism itself.

The initial story that we meet after Cheney-Coker's prologue, describing General Tamba Masimiara's ordeal, takes us back to the North American experience of the slave couple Jeanette and Sebastian Cromantine. In both of these characters, we see manifested prophetic dreams that speak of a return to Africa, from whence their ancestors were forcibly removed—a homecoming of sorts. However, what's problematic about these visions of a return home is that after having been presented with the image of the General in bondage at the hands of his own corrupt countrymen in the 1960's, as well as the prophecy of the mythical figure Sulaiman the Nubian forecasting these events, it becomes clear that this homecoming will have dire consequences for the history of the nation that will become Malagueta.

In the case of the character Jeanette Cromantine, she is given to an elderly black preacher, who is also a freeman, after she is born to a slave mother (Sophie Mahogany) who was impregnated by the son of her white owners (William Blackburn). The preacher is a religious man who has been inculcated with the

Bible, and has rationalized that the plight of the Black Africans in slavery is essentially tantamount to the Hebrew people who suffered captivity in the dessert. He was a free man who, because of a heart ailment, had earned the chance to pass his remaining years in pursuit of the meaning of the curse of Ham and the dispersal of his sons upon seas and in desserts. After years of exploring the curse, he came up one morning with a startling revelation: "Dey bin a walkin for three thousand years, but de good Lawd done hear their tears and he gon bring 'em home soon, yes sir" (Cheney-Coker 4).

Given the course of events that *The Last Harmattan* follows, for the Cromantines and the Black Poor that sail to settle in Malagueta, it might actually seem that this prophecy is one that was destined to come true, were it not for the course of events to follow. Even the fact that the preacher has raised Jeanette with the help of the surrounding community of black women points a back to African roots and connections. "Upholding a tradition traced back to Africa, the black women who came to his ministrations took turns nursing the baby" (Cheney-Coker 4). The fictional historical narrative constructs a prophetic link that connects these black slaves, freemen and freewomen to the African continent from whence they came.

The North America story climaxes when the husband, Sebastian Cromantine, decides to enlist to fight in the American Revolutionary War on the side of the British. Perhaps the most ironic thing about the war is that he is offered a picture of racial equality and humanity. "For the first time in his life he saw black men being embraced by white men, and for the first time in his life he was

invited to share a meal by white men who were fighting for a cause that meant little to him other than the fact that he was now a free man" (Cheney-Coker 8). In spite of fighting for the losing side in the Revolutionary War, the Cromantines would retain their status as free-man and free-woman, as they were transported to England at its conclusion. In the end, though, the freedom that the Cromantines enjoyed would be limited by the color of their skin as Black Poor in England, and they would face a similar situation once British colonialism came to Malaguetta. "The rigors of the English weather, the miserable poverty of many people both black and white, upset them" (Cheney-Coker 13). The picture of the Black Poor that is painted here is one of abandonment, desperation, and poverty in England (and in this way, the historical fiction utilizes actual historical occurrences).

Finally, though, when the Cromantines embark on their journey to Malagueta, all of the misery of slavery and captivity is seemingly left behind. Cheney-Coker writes that, "Now, he (Sebastian) could evoke a lineage that was not defined by time, but by the spirit, by the force of all eternities and the running music of ancestral waters that coursed through his blood" and that "no door would be closed to him now" (Cheney-Coker 14-15). As the story progresses, though, we will come to find that this will be a dream deferred.

* * *

Cheney-Coker begins the episode in Book I of *The Last Harmattan,* which tells the tale of the arrival of the Black Poor in Malagueta, which reminds us that

"History, far from constituting a privileged form of (historical) knowledge, is simply the myth of modern man, and merely amounts to a method of analysis" (Young 45). In this instance, historian Robert Young goes to the extent of labeling history as a myth itself (which rhymes with my understanding of *The Last Harmattan* as the melding of archival fact, mythical fiction, and historical narrative). The key concept that is important—whether a matter of myth and history, or myth as history—is that myth is a constructed teleology that is used to constitute the memory or the story of a people. The scene in which we are presented with the arrival of the Black Poor of *The Last Harmattan* to Malaguetta is an example of a "consciousness [that] was broken up by sterile barriers," and it is the writer "who must be able to give expression to all those occasions when these barriers were partially broken" (Glissant 65).

It is, therefore, quite fitting that Cheney-Coker begins the narrative of Book I, which takes place in the eighteenth century, with a scene that takes us back to the fifteenth-century, which saw the first slaves taken from West Africa by the Portuguese.

> One note of interest that caught the attention of Pedro Almerado, when he called to the Kasila coast in 1462 on his way to begin a reactionary tyranny that was to last four hundred years, was that the inhabitants of the place did not resemble any he had seen since he left Portugal. Tall, agile, dark, and fearless to the point of being treacherous, and possess of a warlike character. (Cheney-Coker 68)

This scene where we see the beginnings of the slave trade, coupled with the following fictional scene of the first British repatriation effort of 1787, brings us full circle to what should supposedly be the end of suffering and captivity for the former slaves who are being returned. However, the irony that awaits them is that

they are to be thrust from one form of captivity into another in the form of colonialism.

Cheney-Coker paints the arrival of the Black Poor as something of an initial relief from the depredations that they had suffered in North America and the desperation that they had experienced after abandonment in England. We are told that "the reality of being in a new environment brought about a discernible change in the spirits of the new voyagers" and that the grey clouds of death "over their lives gave way to an inordinate optimism which, in the brightness of that world, in the reaffirmation of creation before the naming of things, pushed them on" (Cheney-Coker 71). We are given a portrait of an Edenic setting after the creation and before the fall of man. If we take this concept further, and consider this Eden upon which the settlers have embarked, given the prophecy of Sulaiman the Nubian, as well the fate of General Masamiara, it is evident that the nature of humanity in Eden is to experience a great fall as the course of history begings to unfold in Malaguetta.

Historian Christopher Leslie Brown, in *Moral Capital: Foundations in British Abolitionism,* writes about the great hope that the Black Poor had of establishing their roots in an African homeland when they came to settle in Sierra Leone. He states:

> To them (the Black Poor who came to Sierra Leone), the colonization of the African coast meant something altogether different from what it had meant to an adventurer like Henry Smeathman or what it would mean to an abolitionist like Granville Sharp. The coast (of West Africa) presented an opportunity for independence, freedom, and self-sufficiency. (Brown 283)

The "colony of Freedom" in Sierra Leone, represented, for the Black Poor, a reprieve from a sentence of living as a second-class or sub-class or human beings in England.

Coupled with this Edenic portrait of a homecoming, that Cheney-Coker offers us in *The Last Harmattan,* is a benevolent depiction of the king of the town. We can reasonably assume that the king is based on the historical figure King Naimbanner of the Temne/Shebro people, who ultimately gives the settlers permission to occupy the land.

> He was an old man who was not easily exited by gestures. Contrary to that universal belief that men grew wise with age, he had been born wise, a king among men, a seer in the madness and conflicts of his age, who had been born without a single white hair...
> [He] had known at what time Sulaiman's prediction about the coming of the blacks from the other side of existence would happen; how they would look like bedraggled cranes after a storm...but driven by the implacable will of conquerors determined to build a community. (Cheney-Coker 69)

The king is framed in a similar light of mystic and prophetic wisdom as Sulaiman the Nubian. In many ways, he is the indigenous sovereign figure displayed in Chapter I, in our discussion of the *Treaty of 1787/1788,* before indigenous sovereignty was transformed into colonial subjectivity. All of this adds to the picture of an African homecoming from exile for the Black Poor settlers.

From that point, Cheney-Coker offers us various conflicting images of a Malaguetan settlement that, at some points, is on its path to establishing an Eden for the Black Poor, and at others, is on the verge of collapse. For instance, when we are first offered a picture of the settler Gustavius Martins, we are indeed presented with the picture of one who feels he has come home. We are told that

"Malagueta was in his blood," and that "Many years earlier, as a young child, he had been taken out of the region south of the place they had landed, and although time, suffering and the war had worked havoc on his memory, they had not completely obliterated all the lines of the country from his heart" (Cheney-Coker 72). The figure Gustavius Martins is, in some ways, an adaptation of the historical figure Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa, who claims that he was taken from the Igbo people of Nigeria.

Sebastian Cromantine is also presented as a figure who has taken quite well to the new land. In fact, we might even say that he exemplifies the idea that we see so many times in the *Reports of the Sierra Leone Company* and *African Institution* of being "incited to industry" and trade. He discovers coffee growing in the hills of Malagueta and decides that he will invest a significant amount of time in growing this produce. Cheney-Coker writes that "He was not to be put off, and tried to seduce her (Jeanette Cromantine) with the prospect of selling the beans to the ships that called at Kasila" (Cheney-Coker 98). Sebastian envisions Malagueta as a land that will bring him prosperity after a lifetime of captivity and hardship. However, this vision of prosperity is also mixed with troubling mystic visions from whence he does not know. As readers who have seen the prologue that includes Genral Masimiara and Sulaiman the Nubian, we know that the visions are the earmark of prophecy and the colonial future to come. "He (Sebastian) saw himself on another stage; he was an actor in a play where he was the only performer obeying some instructions from a director whose hands were white, whose face was black, but whose voice was indiscriminate" (Cheney-

Coker 87). We will later come to see that the colonial administration, once it establishes itself, will utilize the hands of a black elite and merchant class population to wield English colonial justice, many times in place of displaying its own authorial face.

This dream of the initial settlement begun in 1787, in Cheney-Coker's text, is destroyed by the seeds of mistrust and suspicion that the indigenous of Kasila have towards a settler class of Black Poor who, to them, have come from a land unknown.

> A great horde of enraged men and women from Kasila was pillaging Malagueta, and Sebastian Cromantine, crouching over his wife, prayed that Malagueta would not go up in flames. The plague that had been killing the settlers had spread to their neighbors. At first, they had not thought much about it. But when their children succumbed to death soon after eating the sweet potatoes which the foreign woman (Jeanette Cromantine) had planted, they deduced with an age-old logic, contrary to reason, that the seed of the settlers' misfortune had been planted in their world, which not even the totemic power of their gods could halt.
> (Cheney-Coker 101)

In the end, or at least, at the end of this episode of Cheney-Coker's novel, the Edenic promise of a homecoming that Malagueta initially held for the Black Poor settlers is shattered. The African home continent and homeland to which the settlers envisioned they had an inalienable ancestral connection, was in fact, a bond that a period of captivity in North America and England had seemingly destroyed.

The dream of a "Land of Freedom" would be resurrected with the infusion of new blood of black settlers arriving from Nova Scotia. In the actual history of Sierra Leone, these settlers are brought from Nova Scotia to Africa by the Sierra

Leone Company itself. Fyfe writes of Thomas Peters, a millwright and slave, who escaped from his master in Wilmington, North Carolina. By the time he arrived in New Brunswick, Canada, he was in his fifties. It was he who would spread the word of the Sierra Leone settlement in New Brunswick, while Thomas Clarkson, a white Sierra Leone Company agent, would spread the news in Nova Scotia, particularly in Halifax. Fyfe writes that the Nova Scotian Blacks:

> Asked if it were true, as was being rumored, that they would have to pay rent for their land. He (Clarkson) swore that as Government had promised them free land in Nova Scotia, so the Company promised it free in Africa, and that any charges they had to pay on it would not be rent but rates to maintain the sick or poor, or for the school. (Fyfe 33-34)

It is no coincidence that in the *1796 Report of the Sierra Leone Company,* the subject of unrest among the Nova Scotians, especially in regards to the subject of "quit-rents," was addressed at length in order to ease the worries of investors. The Company was adamant that the terms of agreement, which the Nova Scotians and the Company made before coming to Sierra Leone, were not misrepresented, and that charging rent for the colonial land was justified. However, in Cheney-Coker's construction of the historical fiction of *The Last Harmattan,* the Sierra Leone Company does not figure into the equation, and again, the black settlers are left to construct a new life and a world of their own in Malaguetta.

In Cheney-Coker's text, the figure of Thomas Peters is represented by the fictional character Thomas Bookerman, who is the leader of Nova Scotian group that makes the journey to Malagueta. "Inspired by the irrefutable evidence of the exploitation of his people, now eking out a threadbare existence in the marshlands of Canada after the colonial war, he could dream anew of an exodus, of a country

with an even more fearsome and turbulent mountain where they could settle" (Cheney-Coker 102). Here again, we are presented with the Biblical allusion to the exodus that will take black slaves in exile to an ancestral home in Africa. When they finally arrive on the coast of Malagueta, they are greeted by "bewildered local people [who] offered to look after them, but could offer no news of the whereabouts of the first Malaguetans" (Cheney-Coker 103). Bookerman and the settlers eventually find the Cromantines, Isatu, Gustavius, and the remaining settlers that survived the destruction of the initial settlement of 1787, and they are convinced to come out of hiding in order to resurrect the Malaguetan settlement. The once derailed dream seems to be back on track at this point; however, the pending wave of colonialism will crush the dream of the exodus once and for all.

* * *

The construction of historical fiction and myth within *The Last Harmattan* also enables Cheney-Coker to address themes that are directly related to historical realities—one of which revolves around the complexities of black settlers repatriated from the New World and their interaction with the indigenous African. In essence, this is a theme that deals with the complicated politics of a repatriation or return home to a place that had ceased to become home as a result of being violently torn away and taken across the Atlantic. The lasting union of the settler Gustavius Martins and the indigenous Isatu Dambolla represents both the divide

between the Black Poor settlers and African indigenous that had to be navigated, as well as the potential for successful union and coexistence. When Gustavius sees Isatu bathing in a stream, he immediately brims with desire, but it is not a desire that is limited by blindness. He understands that there is a cultural rift between the two groups that has to be navigated if he is to be successful in courting Isatu.

> Gustavius had decided to have that woman and had been planning accordingly. Unknown to Sebastian, he had been learning the language of the people of Kasila, adopting their food habits, and the wearing of the long gown was merely an extension of his preparedness. (Cheney-Coker 89)

Interestingly, after the settlement has been destroyed by the natives of Kasila, it is Isatu who, like a Pocahantas-figure, teaches the remaining settlers, that include the Cromantines and Gustavius, how to survive once they flee the first settlement after its destruction.

There is an informational and cultural exchange that occurs between the two of them. For instance, as Isatu continues to think about the nature of their union of settler and indigenous, Cheney-Coker writes:

> Gustavius had made her aware of things that would otherwise have escaped her: the equal role of women in the building of a community; the importance of believing in individual efforts for the good of the community; and how it was possible to arrive at the conclusion of an idea without having had a clear understanding of the idea in the first place. (Cheney-Coker 191)

These elements represent a cultural exchange; however, they are also signify a potentially destructive cultural rift. This is a rift that becomes even more significant when we look back to the prologue and realize that it is no coincidence General Tamba Masimiara, who stages the unsuccessful coup, is the grandson of

Sheku Massimiara—one of the "new breed of [indigenous] settlers" that Malagueta begins to attract in Book IV toward the end of the novel.

Isatu foresees this future of Malagueta, and is filled with doubt when she takes note of the class differences that are beginning to arise between the settlers themselves:

> She wondered how in God's name they had come to that place, and whether the Almighty had not made a mistake in grouping them together. One day, she wasn't sure when, they were going to give up all façade of unity and start fighting each other, because they were already beginning to talk of the poor and "aristocrats" among them and develop serious notions of class. (Cheney-Coker 191)

Although this is not the type of mystic vision that we have seen manifested through the prophetic Sulaiman the Nubian, or even Sebastian's vision of the white hands controlling all, it is perhaps even more poignant because it comes in the form of a real-time observation based on the evidence of emerging class distinctions that have been presented to Isatu. These are the seed of destruction that are being planted, and they will come to fruition long afterwards in the time of Genral Masimiara.

Cheney-Coker also points to the growth of the Malaguetan settlement and the linguistic rift that is felt by Isatu. She talks of:

> Trying to speak a new language which every day was receiving more and more words as more and more of them appeared from all parts of the world with their accounts of wars, famine, kidnappings, and revolts. It was through them that she had become acquainted with names like Lobito, Jamaica, Mississippi, Congo, Angola, and the ocean was so great that it took a whole season to cross it." (Cheney-Coker 191-92)

All of this points to the complexity of the world that is coming into being as a "Colony of Freedom" for slaves, who have emerged from captivity in the various

parts of the world that wanted them as slaves, but disowned and disavowed them as free human beings.

The cultural difference between the settlers and indigenous is especially highlighted when Isatu brings Gustavius on a journey with her to see her family and reconnect with her people so that she may bear a child. Sawinda Dambolla, as a wise elder, and mother of Isatu, highlights the details of what divides them:

> They have a dubious notion of freedom so that man is perceived as living in a world where he is independent of nature. Space is a thing they have not learned how to deal with, because they are pulling down everything: trees, groves, shrines; insulting the souls of the dead. Rites that help us into adulthood mean nothing to them, the spiritual is suspect, and very little thought is given to the relationship between what we bring into this world and what we take to out graves. (Cheney-Coker 198)

If we compare this passage with Wadstrom's map that we used in Chapter III (*See page 105*), depicting a European woman on developed land, who is reaching out to a loinclothed African male on a landmass of bush, then we come away with an even stronger idea of the manner in which Europeans presented Africa as continent that was a "different" and therefore "uncivilized." This is also the manner in which those repatriated blacks from the New World, who would come to be called Krio, particularly the aristocrats, would distinguish themselves from other indigenous Africa and Africans as well.

The Last Harmattan and the Emergence of Colonialism

As we have seen through Chapters I, II, and III, the emergence of the British colonial project in Sierra Leone can be split into three phases that are marked accordingly with the British institutions that attempted to create colonial

civilizations: The initial settlement of 1787, the shift to company control at the hands of the Sierra Leone Company in 1791, and finally, the establishment of the official British Crown Colony in 1808. However, Cheney-Coker, offers us a re-constructed narrative of history that is also highlights the coming of colonialism as an event comparable to the traumatic shock of the slave trade and relocation to the New World[7] (Glissant 65). In *The Last Harmattan*, the colonial project is depicted as one single unified effort that imposes itself upon the repatriated black settlers who have now made their home in Malagueta (as there is no Granville Sharp or Sierra Leone Company in Cheney-Coker's novel).

By the time the initial British colonial attempt is made, the "colony of freedom," in Cheney-Coker's text, has already been established as a settlement independent of British and colonial influence. This is yet another convention and construction of historical fiction that Cheney-Coker utilizes so that we, as readers, see the actual faces, hopes, and dreams of the black settlers who came to Malagueta beginning in 1787. Cheney-Coker also gives a concrete and distinct face to the emerging colonial system and its philosophies on civilization in the form of Captain David Hammerstone. Over the course of the novel, it is evident that Hammerstone goes through a similar colonial learning curve in West Africa, similar to what the British went through in Sierra Leone, since he fails in his first attempt, and is finally successful in his second.

* * *

[7] Glissant, Edward. *Caribbean Discourse,* p. 65. Glissant speaks of History as neurosis. He writes "Would it be ridiculous to consider our lived history as a steadily advancing neurosis? To see the Slave Trade as a traumatic shock, our relocation (in the new land) as a repressive phase...?"

The character of the British Captain David Hammerstone is one that is built upon the historical figure Governor Charles MacCarthy, who was perhaps the most proactive governor in terms of striving to ensure that the imprint of his own vision of colonial civility in Africa was enacted. Fyfe, in *A History of Sierra Leone* states, "Where previous governors saw an administrative problem, how to settle them cheaply, he saw a heaven-sent way of transforming Africa by changing them into Christian communities, orderly villages, each grouped round its own church tower, instructed and cared for by benevolent European guidance" (Fyfe 128). The name Hammerstone is aptly chosen by Cheney-Coker because, like his fictional character, the actual historical figure MacCarthy viewed Freetown, and Sierra Leone, and in fact, West Africa on a whole, as a blank slate upon which he could fashion a new world through means of colonialism. MacCarthy believed, very strongly, that the British should expand as far and wide as possible in the West African region, and was extremely displeased with a British governmental policy that handed Goree and Senegal back to the French in 1816 (Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone* 131).

When MacCarthy took over as governor, Freetown had scarcely half a dozen stone buildings, public or private, and no governor's house or official public offices. It also lacked a church, and instead, services were held in a hired room which was also used as a courthouse and girls' school. He was shocked at

the state of disrepair which he met Freetown in upon his arrival.[8] However, Fyfe writes that

> MacCarthy spared no expense to make villages reflect his vision. Bells, clocks, and weathercocks were ordered from England for church towers, forges for village blacksmiths, scales and weights for village markets. Quill-pens and copy-books, prayer books, and arithmetic books were ordered for schools, with tin cases for the children to carry them in, lamps to read them by. Hats were ordered for the men, bonnets for the women, shoes for all. Gowns and petticoats, trousers and braces—buttons too, with needles, thread and thimbles, soap and smoothing-irons, even clothes-brushes, nothing was forgotten. (Fyfe, A *History*... 131)

MacCarthy's vision involved the idea that by dramatically altering the African environment itself, the Africans within that very environment would inevitably be impacted, supposedly for the better. Literacy, education, and religion also went hand-in-hand for his vision of what Sierra Leone had to become in his eyes.

Governor MacCarthy also felt a degree of entitlement for all that he had accomplished though his colonial endeavors in Sierra Leone, and was not bashful in expressing his belief that he should be rewarded for his undertakings in Africa. He would write to the British Crown, petitioning for knighthood, and include in this request, a certified pedigree of descent from the ancient Irish Kings. He would eventually receive this knighthood in 1820, at which time he took a leave from Sierra Leone to reap his reward from the King George (Fyfe, *A History*... 140). It is this image of zealousness and boastful colonial arrogance, as well as the methodology of colony-building in Africa, that Cheney-Coker attempts to depict by giving Captain David Hammerstone his own stage in the novel on which to perform.

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[8] Fyfe, Christopher. *A History of Sierra Leone,* p. 133-134.

* * *

We are introduced to Captain Hammerstone near the beginning of Book II, after the settlement or "colony of freedom" has been established at Malagueta. He sits in retirement from a life of sea-faring adventure, and is described as one who is "exiled from the tempestuous wave of adventure" at home in his comfortable English country cottage (Cheney-Coker 151). Cheney-Coker presents a the image of an adventurer who is bored with life on the English Isle, and who views those lands and peoples he encounters on his adventures as objects upon which he might make firm and lasting impressions.

> When he had been made to give up command of his ship six months earlier, because of an acute case of nervous disorder brought about by the effect of blackwater fever, he had rejected the offer of a job in an office preparing export documents, in favor of a retirement at forty-seven. But after twenty years at sea, he felt like a seal out of water in the pleasant meadow where even the gentle nature of life and the splendid bulls did not compensate for his former life. He missed the turbulence of the great oceans, the freedom and music of the waves...and the chance of being feted by the natives of enchanting islands. (Cheney-Coker 152)

Perhaps the most ironic element of this passage lies in the fact that the sea, for Hammerston, represents the greatest amount of freedom possible. The "turbulence" of the ocean is a favorable thing, and the waves, in addition to offering a sort of freedom, carry with them a sort of "music" as well. The very same ocean that represents freedom for Captain Hammerstone, as we will recall, for General Tamba Masimiara, is "vast and crude"—something "which in some unexplained way had tormented him since he was a child" and which "he had

come to believe held the key to the terrible wound and pain that was his country's history" (Cheney-Coker ix). For Masimiara, the sea represents the coming of invaders, the bondage of his people throughout history in slavery and colonialism, and even as he sits in the cell overlooking the sea, bondage at the elite of his newly independent Malagueta.

In the fictional portrait of history that Cheney-Coker constructs, he paints a picture of Hammerstone as a man who can't handle a life of sitting still in obscurity, and consequently, turns to colonialism with a sort of religious zeal after reading reports similar to those which we explored in the Chapters I, Chapter II, and Chapter III, from the Sierra Leone Company, African Association of London, and African Institution of London. The text reads that:

> It came unexpectedly. He had been reading the exploits of the missionaries, about the omnivorousness of the Bible for all men and women. Going to the deepest resources of the Bible, he concluded that God had arranged it so that they could blaze the trail for empire builders and explorers in Africa. He had not sinned in the story seasons of his past, because what he had done during those extremes of passion was to reshape the cacques of the human race. (Cheney-Coker 153)

Subsequently, Hammerstone "Once again, saw himself as a captain, flying the ensign of a new ship, behind the liturgy, to the ends of the world just to get away from England" (Cheney-Coker 153). It's also both interesting and disturbing to note that Hammerstone is able to rationalize away the wrongs or crimes against humanity of his past because the literature he has read leads him to believe that his actions "reshape[d] the caciques of the human race." The Captain has rationalized and recreated his existence as a god-given and god-driven force, that is destined to reshape the supposedly uncivilized portions of the globe.

The story of Hammerstone is where Cheney-Coker constructs a human portrait of a historical colonial figure in order to depict the mentality of emerging colonialism in West Africa. As we recall from the previous three chapters, reports like those of the Sierra Leone Company, African Institution, and African Association, were written with a keen eye on stirring interest about colonial endeavors in the England itself. It is no coincidence that Cheney-Coker writes that Hammerstone:

> overheard a conversation about a place where "a bunch of blacks had established a republic where the earth had not been explored," and for which the British government was looking for men with experience to go out and set up businesses, backed of course by a garrison to "protect their interests." (Cheney-Coker 156)

Six months later, Hammerston had a commission from the Colonial Office, and was at the head of a force of sixty men, with whom he would build a fort at Malagueta. The idea was that he would "protect the traders who would follow on his heels to build warehouses and shops, guarantee peace and stability, and to put down any rebellion." He went out with a zealous belief that "his new life had already been sanctioned by Divine Providence" and was a man "utterly convinced of his own worth...determined to impose his rule" (Cheney-Coker 156).

The colonial reasoning that Cheney-Coker presents here is one that rhymes with the philosophy of perfectability that is anchored in the emerging science of late eighteenth-century, which we saw exemplified in the anthropology of Blumenbach from Chapter III of this project. In the character of Hammerstone, like the actual figure of MacCarthy, we see the implicit, and many times explicit, notion of superiority based on European origins and white skin, versus the

inferiority of African origin and black skin.[9] This philosophy of superiority comes through when we read the speech that Hammerstone makes when coming upon shore to speak with the black settlers:

> He told them that he was a representative of a king who already controlled a large portion of the world between the islands of the Nordic tribes and the ancestral grounds of the aborigines of Australia, and with vast trade in sugar, cotton, spices, and gemstones. How they had pacified the warring peoples of Borneo and sent an expedition to crush a rebellion by dogeaters in China. (Cheney-Coker 158)

The implicit and explicit notion of superiority here is that since we the British have conquered these supposedly savage nations, there is little doubt they can subdue these repatriated settlers. In Hammerstone's eyes, the idea that he represents "a king who already controlled a large part of the world," is something that should cause the black settlers and indigenous Africans took look upon British might and white skin with great awe and reverence.

Perhaps the most striking part of Hammerstone's bold introduction to the black settlers comes when he speaks of the underlying reasons of trade and its importance to the cause of his colonial mission. He remarks:

> This place is good for trade and we are going to build a garrison, new shops and a tannery, a distillery, and other business; and what we produce we can sell to other people. You can work for us any time you want, just so you know that we intend to stay and run our business unmolested. (Cheney-Coker 158)

Cheney-Coker presents us with an economic vision of European settlement in Africa for commercial purposes—comparable to what we see in Adam Smith and the Sierra Leone Company—that is boiled down to the simplest terms that even a

[9] Hammerstone could easily be substituted with several other colonial figures—i.e. F.D. Lugard, the nineteenth-century colonial figure of Nigeria.

sea-captain turned African colonialist and civilizer, like Hammerstone, could understand (*See Chapter II for further clarification*). At the center of this economic model is the military defense and protection of territorial interests, which in turn, effectively means protection of colonial trade interests.

In the end, this first attempt at colonization by Hammerstone and his men is not meant to be. He and his men are eventually pushed back and forced to leave Malagueta for a time. However, Hammerstone and a new fighting force return boldly and with a vengeance in Book III of *The Last Harmattan's* historical fiction, and once he and his men re-install themselves in Malagueta with their military garrison, the age of British colonial administration in Malaguetta has begun.

* * *

In Book III of *The Last Harmattan,* we find that Hammerstone has not lost his colonial and religious zeal when he storms back to take the Malaguetta settlement with his new fighting force that is a mix of his remaining British soldiers, and new indigenous Africans soldiers, who have been recruited from the region to which he fled after being pushed back. Cheney-Coker writes that "Soon Malagueta had a flag," and that the morning after, "the captain went into action to reorganize the administration of Malagueta." Demonstrating the tendency of colonial officials to be suspicious of that which they don't understand, in addition to a desire to institute Christianity as the religion of the colonial state,

Hammerstone also "abolished the prosperous business in divination by Modibo the Susu on the grounds that it was subversive" and imposed "a dusk-to-dawn curfew" upon the entire settlement (Cheney-Coker 236). The implicit idea is that any religion not linked to the colonial state undermines the authority of the colonial government. Church and colonial state, in this case, must be aligned if the colonial mission is to succeed. The "dusk-to-dawn curfew is also designed to impose the idea that freedom is, in fact, not a given right, but is instead something that can be given and taken away by the colonial state.

The next scene, like several in Cheney-Coker's text, is evocative of that which we see in the *1807 Report of the African Institution,* that we should recall from Chapter III, in which Mungo Park is quoted as saying that in regards to the supposedly uncivilized state of the African, "Nothing is wanting to this end but example to enlighten the minds of the natives, and instruction to enable them to direct their industry to proper objects." Indeed, the communiqué that Hammerstone sends back to England, on behalf of himself and his new colonial settlement, is the very similar to the type that one would encounter in an *Insitution Report*:

> Seizing the advantage that victory gave him, he dispatched two leading members of the aristocracy on a schooner to London, with a letter for the partners who had commissioned the expedition to Malagueta. In the fine methodical handwriting of a man schooled in the art of flattery, he thanked them for giving him advantage further, he mentioned the potential for growth in Malaguetta, its untapped wealth and the richness of its vegetation, and made his only concession to the people by praising their kindness, concluding that they were so peace-loving they had refused to follow en masse that hot-headed one eyed bandit to a certain death. *Saying that the people were just waiting for expertise which could be given only by men who had created advanced tools and were*

> *already putting their skills to building industries, he urged his partners to send young men out to settle in Malagueta.*
> (Cheney-Coker 237-38)

The zealous language that Cheney-Coker frames here to encapsulate Hammerstone's enthusiasm at the potential for European colonizers in Africa resembles the language that we see in the *Reports of the Sierra Leone Company* and the *Reports of the African Institution.* Recall that in the postscript of the *1791 Report of the Sierra Leone Company,* company officials wrote about the potential of Sierra Leone and Africa as a whole:

> [Africa is] a market, indeed, to the demands and extend to which it is difficult to assign a limit. But the benefits Africa was to derive from this connexion are still more important: The light of religious and moral truth, and all the comforts of civilized society. To insure the attainment of these benevolent purposes, it was necessary for the Company to be possessed of a tract of land in Africa. (*1791 Report of the Sierra Leone Company* 29)

The tract of land that the company attained was that of the failed "Colony of Freedom" that began in 1787. The emphasis on Africa as a "market" speaks to the heart of the colonial project and the wealth that the British metropole hoped would come as a result of the colonization of an untapped continent. Cheney-Coker, through his construction of the character Hammerstone, captures the sprit of colonial zeal that we read in the reports of institutions like the Sierra Leone Company.

While his zeal still remains, Hammerstone's colonial learning curve also becomes evident. Instead of the heavy, impatient hand that he once wielded upon arriving in Malaguetta to enact his first attempt at colonization, his new approach is more of an effort to cajole through diplomatic means. He now reasons that:

> Malagueta was not a tidal wave or a tamed beast, but a difficult mistress. So he would have to be patient in the courtship, win her with acts of generosity and understanding. He prayed for the day when people of the town would get to see that his motives were good, that his men were not the murderous butchers they appeared to be. The river between them was not one of blood brewing with hate, but a case of misunderstanding. He was bringing the benefits of civilization, the justness of English laws...
> He saw the day when after Malagueta had become a town stamped with the permanence of English laws, when the blacks were themselves the messengers of the metaphysical transition—darkness to light, neo-paganism to classicism—the enclyclopaedic mind of the English would be admired by the best sons and daughters of the town. (Cheney-Coker 259)

Hammerstone, who in many ways, is on a mission to find colonial glory and adventure, still reasons that his endeavors in civilization—be they peaceful or violent—are still done for the good of the Africans themselves. Like children, in time they would come to see that all of these acts undertaken were for the sake of "enlightenment"—a term which implies that the violence that Hammerstone undertakes in the name of spreading his form of civilization is supposedly distinguishable from the violence of a so-called "un-civilized" people. To quote Robert Young, "Enlightenment is totalitarian. The very powers of rationality which enabled modern man to free himself from nature and control it had also become an instrumental device to dominate him" (Young 7).

What problematizes Hammerstone's vision of this "metaphysical transition from darkness to light" is that there is never enough room for all kinds or varieties of humankind within this vision of "enlightenment." There are those who will always be left out in the dark, simply because they are deemed too barbarous, too undesirable, or simply incapable of being civilized. For instance, the Africans soldiers that Hammerstone recruits for his second attempt to

establish a colonial state in Malagueta are examples of those who cannot be made or molded to fit:

> He tried to picture them in the uniform of soldiers of the king, teaching them how to salute, how to make their beds and raise a flag. These men, he concluded, were not born for that kind of discipline. Order for them was merely a momentary password to kill, rape, and plunder, and once their appetites were satisfied they would revert to their ancient barbarism. He like those bastards, but the thought of running a town with them filled him with the deepest imagination of horror. "Good Lord," he thought, "imagine me presenting this lot to a representative of the king!" (Cheney-Coker 233)

These African soldiers, in Hammerstone's eyes, were simply killing machines that he utilized in order to serve a colonial purpose. In many ways, every subject has a specific place in the colonial order that the Captain attempts to create.

* * *

Governor Charles MacCarthy, like his fictional counterpart Captain Hammerstone, was a colonialist who had determined, in his religious zeal, that he knew the face of God, and endeavored to create Freetown and Sierra Leone in the British image of what civilization should be. For example, Fyfe writes that "In 1816, an ordinance was passed to acquire for them, [the black colonial inhabitants in Sierra Leone] compulsorarily, land by the shore beyond Sanders Brook belonging to Eli Ackim, a Nova Scotian Trader, who had bought it from its Maroon owner. A jury awarded him *L*62 compensation which he took with bitter protests at being dispossessed in favor of aliens" (Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone* 135). In the eyes of MacCarthy, infrastructural development was of the utmost

importance, and was directly related to colonial and civilizational development in Africa. Fyfe also writes further about the fervor with which Governor MacCarthy went about developing Freetown and Sierra Leone in order to maintain his British soldiers as well. He writes that:

> As commander-in-chief MacCarthy could also draw on the Treasury for military buildings. An elegant officers' mess was built on the slope between Fort Thornton and Pademba Road, and magnificent Commissariat buildings. The Commissariat store, three stories of stone with a wooden superstructure, was built at the wharf. MacCarthy estimated it would cost *L 4000*: The eventual cost was believed to be *L*50 – *L* 60,000. (Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone* 134)

The Governor had a penchant for building, in large part, because he and the Colonial Office viewed Africa as a blank slate upon which it was their duty to make an impact and alter forever.

It is these actual historical occurances that Cheney-Coker draws from when, in *The Last Harmattan,* he writes, "Rapidly, Malagueta underwent a transformation," and then proceeds to outline the manner in which Hammerstone goes about building the colony to suit his own vision and design (Cheney-Coker 297). The text then reads that:

> The plans for development of the town that Captain Hammerstone had drawn up were eagerly accepted by his associates. But after declaring himself governor, he allowed contrary views to be expressed by his men. In them, they appealed to him for understanding, trying to convince him that the difficult task of modernizing that part of the world required a combination of skills and the experience derived from previous endeavors of a similar kind. They spoke of the urgency of acquiring more *Lebensraum.* 'We have to think ahead, Captain, to the time when trade would be good.' They jolted him with the dazzling prospect of expanding Malagueta from the Guinea coast right to the very reaches the desert; the merchants of Liverpool, the stockbrokers in London, and even the church would each contribute. (Cheney-Coker 297)

Here, in Cheney-Coker's historical fiction, the grand vision of building and expanding Sierra Leone, or "difficult task of modernizing that part of the world" is attributed to the MacCarthy-like figure Hammerstone. The point is made that the colonialists have dreams and visions for Malaguetta (Sierra Leone) that are bigger and grander than Malaguetta itself. This grand vision involves all of West Africa, and eventually, the African continent as a whole.

Perhaps the culminating moment within *The Last Harmattan* comes in Book IV when we see and elderly Jeanette Cromantine, who was among the first wave of Black Poor settlers in 1787, surveying Malagueta almost eighty years later in the final years of her life. Cheney-Coker writes that:

> The town had grown beyond her recognition since the time of the last war. On the site of the first settlement that they had built almost eighty years ago, she saw the fort built as a new home for the governor, next to the splendid courthouse where they administered the laws of their Queen. The streets had been widened to make room for the coaches of the new merchant class; the harbour was crowded with the ships of the trading nations with which Malagueta was doing business. But it was the new administrative building of the colonial regime that held her spellbound: huge imposing, and occupying much of the land where some of the finest battles took place. (Cheney-Coker 338)

The symbolism here is unmistakable—the site of the first settlement in 1787 has now been trumped by the home of the governor, as well as a colonial courthouse. It has become the seat of colonial power and colonial law. The dictates of the merchant class now govern the town since colonial trade is now king and the colonial administrative building has the aura of an imposing monster that is designed to captivate and awe.

* * *

Out of all of the characters of the text, Alphonso Garrison, represents the creation and rise of an aristocratic elite in Malagueta. One of the richest men in town, he arrived in Malaguetta from the Island of Cape Verde (off the coast of Sierra Leone) with his wife Olivia, and his two daughters Arabella and Matilda. He owned a brewery in Malagueta where rum was distilled, and "was able to predict the best time to invest in a printing machine;" and as "the proprietor of the only newspaper in town, he printed all the news and gossip worth reading and thus made a fortune" (Cheney-Coker 264). It is no coincidence that Cheney-Coker links the elitist Alphonso Garrison with the *Malaguetan Star,* the first newspaper of Malaguetta, which is a mirror of the *Sierra Leone Gazette* that was started by the Sierra Leone Company. The original incarnation of the Sierra Leone Gazette faded away in 1810, however, Governor MacCarthy resurrected the newspaper in 1817 as the Sierra Leone Royal Gazette. Fyfe writes that:

> The Gazette was filled with reports of dinners, balls, and fetes champetres, given by the leaders of Freetown society, 'the fashionables' as they were styled. The social season culminated in Fair and Race Week about Christmas. Tents were pitched in Water Street for the fair, horse-races were organized by the Sierra Leone Turf Club. (Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone* 145)

Again, it is this history that Cheney-Coker draws from when he constructs his historical narrative within *The Last Harmattan.* He writes that "a new class was beginning to influence the social life of Malagueta...some of the wealthy citizens came out onto the street to shake the hands of the soldiers as if they were freeing them from a long occupation" (Cheney-Coker 263). I think that Simon Gikandi's

offers us a method of analyzing the manner in which Cheney-Coker draws from historical realities to create historical fiction. Gikandi adapts the idea of Gerog Lukacs for the African novel, when he remarks that, "If the historical novelist can succeed in creating characters and destinies in which the important socio-human context, problems, movements of an epoch, appear directly, then he can present history from below, from the standpoint of popular life" (Gikandi, *Reading The African Novel* 30).

At the conclusion of the war, which saw Captain Hammerstone come to power once again, Alphonso Garrison was made "mayor of Malagueta with the responsibility for civic and social order." Cheney-Coker writes that he "put on his ceremonial robe of ermine, scarlet hat and white gloves and the heavy chain with the pendant of the Queen dangling from his neck," with an air that made it obvious he had been preparing for this moment for a long time (Cheney-Coker 322). He came to view those who rebelled against the colonial government as a "harum-scarum of barbarians who did not know what was good for them." The line of thinking continues, "How could they have revolted against people who only wanted to do the right things for them, feed them, clothe them, and insure that they did not die from excessive drinking, harlotry, and witchcraft to which they were so prone?" (Cheney-Coker 322). In many ways, Garrison has not so much been co-opted by the colonial government, but instead, the reality is that he has much to gain in terms of the power aspect and the financial aspect of colonialism and the colonial state. However, there is also the matter of Garrison as one who is seemingly desirous to cast off any traces of what is deemed

"unfavorably African, and therefore, uncivilized" by the British, in favor of that which is "British and supposedly civilized."

Cheney-Coker also makes a point to direct our attention to the desire for the generativity of this new aristocratic line in Malagueta on both the part of the aristocrats themselves and the colonial administration:

> The children of the noveau riche mixed with the few sons of the colonial administration in the grammar schools. Their expensive jackets and ties marked them as a special breed; they stood out like precious bulls: proud, stubborn and opinionated. They had a brazenness and arrogance which came from a claim to the world that was the preserve of those who wielded power and meted out justice. (Cheney-Coker 325)

It is there with this new aristocratic class that power would be centralized among the black colonial population, and through whom the colonial administration would wield its power. The reality of Sulaiman the Nubian's prophecy rings true here, that black people from the sea "would live under the impression of being in control of their own destinies" (Cheney-Coker 19). In fact, Cheney-Coker explores the creation of this elite further when he writes that, "They were so fascinated with the prospect of being accepted into the houses of the English that they went to the Notary Public and changed their names from 'African' to 'Christian' ones so that the pronunciation would not break the jaws of the English when they met at parties." In many ways, these nominal changes represent symbolic baptisms from so-called "uncivilized" to "civilized" in the construction of fictional Malagueta and the historical realities Sierra Leone.

Cheney-Coker also points to the colonial expansion into the hinterland or interior that lay outside of the Freetown settlement and what are presently the

provinces of Sierra Leone, separate from the seat of power in the Freetown Western Area. It points to a rift between the settler population, favored by the British, that would come to be called Krio, and the indigenous population (*See Sierra Leone Ethnic Map in Figure 1, page 1*). He writes that:

> Gradually, Malagueta began to attract a new breed of settlers. They came from the surrounding towns: colorful men with bright glassy bead necklaces, gaps in their teeth and women distinguished by a terracotta beauty. With large bundles on their heads, they settled into the outskirts of Malagueta, went to work as houseboys, labourers and dock workers and allowed themselves to be conscripted into the new army that the administration was assembling to serve the Queen. One such conscript was Sheku Masimiara, whose grandson was to stage a coup against a corrupt president seventy-five years later. (Cheney-Coker 326).

It is here that we see another grave class distinction, which begins to emerge, alongside the one that exists between the common black settlers and aristocratic settlers. Cheney-Coker specifically refers to this native group of settlers as "a new breed" and points to their "colorful men," "glassy beads necklaces," and "women distinguished by terracotta beauty." They stand in stark contrast to the black Krio who seemingly strived for what we might call Englishness. It is also no coincidence that the grandfather of General Masimiara, the coup leader that we meet in the epilogue and prologue, is the native figure clearly existing outside the perimeter of colonial social power, mentioned here.

This class distinction became even more amplified as the British Parliament declared an Order-in-Council on 28 August 1895 that pronounced the British Crown and colonial authorities had jurisdiction in the foreign countries adjoining the Sierra Leone Colony. Almost a year after that, on 31 August 1896, the British government formally declared that land surrounding the Colony—in

what are now the provinces outside of the Freetwon Western Area— an official Protectorate of the Crown. The argument given was that this assimilation was the "best for the interests of the people over the territories lying on the British side of the French and Liberian frontiers"[10] (Fyfe 541). As a result, this set up a distinction between the colony of Sierra Leone and the protectorate of Sierra Leone.

* * *

I think that it is important, in my final few words about *The Last Harmattan,* to speak about the manner in which Cheney-Coker re-constructs history for the ends of creating a historical narrative fiction about Sierra Leone. My decision to utilize Cheney-Coker's novel in order to conclude this project, that deals with the history of Sierra Leone, is born out of a belief that the study of literature, history, and the study of the archive have as much to do with our own present era and postcolonial world, as it does with the periods of the past from whence this history we are constructing came. The process of constructing a historical narrative of a past colonial era is the process of moving forward and projecting a vision of empowerment that will guide us into the future. It is the process of picking up the fragments and pieces of a dis-jointed world that has been marked by the pain and shock of a history that has been imposed, and creating a new world of hope that coincides with this new vision of history.

[10] Fyfe, Christopher. *A History of Sierra Leone,* 541. Fyfe gives a detailed history of the events surrounding the declaration of the Sierra Leone Protectorate.

Postscript:

Toward an Archive of the Past, Present, and Future

Sitting down to formulate the concluding thoughts for this archival venture that began in 2001, and has taken me to archival holdings in Sierra Leone, England, and the United States, I am reminded of the tenets that have guided me over the course of this project's evolution. Throughout the six years of traveling, research, and pouring over the various archival documents—treaties, reports, treatises, etc—I have had much time and space to deliberate what it means to be strongly committed to the concept of a radical and fluid definition of the archive and archival study.

The notion of the archive as a fluid entity that is continually changing, evolving, and building with each generation's mode of perception, conception, and construction is one that has inspired me to make my own generational contribution as I have progressed through this project over the years. This certainly does not imply that the archival conception of those prior generations—like the generation contribution of Christopher Fyfe who played a large part in establishing the Sierra Leone National Archives in the 1960's—are to be discarded or deemed expendable; quite the contrary, in fact. They are to be studied, valued, and built upon by later generations, like my own, that draw inspiration from them. After all, it is quite clear that, although they are written within the historical genre, the works of *Sierra Leone Inheritance* and *A History of Sierra Leone,* by Christopher Fyfe of my parents' generation, which inspired *The Krio of Sierra Leone* and *A New History of Sierra Leone*, respectively penned

by Wyse and Alie of the later generation, have all made their own contribution to the my own literary scholarship and conception of the African-British Eighteenth Century.

This project brings to light African-British treaties and Sierra Leone Company documents that have never been explored in this sort of critical manner before, in addition to making links to the emerging colonial project and eighteenth-century anthropological science. However, it also should be clear that while this archival project is about the African-British Eighteenth Century and the emergence of colonialism in Sierra Leone, the archival dimension holds a larger scope and greater implications. The archival dimensions of this project carry the important implications that are inherent in being able to know oneself and having the ability to knowledgably construct the history and identity of a people in an increasing age of global citizenship. By knowing ourselves and understanding that we have the power to knowledgably and responsibly construct histories of our past, we as human beings, are strengthened and empowered with a greater understanding that we can knowledgably and responsibly construct our presents" and our "futures" in this age of increasing globalization.

This notion of empowerment to knowledgably construct histories of our ancestral pasts, which thereby, contributes to empowerment that allows a people to build solid "presents" and "futures" upon solid knowledgeable foundations, is the primary reason that I have chosen to conclude this archival project with the contemporary African novel *The Last Harmattan of Alusine Dunbar* by Syl-Cheney Coker. Through his creation of a historical fiction that details the history

of Sierra Leone from settling of the Sierra Leone "Colony of Freedom" in 1787 to the African decade of independence in the 1960's, Cheney-Coker constructs a historical portrait in which we come to understand the implications that an eighteenth-century Sierra Leone colonial settlement has for the unfolding history of what will become the newly independent nation of Sierra Leone of the twentieth century.[1]

Cheney-Coker, through his novel, transcends the role of writer, and becomes a teacher, a historian, an archivist, an most importantly, one who gives his readers the tools to construct a knowledgeable understanding of the colonial project in Sierra Leone, and throughout Africa as a whole; as well as the implications that this colonial past have for the postcolonial present and future. In many ways, Cheney-Coker's task that he accomplishes through *The Last Harmattan of Alusine Dunbar,* is very similar to my own task and aims that I establish when I began this archival project. "The duty of the writer is to explore, to show its [or the events of historical consciousness] in a continuous fashion to the immediate present," and the task is to do this with "a full projection forward into the future" (Glissant 63-64). In the end, the archive is a powerful tool, and the job of the archivist, the writer, the historian, and literary scholar, who commits to working with the archive, is to empower generations so that they may knowledgably go forward to construct sound, stable, and knowledgeable "presents" and "futures."

[1] One should recall that the name Sierra Leone, in *The Last Harmattan of Alusine Dunbar,* is substituted with the Malguetta, which is a fire-like pepper indigenous to the Sierra Leone region.

APPENDIX OF TREATIES

Sierra Leone Treaty of 1788

Know all men by these present that I King Naimbanner chief of Sierra Leone on the Grain Coast of Africa by and with the consent of the other Kings, Princes, Chiefs, and Potentates subscribing hereto. In consideration of the present as by a list annexed now made me by Captain John Taylor of His Britannic Majesty in behalf of and for the sole benefit of the free community of Settlers, their Heirs and Successors lately arrived from England and under the protection of the British Government have granted and by these present do grant and forever quit claim to a certain district of land for the settling of the said free community to be their's, their heirs and successors forever. That's to say all the land, wood, water, etc, which are contained from the Bay Common called Frenchman's Bay, but by these presents changes to St. George's Bay coastwise up the river Sierra Leone to Gambia Island and Southerly or inland from the river side twenty miles. And forth be it know unto all men that I King Naimbanner do faithfully promise and swear for my Chief Gentlemen, and People likewise, Heirs and Successors, that I will bear true allegiance to His most Gracious Majesty George the third, King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, &c &c &c...That the customs payable by vessels anchoring in St. George's Bay shall pay Ten Bars to the Free Settlers and Subjects of his Britanniac Majesty. And the Customs paid for watering to be paid to King Naimbanner his representatives or successors. That is to say Fifteen Bars as customary.

Signed John Taylor
Richard Weaver
Thomas Peall
Benjamin Ellet

King Naimbanner
James Dowder

Pa Bongee
Bick Robbin
Abram Elliot Griffin

A List of the Presents given in consideration for Completing the Purchase of Land, &c, hereunder annexed, viz:--

One embroidered bersode coat, waistcoast, and breeches.
A crimson satin embroidered waistcoast.
A lead coloured satin coat, waistcoat, and breechers.
A mock diamond ring.
Two pairs of pistols.
One telescope. Two pairs of gold earrings with necklaces and drops.
Eight doze[n??] bottles of wine.
One puncheon of rum.
A tierce or three hundredweight of pork.

One box of smoking pipes.
Seven muskets. Twenty points of tobacco.
One piece of fine white cotton or calico.
Ten pounds of beads in lots.
Two cheeses weighing twenty-eight pounds.
Two hundred gun flints.
One dozen bottles of red port wine.

This is to certify to all to whom these presents may come, that we whose names are hereunto subscribed maketh oath that the purchase of the land, &c, made by Captain Thompson was not (to out certain knowledge) valid; it having been purchased from people who had no authority to sell the same.

Sierra Leone Treaty of 1807 (July 10)

Treaty of capitulation between the Governor of Sierra Leone and King Firama and King Tom

(Courtesy of British National Archives, Kew Gardens, England)

Treaty of peace and alliance between the Governor of the Colony of Sierra Leone, for the Sierra Leone Company, on the one part, and King Firama and King Tom, with their Princes and Headmen, on the other part.

1. It is agreed that there shall henceforth be peace and friendship between the British Colony of Sierra Leone and King Firama and King Tom, and all the Princes, Headmen, and people subject.
2. King Firama and King Tom, with the consent of all the Headmen at this time assembled, do hereby surrender to His Majesty the King of Great Britain, for the use and benefit of the Sierra Leone Company, all the right, power, and possession of every sort and kind in the peninsula of Sierra Leone and its dependencies which they or either of them formerly had to the westward of the Colony of Sierra Leone or any part thereof.
3. It is, nevertheless, agreed that the claim of the proprietors of Bance Island to the possession of Cape Sierra Leone and the adjacent land, shall not be altered or affected by this Treaty; neither shall the claims of any other person or persons to the same or any part thereof be affected or altered by it; but all such claims shall remain the same as if this Treaty never had been made.
4. No native town shall be built nearer to the Colony than Robiss, except Robiss, Salt Town, and Ro-Cupra; the land between Robiss and Ro-Cupra shall be left to the people of those places for their luggars; and in consideration of the permission thus given to rebuild Ro-Cupra, the Governor of Sierra Leone shall have the right to make what use he thinks proper of Sig. Domingo's point and the land adjacent thereto, he engaging to make a reasonable compensation to Sig. Domingo for the same.

5. The customary payment of one hundred bars to King Firama, as agreed upon between him and the Governor of Sierra Leone on the 7th March 1794, shall continue to be paid to him.
6. The Governor of Sierra Leone engages that the usual customs for watering in St. George's Bay shall be collected regularly and paid to King Firama and his successors, or to such person as he or they may appoint to receive the same.
7. And to prevent disputes it is hereby acknowledged that the duties payable for water are fifteen bars (each bar being of the full value of three shillings and four pence sterling, if paid in goods or specie) for every trading vessel that takes water, whether it takes little or much except crafts belonging to traders residing on the Coast of Africa, and vessels of any description belonging to the Sierra Leone Company, or to the colonists of Sierra Leone, or to the proprietor of Bance Island. And further, that no vessel ought to pay for water more than once in one voyage, unless that voyage continue more than a twelvemonth.
8. If any dispute shall arise concerning the boundary between the Colony and Robiss and Ro-Cupra, the Governor of Sierra Leone and the Headmen of Robiss and Ro-Cupra shall meet and settle it in a friendly way.

Done at Robiss this tenth day of July, in the forty-seventh year of the reign of our sovereign Lord George the Third, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland King, and in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and seven.

A. Smith

Alexr McCaulay

King Firama
(X mark)

King Tom
(X mark)

King Banna Firama
(X mark)

London

In presence of—
William McCaulay
John Thorpe
John McCaulay Wilson
David Edmund, junr
George S. Caulker
Charles Shaw

Sierra Leone Treaty of 1819

Agreement for Mar Porto & Ro Bompe–renamed called Waterloo & Hastings, Sierra Leone

Convention between His Excellency Lieut. Colonel Charles MacCarthy, Captain General and Governor Chief in and over the Colony of Sierra Leone and its Dependencies Vice Admiral of the same &c. &c. and Commander in Chief of His Majesty's Forces on the West Coast of Africa on the part of His Majesty the King of Great Britain and Ireland, and Pa Loudon commonly known by the name and style of Ka Conko, and his Chieftains, Headmen &c. &c. &c.

His Excellency the Captain General and Governor in Chief being anxious to maintain the happy union and harmony which have for several years past subsisted between the Colony of Sierra Leone and the Timmanies, wishing to strengthen and renew the former Treaties made by his Predecessors with the King and Chieftains, to prevent all misunderstanding which might arise from misconception as to the proper limits and boundaries of the Colony, the rights and titles of British subjects under the Authority of the Governor and Council hereafter to former Establishments on such parts of the left bank of the Bunch River as are at present unoccupied by British Subjects, and Pa Loudon commonly called Ka Conko and his Chieftains, Headmen and Gentlemen, being animated with the same sentiment, have for the benefit of all parties concerned agreed as follows

The said Pa Loudon Commonly called Ka Conko his Chieftains, Headmen and Gentlemen have for themselves and their Successors, ceded, transferred, and given to his said Excellency Governor McCarthy as Governor for the time being, for the use and on the behalf of His Majesty, the King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and his successors, the full, entire, free, and unlimited possession and Sovereignty of the Territory and lands commonly known under the name Mar Porto and Ro Bompe situated on the Banks of the Bunch River and extends from, to, with all right and title to the Navigation of the same River; water on the Riverlet situated on the left side of the aforesaid.

The extent and limits of the aforementioned Lands of Mar Porto and Ro Bumpe shall be duly established in the presence and with the consent of Pa Loudon commonly called Ka Conko or a Person or Persons duly authorized by him to that affect and no alterations in said limits shall hereafter under any pretence or plea be permitted under the authority or Sanction of His said Excellency the Governor or his Successor without the concurrences of the said Pa Loudon or his Successor, if being fully understood that within the extent of those limits only British subjects shall have right to occupy lands in the district.

In consideration of which transfer of Land, His said Excellency the Captain General and Governor in Chief for himself and Successors as the Governor of Sierra Leone for the time being, on the part and on the behalf of His Britannic

Majesty engages, promises and agrees to pay yearly and every year to the said Pa Loudon commonly called Ka Conko, or to such person as may succeed him or be appointed or authorized to receive the same, the Sum of Fifty Bars in lieu of all other claims or demands of whatever nature or description/the yearly Rent of a hundred Bars to Kin Farima excepted which shall continue as here-to-for/And His Excellency solemnly promises for himself and his successors for the time being on the part of His Britannic Majesty, not to disturb or molest any of the native Inhabitants who may now occupy any Town, House or Falt, whither the extent of the limits of the place aforementioned.

It is further agreed by the contracting parties that the Year Rent of Fifty Bars shall become due and payable on the fourth day of June in each year, the same to commence from the fourth of June next and payable on the same day of the year One-Thousand Eight hundred and Twenty, and to consist of the following articles which are to be taken at rate here agreed upon, and not liable to any alteration.

Lastly in fault of due on regular payment of the yearly Rent above agreed upon, the present Treaty shall be considered as null and void.

In Witness whereof the said Contracting parties at Freetown in the Colony of Sierra Leone on the Twenty-Fifth day of May One-thousand eight hundred and nineteen, have hereunto set their hand and seals in presence of the subscribing Witnesses.

/Lt/ C. MacCarthy
"Pa Loudon + Konko"
"Pa Naingbanna"
"Moimadoo Bandio"
"Pa Kattena"

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