Migrant emotivations: Reconceptualising migrant motivations as emotional drivers

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They didn't go because they wanted to be rid of their wives and children. They didn't go because they wanted an easy life. They didn't go for a spree. They went because their souls cried out for better opportunities and better breaks. And just like them, I'm going for the same thing.

Karl Sealey, *My Fathers Before Me*

In the 1880s, British-German geographer E. G. Ravenstein formulated his so-called "laws" of migration – the first attempt to schematise the dynamics of voluntary human mobility. Training his analytic unit almost exclusively upon the migration of labour, Ravenstein highlighted 'the desire inherent in most men to "better" themselves in material respects'.[1] Compare this with the epigraph above, taken from a short story written by a Caribbean author resident in 1950s Britain, and one finds very little dissonance in their evaluative frames. During the opening salvo of migration studies, then, Ravenstein was on the cusp of a powerful postulation which might have utterly reshaped the field's evolution. Migrant motives (even those driving "economic migration", the taxonomic label pasted on to postwar Caribbean movements) reside within the domain of felt experience. The binary between logic and emotion, thought and feeling, casts a veil of cold and rational economic calculation over migrant motivational patterns, and it is a veil which few researchers in the intervening 150 years have seemed willing to penetrate. This has masked the emotional dynamics which work in tandem with such material concerns to produce human movement.[2]

This interplay between context and feeling is the fundamental premise which animates the following paper, in which I reconceptualise migrant motivations as essentially emotional states through an historical case study of the Caribbean migration flow to postwar Britain. The interplay between a decision – a *desire* – to migrate and felt experience is so mutually constitutive that it becomes analytically rudderless to isolate them. Migrant motives are emotional, indeed *are* emotions. As should be obvious, motion is inherent to the act of

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[1] Ernst Georg Ravenstein, 'The Laws of Migration', *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society* 52, no. 2 (1889): 286.

[2] We have begun to see in recent years, however, something of a rapprochement between migration studies and affect studies. A 2015 special issue of *Emotion, Space and Society* was devoted to precisely this, hoping to partially fill the scholarly lacuna pertaining to 'the emotional side of the migrant condition' which is 'relatively understudied'. See Loretta Baldassar and Paolo Boccagni, eds., 'Moving Feelings: Emotions and the Process of Migration', special issue, Emotion, Space and Society 16 (2015). Quote from Paolo Boccagni and Loretta Baldassar, 'Emotions on the Move: Mapping the Emergent Field of Emotion and Migration', *Emotion, Space and Society* 16 (2015): 1.

migration, just as a measure of motivational substance is inherent to voluntary human mobility. Emotion, meanwhile – what I suggest *is* that motivational substance – is e-motion: a movement, an outward projection. Migration, motivation, and emotion are intricately, rhizomatically linked, and in order to highlight this I employ a linguistic bridge between them: we do not have migrant motivations, we have migrant *emotivations.* This portmanteau term helps retain a measure of sensitivity to these linkages, and by extension keeps the main propositional thrust of this paper close to hand.

Experiences of emotion cannot, of course, be dissociated from their contexts of production, and so the following bears heavily upon the historical conditions at play within the Caribbean – the region within which these emotions were felt, practised, and expressed. In itself, asking why these migrants came to Britain – inquiring into the emotional experiences which drove them across the Atlantic – is one of the most profound historical questions we can ask of this movement, yet we can also stake out a claim for these emotions as possessing a significance which lay beyond the impetus to migrate. Emotivational patterns came to condition conceptions, perceptions, and receptions of Britain, and of their migratory experiences more generally. In other words, the emotivations that migrants alighted with helped to shape future evaluation of experience, and therefore played a critical role in subsequent emotional output. Even before their arrival in Britain this held true: each migrant's personal emotivations influenced how the affective experiences and evaluations of their departure and journey, undermining any attempt to historically reconstruct these formative moments without reference to the feelings which drove them to migrate. Richly affective content in themselves, emotivations stem from *past* contextual experience and play a role in determining *future* emotional experience, as well as the evaluation of it.

1.1: Feeling Britain

The obvious first move here concerns Caribbean self-definitions of Britain as the "mother country". That "Britishness" was a defining trait of these migrants' identities has become somewhat an historical cliché, but it should not detract from its broad truth value. Pre-independence, Caribbean societies and their collective identities were awash with British representational forms and cultural symbolism. Aside from its regular features on

British history, Barbados' largest newspaper referred to the island as "Little England" and liberally splashed the "Mother Country" moniker throughout its column inches;[3] Jamaica's *Gleaner,* meanwhile, often ran successful donation appeals to finance the local celebrations held on royal occasions.[4] These occasions – funerals, coronations, and royal visits – were a central feature of Caribbean social and cultural life: Residents festooned homes and local businesses with bunting;[5] processions thousands-strong formed in local communities upon the death of a monarch;[6] and local businesses – doubtless with a finger on the pulse of what would sell – marketed special products such as 'Coronation Pop … the drink of all Loyal Subjects'.[7] This was not merely the trite gloss of mass media or commodity-peddlers. Guyanese Elma Seymour remembered that in preparation for The Prince of Wales' visit to Georgetown, Guyana in 1902 her mother 'sat up for nights' making dresses the colour of the Union Jack,[8] whilst much of Jamaican James Berry's literary output can be read as a poignant attempt to articulate how the "Britishness" of these Caribbean cultural spaces calibrated historical subjectivities, reference points, and felt experiences.[9]

These themes possess the capaciousness of monographs, and indeed exist as such.[10] But rather than retreat into historiographical roads well-travelled regarding the emergence of Caribbean Britishness and its locations within colonial frameworks or cultural forms and practices, I wish to press forward. Doing so involves the presupposition that many contemporary Caribbeans identified as British and held positively-charged associations of Britain – its political and judicial structures, its literary history, the perceived principles

[3] *Barbados Advocate*, 24 August 1952; *Barbados Advocate*, 2 April 1950; *Barbados Advocate*, 13 July 1950.

[4] *Daily Gleaner*, 19 April 1902; *Daily Gleaner*, 10 May 1902; *Daily Gleaner*, 24 April 1953; *Daily Gleaner*, 14 May 1953; *Daily Gleaner*, 15 May 1953.

[5] *Daily Gleaner*, 2 February 1901. See also Anne Spry Rush, *Bonds of Empire: West Indians and Britishness from Victoria to Decolonization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 57, 65.

[6] *Daily Gleaner*, 2 February 1901; *Daily Gleaner*, 4 February 1901.

[7] *Daily Gleaner*, 15 April 1902; *Daily Gleaner*, 19 April 1902.

[8] Elma E. Seymour, *A Goodly Heritage: The Autobiography of Elma E. Seymour* (Georgetown: Guyana National Printers, 1987), 15–16.

[9] See, for example, James Berry, *Windrush Songs* (Hexham: Bloodaxe, 2007); James Berry, *Fractured Circles* (London: New Beacon Books, 1979).

[10] The touchstone here is Rush, *Bonds of Empire.* Brian Moore and Michele Johnson take a particularly notable evaluative stance, highlighting 'the efforts of the Jamaican social elites and their British imperial masters to impose a new sociocultural religious and moral order, based on British imperial ideologies and middle-class Victorian ideas, ideals, values and precepts, on the Jamaican people'. See Brian L. Moore and Michele A. Johnson, *Neither Led nor Driven: Contesting British Cultural Imperialism in Jamaica, 1865-1920* (Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 2004), xiii.

embedded within its national identity – and that this was produced and replicated through the region’s cultural landscapes and societal configurations. Many of these are necessarily fleshed out as the narrative progresses, but by using the above as a ‘simple predicate for any historical investigation’ rather than a conclusion to be proved *in extenso,* we are able to ask productive questions about how these collective identities operated upon historical subjectivities, and what this meant for affective migratory motivations.[11]

The key takeaway here is that whatever their contextual processes of production, these identities existed within the orbit of felt experience. Through an engagement with and an internalisation of their civic status along with certain, perceived British values, histories, cultural forms, social structures, and notions of class, these identities begat a certain position, a certain referential frame from which Caribbeans could interpret the world and their place within it. As the perceived relation between subject and group, always contingent on historical context, these identities were, as Stuart Hall would say, positionings.[12] Moreover, they were identities first and foremost *felt and experienced.* Suspend an important discussion of how such identities are transmitted through the vehicle of the familial unit, and it becomes hard to deny in Connie Mark’s account how their ultimate location lay on this plane of felt experience: ‘We were British! England was our mother country. We were brought up to respect the royal family … We grew up as British’.[13] Likewise in the memories of Randolph Beresford, from British Guiana: ‘We were told—we understood—we were part of Britain, we were British. We weren’t anything else. We were British’.[14] No doubt Frantz Fanon would say that such affectively-located identities mask a more fundamental kernel, that they are psychoanalytical sublimations of a deeper and more

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[11] The quotation, formulated around a different issue of historical practice and interpretation, is taken from Walter Johnson, ‘On Agency’, *Journal of Social History* 37, no. 1 (2003): 114.

[12] Much of Stuart Hall’s theoretical work on identity can be read as an attempt to disentangle any residue of essentialism from its conceptualisation, and inject a measure of historicism and dynamism into its operation. For Hall, a historical subject is placed or positioned through identity, so that identity *itself* becomes a positioning in wider historical context and its modes of discourse. Paul Gilroy would later build on this mutable and historical foundation in his call for black identity to focus not on essentialised “roots”, but on the changing “routes” through which blackness is constituted over time. See Stuart Hall, ‘Cultural Identity and Diaspora’, in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990), 225-7; Gilroy, *Black Atlantic*, 12, 133.

[13] ‘Connie Mark: Community Activist and Caribbean Champion’, *Guardian*, 15 June 2007.

[14] Randolph Beresford, interview, 12 April 1988, tape 40, Oral History Collection, H & F.

primaeval desire for the whiteness associated with such identities.[15] But of equal value is to take these actors at their word when they say they had 'grown up British in every way'[16] and therefore 'felt … a part of Britain'.[17] There was a critical domain of collective feeling in the Caribbean – before the representational tumult of independence – whereby individuals *felt* their state of *being* British. The ways in which they felt this defined how they understood their relationship to Britain and Empire, and partially how they understood themselves. By taking their expressions *as* expressions and not as overwrought psychological ciphers, we can use them to pose questions and posit answers about migratory motives from the standpoint of affective experience.

1.1.1: Belonging

We can go further than this, and the testimony of Jamaican poet James Berry allows us to do this. By saying that 'the idea of being British made us special; we were not African, not American, we were British', he cast a bright spotlight upon the ramifications of felt notions of identity.[18] Not only are identities produced and performed on the level of felt experience, but the summary output of such phenomena are affective states. Identities, in other words, produce emotion – feelings of belonging. Practices, cultural symbols, historical consciousnesses, and interactions with material worlds are all essential to this dynamic, and when one's cultural capital or historical consciousness is displaced through colonialist machinations, it produces a strange sundering or pluralisation of feelings of belonging. A Trinidadian, say, may have spent the majority of his life in Arima, his lifeworld geographically dominated by bamboo groves and the rugged peaks of the Northern Range, socially rooted in the networks of support and commerce around him, but feel a coexistent sense of belonging to Britain, the "Mother Country". Indeed, this was the experience of calypsonian Aldwyn Roberts, better known as Lord Kitchener. After travelling to Jamaica to work for two

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[15] Under the burden of evidence, one could point to the pigmentocratic structure of Caribbean societies, which culturally and socio-economically privileged lighter skin tones.

[16] E. R. Braithwaite, *To Sir, With Love* (London: Bodley Head, 1959), 40.

[17] William Naltey quoted in Mike Phillips and Trevor Phillips, *Windrush: The Irresistible Rise of Multi-Racial Britain* (London: HarperCollins, 1998), 14. Indeed, Kennetta Perry has argued that for these Caribbean persons the state of "being British" did not contain overtly racialised notions, a mirror of their conception of Empire and Commonwealth as a multi-racial "family of nations". See Kennetta H. Perry, *London Is the Place for Me: Black Britons, Citizenship and the Politics of Race* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

[18] Colin Grant, *Homecoming: Voices of the Windrush Generation* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2019), 31.

months, “Kitch” reported that he ‘started getting a kind of homesick’.[19] Curiously, this was not a permutation of homesickness familiar to those in postmodern Western societies, nor the epidemiological form of homesickness which prevailed in the United States during the nineteenth century.[20] Even to Roberts’ emotional register, the feeling was peculiar: ‘it was very funny, that it was a homesick, but not homesick for Trinidad’.[21] Shortly afterwards, he would migrate to England and pen that preeminent paean of belonging for the “Windrush generation”: “London Is The Place For Me”.[22]

Such is the motivational power of this rupture, this pluralisation of belonging – one which could only have been produced within this specific context, in this specific time and within this specific place, through its variant social, cultural, and political components. For many, migration to Britain was not a journey to a foreign locale but a kind of repatriation: Jamaica’s *Gleaner* noted of the migrants in 1962 that, along with their adoration of the royal family, they were raised ‘to think of England as the “Mother Country”’, accustomed to singing “God Save The Queen” ‘as fervently as any member of the League of Empire Loyalists’, and spoke of journeying to Britain as ‘“going *home*”’.[23] This notion of return to places never visited, of the frictional energy generated from these migrants’ tensions of belonging, was given poignant expression by St. Lucia’s titanic figure of poetry, Derek Walcott, when he ruminated: ‘but never guessed you’d come / to know there are homecomings without home’.[24]

Nevertheless, pluralised feelings of belonging did not trigger the journey *per se* – they merely motivated the choice of destination.[25] As a social phenomenon in the Caribbean,

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[19] Aldwyn Roberts quoted in Phillips and Phillips, *Windrush*, 65.

[20] Susan J. Matt, *Homesickness: An American History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[21] Aldwyn Roberts quoted in Phillips and Phillips, *Windrush*, 65.

[22] Lord Kitchener, ‘London is the Place for Me’, track 2 on *Festival of Britain / London Is the Place for Me*, Melodisc, 1951, 10" record.

[23] *Daily Gleaner*, 21 October 1962. Emphasis mine.

[24] Derek Walcott, *The Gulf and Other Poems* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1969).

[25] By helping to determine the choice of destination, these feelings of belonging are strikingly befitting of Ronald de Sousa’s argument that emotions are evolutionary solutions to problem-solving. We can choose to discard the overtly Darwinian approach implicit here, and even so are left with a sophisticated account of the relationship between reason and emotion and a compelling collapse of the reason-emotion dualism – approaches which fit well with this historical example, where feelings of belonging have shaped the choice of destination. De Sousa argues that emotions ‘determine the salience of things noticed and of live inferential options, and so control the parameters of rationality’. See Ronald de Sousa, *The Rationality of Emotion* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1987), 257.

migration was decidedly *on* in this period – just as it had been in earlier periods. We will explore these periods and their contextual drivers shortly. Irrespective of the "mother country", many instead made the journey to America – at least until the McCarran-Walter Act of 1952 effectively slammed the door to Caribbean migration.[26] But once migration presented itself as a viable practice in one's consciousness, for those who felt themselves British and who felt the affective pinch of belonging inherent to this identity, Britain was the unequivocal port of call.

1.1.2: Maternal metaphors and affective bonds

Splintered feelings of belonging may have shaped the end destination and not the mobilisation itself, but other currents within the mother country ideology did furnish powerful emotivational impetuses. Within the Caribbean, colonialist practices relied on the maintenance of *status quo* by attending to the felt experiences of subalterns; social, cultural, political, discursive, and material contexts were all carefully geared toward the production of feelings of belonging. One of the most important ways in which this worked – and as a result, reinforcing British domination as a coherent, legitimate model – was by employing familial imagery and symbolism.

This was not a novel development, and it is possible to track the way such cultural representations were mobilised and modified over time. For previous Caribbean generations, the reception and reputation of Queen Victoria rested on her presentation as a matriarch, head of a "family" of nations.[27] This was always more pronounced on regal occasions. During Victoria's diamond jubilee in 1897, Anglican and Baptist congregations in Jamaica or their Catholic counterparts in Trinidad listened to glowing screeds by the clergy

[26] See "David" quoted in Chamberlain, *Narratives of Exile*, 194. The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, better known as the McCarran-Walter Act, imposed a regime of immigration control for the United States based on national quotas, and by so doing limited the number of eligible migrants from the British Caribbean to just 100 per territory. Before this, an estimated 2,600 migrants were moving to the United States annually. See Letter from B. A. B. Burrows of the British Embassy in Washington, DC to the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, 18 February 1952, CO 936/189, The National Archives. For sociological treatment of Caribbean migration to the United States, see Ransford W. Palmer, 'In Search of a Better Life: Caribbean Migration to America', in *U.S.-Caribbean Relations: Their Impact on Peoples and Culture*, ed. Ransford W. Palmer (Westport: Praeger, 1998); Roy Simon Bryce-Laporte, 'New York City and the New Caribbean Immigration: A Contextual Statement', *International Migration Review* 13, no. 2 (1979): 214–34; Constance R. Sutton and Elsa M. Chaney, eds., *Caribbean Life in New York City: Sociocultural Dimensions* (New York: Center for Migration Studies of New York, 1987).

[27] Rush, *Bonds of Empire*, 53-56.

which folded Victoria's motherhood, womanhood, piousness, and sovereignty into one neat, morality-laden package.[28] Colonial officials and dignitaries from around the Empire offered up similar panegyrics, which Caribbean newspapers eagerly covered.[29] This fusion of the body politic and body natural bounced off of apposite representations of the kindred Empire, a global multi-ethnic family characterised by a fraternity and consanguinity bequeathed it by dint of a shared ancestry which found its ultimate location in Victoria.[30] This reached an almost histrionic apotheosis through the eulogies commemorating Victoria in the wake of her death in 1901. One poem submitted to a Trinidadian newspaper waxed lyrical over a 'feeling' that 'comes from birth to us / Of Reverence for a mother' – her 'children' left with 'grief heartfelt / and weeping / Bid thee a last farewell'.[31] As reported in the Caribbean, First Lord of the Treasury Arthur Balfour spoke of '"the person of the sovereign, who was a symbol of unity of the Empire"', while Lord Salisbury spoke of her reigning '"by her hold on the hearts of her subjects"' and emphasised her '"brilliant qualities as a wife, mother and woman"'.[32]

Bafflingly, what has been overlooked in imperial historiography is the central mechanic upon which the efficacy of these colonial optics relied: their inherent emotionality.[33] The emotional concepts and prescriptions embedded within contemporary notions of

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[28] *The Daily Gleaner* reported a speech made by Reverend Father Mulry in St. Catherine parish, Jamaica, for Victoria's diamond jubilee: '"she was a type of the noblest of women, as a maiden, pure and perfect in character, as a wife filling her station as only a true woman can, as a mother faithful to her trust and the discharge of her maternal duties … The Queen governed her subjects for their own welfare"'. See *Daily Gleaner*, 28 April 1897. Meanwhile, Father Sadoc Silvester at the Church of the Immaculate Conception in Trinidad said all were '"bound to be grateful to Almighty God that he had given them so model a Queen, Wife, and Mother"'. See *Port-of-Spain Gazette*, 22 June 1897.

[29] Reported in the *Gleaner*, C. B. Berry, a colonial official in Jamaica, stated in a council debate that '"Queen Victoria is a woman and that means a great deal to all who are not hardened sinners; Queen Victoria is a good woman … Queen Victoria is a mother … As a Queen, as a woman, as a wife and as a mother Queen Victoria is inferior to none'. See *Daily Gleaner*, 23 April 1897.

[30] 'Her sons to-day were found everywhere, occupying positions in the vanguard of civilisation and progress'. See *Port-of-Spain Gazette*, 22 June 1897.

[31] *Port-of-Spain Gazette*, 27 January 1901.

[32] *Daily Gleaner*, 1 February 1901.

[33] Anne Spry Rush has conducted pioneering work on the reception and reputation of Victoria in the Caribbean and the conflation of her image with mother- and womanhood. She follows, however, an analysis rooted in its gendered undercurrents, and not the intersection between gender and its embedded emotional qualities. See Rush, *Bonds of Empire*, 49-56, 67. This is different from, but not mutually exclusive with the representational operations of imperialists in British India which David Cannadine has dubbed "ornamentalism" and which relied on a certain projection of pomp and grandeur, with imperial officials functioning as "ceremonial impresarios". See David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); David Cannadine, Aspects of Aristocracy: Grandeur and Decline in Modern Britain (London: Penguin, 1995), 37.

motherhood and the family provided the lubricant for these gears to bite; by trussing up Victoria and the Commonwealth in maternal and familial garb they became, by association, representative of the archetypal emotions and dynamics tethered to them. Victoria was the benevolent, begetting, yet stern matron from afar, equally capable of compassion or correction, cod liver oil in one hand and the cane in the other. The imperial "family" were ancestrally bound to each other in loyalty, care, and mutual aid. The mutual prescriptivism inherent to such dynamics amplifies the political potency of such imagery: Just as a maternal and fraternal love is supposedly unconditional, so you are *expected* to love your mother and brothers. There is a hard kernel of obligation veiled behind such feelings and gestures which cannot be circumvented without a measure of emotional suffering. This instrumentalisation of affective entanglements for the purposes of social and political control represents an historical intersection between emotion, power, and regulation in an imperial context: Emopower becomes the counterpart to Foucauldian biopower.[34]

In the wake of the Queen's death her imperial motherhood was transferred, more or less wholesale, from Victoria the person onto Britain the nation.[35] The metropole became not simply the "mother country" – it was reified, personified, anthropomorphised into a literal mother, bringing with it all the emotional valences contained therein.[36] Prewar Caribbean children were, as one migrant said, 'brought up to regard and respect Britain as our '"Mother"'.[37] As Eric Wolf would say, a name was turned into a thing.[38] The ways in which these representational gymnastics shaped migrant motivations is contained within a

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[34] Biopower was a term which Michel Foucault employed to describe the growth of medical and statistical mechanisms deployed by the nation-state to control the bodies and populations of their residents. See Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the College De France, 1977-78*, ed. Michel Senellart, trans. Graham Burchell (London: Palgrave, 2007), 16-38.

[35] The personification of the nation state, its deployment within metaphor for mother or father, and the emotional content on which semantic connection rests, is a common political technique, from fascists to imperialists to nationalists. Moreover, it is largely a history which has yet to have been written. Aside from the obvious fascist examples of the 1930s, which formulated familial and gendered metaphors of nation along consanguineous fault lines for the purposes of exclusion, one immediately thinks of Jawaharlal Nehru's speech on the eve of Indian independence, imploring the nation to 'build the noble mansion of free India where all her children may dwell'. See Jawaharlal Nehru, 'Tryst with Destiny', 14 August 1947, accessed 19 May 2021, https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/1947nehru1.asp.

[36] "Mother country" was a term in use in the Caribbean since at least the nineteenth century. See *Barbados Advocate*, 20 June 1884. What I am tracking here is how this was transformed into a literal or metaphorical mother.

[37] Christopher Woodley quoted in Sav Kyriacou, ed., *The Motherland Calls: African-Caribbean Experiences*, 2nd ed. (London: The Ethnic Communities Oral History Project, 1992).

[38] Eric R. Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 6.

non-question: You would come to your mother's aid in her time of need, wouldn't you? For those whom the mother country ideology had moulded their feelings of being and belonging, coming to Britain meant fulfilling an almost familial obligation to aid the nation. In many ways this was an extension of an identical affective dynamic present during wartime, adapted now to serve Britain's new needs. By being 'made to understand that we were British',[39] many of the approximately 16,000 Caribbeans who served in the Second World War felt 'compelled … to defend Britain',[40] felt it 'only right that we came over and did our bit'.[41] Jamaican Connie Mark laid bare the power of these emotional prescriptions to produce feelings of obligation – tangible *motivations* – to migrate, admitting: 'when your mother has problems you've got to come and help. So we all felt obliged to come and everybody was very happy to come'.[42]

For some, these feelings were translated into the postwar context of reconstruction as Britain felt the birth pangs of a new era in the squeeze of an acute labour shortage.[43] Wilmoth George Brown, passenger on the *Windrush,* remembered that 'one of the reasons for coming was that those who did not serve in the war wanted to play their part in providing the labour which was needed for rebuilding'.[44] Writing in support of emigration from the Caribbean, the *Barbados Advocate* spoke of the fact that 'West Indians could be of help' to the 'Mother Country'.[45] Many of these early trailblazers, then, were captured by a feeling that they 'were doing a service',[46] and these feelings were stimulated by a commensurate discursive environment in the Caribbean. No doubt aware of the way these feelings of belonging could be instrumentalised, an assortment of organisations with vested interests in driving this migration flow manipulated the region's pre-existing cultural value system to create a symbolic landscape rich with the familial allegorisation of Empire and its

[39] William Naltey quoted in Phillips and Phillips, *Windrush*, 14.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Cecil Holness quoted in Vivienne Francis, *With Hope in Their Eyes: The Compelling Stories of the Windrush Generation* (London: Nia, 1998), 195.

[42] Connie Mark quoted in Kyriacou, *The Motherland Calls*, 3.

[43] A labour shortage amplified in these years by a growing flow of native Britons to the white Dominions – so much so that Churchill in 1947 decried the emigration trend and beseeched would-be emigrants to delay their journeys until such a time as Britain's labour woes had passed. See *Times*, 29 August 1947.

[44] W. George Brown, *Windrush to Lewisham: Memoirs of 'Uncle George'* (London: Mango Publishing, 1999), 15.

[45] *Barbados Advocate*, 13 July 1950.

[46] Sharon Frazer-Carroll quoted in Charlie Brinkhurst-Cuff, ed., *Mother Country: Real Stories of the Windrush Children* (London: Headline, 2018), 83.

requisite notions of service. Britain's public sector – British Railways, London Transport, and local hospital boards – were the main impresarios here.[47] It was perhaps one of these organisations that was responsible for the film vans Alfred Williams saw traipsing rural Jamaica, employing relatively new media technologies to implore people to 'Come to England. Come to Mother Country'.[48] 'There were adverts everywhere', one woman remembered, the key takeaway from them being that 'the mother country needs you!'.[49] This deafening injunctive climate, characterised by its skilful manipulation of the affective resonance inhering to the mother country ideology, was also recalled by Jamaicans Jimmy Ellis[50] and Charlie Phillips.[51] Moreover, it seems to have worked. In light of these campaigns, Phillips 'saw people selling their goats, pigs, cows, and their land' to drum up the capital needed for the voyage, interpreting it as 'sacrifice[s] we made as British citizens'.[52]

These migrants were not, however, single-minded misty-eyed philanthropists. Even those driven to Britain by the brightest flames of familial service and sacrifice did so under certain assumptions regarding their occupational aspirations and material welfare, formed against the foil of the contextual situations within Caribbean societies. One unnamed "West Indian" in the *Manchester Guardian* perfectly highlighted this parallelism when he stated that 'we are all one family. Britain is helping us by giving us work and we are doing jobs that help Britain's industries'.[53] Others driven by notions of service expressed apposite thoughts.[54] There was always an element of transactional thinking within these emotivations, so that they become not emotional practices based on a specious pure kernel of familial self-sacrifice, but practices undergone based on feelings, experience, and knowledge formed within the messy tumult of historical context. It is toward components of this context that we turn now.

[47] See, for example, *Daily Gleaner*, 2 March 1955.

[48] Alfred Williams and Ray Brown, *To Live It Is to Know It: From Jamaica to Yorkshire – the Life Story of Alfred Williams*, People's History of Yorkshire (Leeds: Yorkshire Art Circus, 1987), 66.

[49] Anonymous interviewee quoted in Elyse Dodgson, *Motherland: West Indian Women to Britain in the 1950s* (London: Heinemann, 1984).

[50] Jimmy Ellis quoted in David Matthews, *Voices of the Windrush Generation: The Real Story Told by the People Themselves* (London: Blink Publishing, 2018).

[51] Charlie Phillips quoted in Matthews, *Voices*, 49-50.

[52] Ibid., 50.

[53] *Manchester Guardian*, 31 January 1955.

[54] Brown, *Windrush to Lewisham*, 15.

1.2: The British Caribbean and its discontents

There is a scene in George Lamming's novel *The Emigrants* in which migrants, on board a vessel journeying to England, are discussing their motivations for emigrating. In the din of conversation, all participants pause to reflect on one Trinidadian's assertion: '"Trinidad ain't no place for a man to live; an' that's why you see I clearin' out"'. Once all are finished speaking, the narrator adds that 'whatever the difference in their past experience they seemed to agree on one thing. They were taking flight from something they no longer wanted. It was their last chance to recover what might have been wasted'.[55] Thus, those who did not share feelings of zeal or the affective compulsion to serve the "mother country" nevertheless possessed other emotivations, ones which cleaved far closer to migratory engines, not rudders. Of this migration flow, what little emotional representation that exists has, slipshod and *en passant*, depicted it as a movement of hope.[56] Migrants came "with hope in their eyes" searching for a better future, a better break. We will soon see that there is a measure of substance to such hasty generalisations. However, they work to ignore and obscure the contextual conditions of the generation of hope, and, like so many matryoshka dolls, the emotional experiences which generate hope itself. Social, economic, and cultural infirmities within the region worked on the level of individual experience to produce negatively-conceived emotional outputs, and it was these which translated into tangible motivations to migrate. The decision to migrate stemmed not principally from hope – it stemmed from feelings of disillusionment, disappointment, hopelessness, and frustration with the constraints of one's own environment.

1.2.1: Economics, unemployment, and felt experience

Reconstructing these constraints begins with the economic context. The British Caribbean possessions of the mid-twentieth century represented an assemblage of fragile, anaemic, and predominantly monocultural economies, the system of land ownership – consisting of a hybrid mixture of smallholdings and vast corporate-owned plantations – unable to generate

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[55] George Lamming, *The Emigrants* (London: Michael Joseph, 1954), 34.

[56] Vivienne Francis, *With Hope in Their Eyes: The Compelling Stories of the Windrush Generation* (London: Nia, 1998); 'Our Jamaican Problem', 17 January 1955, British Pathé newsreel footage, (*British Pathé,* 1955).

enough agricultural employment to mitigate chronic labour surpluses and growing populations.[57] Unemployment in the region vacillated between 15 and 20 percent, its explosive swings triggered by each island's reliance on agricultural exports whose production and processing are by nature seasonal.[58] Between 1935 and 1945 the radical economic historian William Macmillan visited the Caribbean, and so shocked was he by the poverty, malnutrition, and unemployment that he wrote *Warning from the West Indies.* In the year following its publication, Macmillan's foreboding found concrete vindication: The first stirrings of labour unrest in 1934-5 now erupted, in 1937, with a fever and fret. These disturbances, 'unprecedented in their scope and scale',[59] provided a socio-political climate within which the nationalist leaders and political movements who came to dominate twentieth-century Caribbean politics cut their teeth.[60]

The depression-era labour unrest proved that little by way of socio-economic improvement had come to the region since Lloyd George allegedly dismissed it as the "slums of the Empire" – and yet little by way of it came after.[61] Made fidgety by the spectre of colonial rebellion, and as a result of recommendations made by The Report of the West India Royal Commission – issued in 1939 as a direct response imperial response to the

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[57] Regarding the reliance of individual economies in the British Caribbean on monocultural agriculture, the winds of change were in the air at this point. Trinidad's oil industry was beginning to roar into life, as was Jamaica's bauxite industry, which would come to dominate the Jamaican economy in the following decades. This is all tied to the growth of nationalist politics on the island, political independence, and the efforts of nationalist politicians to strengthen, diversify, and industrialise their respective economies.

[58] Douglas Manley, 'Migration Past and Present', in *The West Indian Comes to England: A Report Prepared for the Trustees of the London Parochial Charities by the Family Welfare Association*, ed. S. K. Ruck (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960), 14.

[59] Howard Johnson, 'The British Caribbean from Demobilization to Constitutional Decolonization', in *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume IV: The Twentieth Century*, ed. W. M. Roger Louis and Judith Brown (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 604. For an exhaustive historiographical overview, see O. Nigel Bolland, *On the March: Labour Rebellions in the British Caribbean, 1934-39* (Kingston: Ian Randle, 1995). For a work which focuses in on the political dimensions of these upheavals, see O. Nigel Bolland, *The Politics of Labour in the British Caribbean: The Social Origins of Authoritarianism and Democracy in the Labour Movement* (Oxford: James Currey, 2001). For a work concentrating specifically on the Jamaican context in the late 1930s, see Ken Post, *Arise Ye Starvelings: The Jamaican Labour Rebellion of 1938 and Its Aftermath* (Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff, 1978).

[60] In Jamaica the politicians who most reflected this trend were Alexander Bustamante and to a lesser extent Norman Manley. In Trinidad and Tobago, this was T. U. B. Butler. In Barbados, Grantley Adams.

[61] This is a quote often ascribed to Lloyd-George, but no work points to the original source, instead circularly referencing one another. It could well be false – like Volataire's famous but apocryphal quote 'I disagree with everything you have said, but I defend your right to say it' – but it accurately reflects the disdain and neglect of the British political establishment toward the region. For examples of the ascription, see Chad Varah, 'Islands of Hardship', *Picture Post*, 14 June 1956; W. M. Roger Louis, 'Prophets of Colonial Strife', *Times Literary Supplement*, 16 February 1990.

unrest, and better known as the Moyne Report – Westminster passed The Colonial Welfare Development Acts of 1940 and 1945. They proved, however, wholly ineffective in tackling the labour issues which had grown into the defining issue of Caribbean social and political life.[62] In interwar Jamaica, for example, Alfred Williams remembers dense presses of men, 100 yards long and as 'broad as a road', queuing outside sugar plantations rumoured to have vacancies.[63] Compare Williams' experience with an incident in Kingston in December 1947, when two labour recruitment centres were opened intended to serve a maximum of 400 people. When a combined 18,000 jobseekers arrived, many saw the futility of their efforts and crowds began tearing down the premises before being dispersed by tear gas.[64] For the majority of Jamaicans, the only substantial change to their lived realities which occurred between these two events was the doubled cost of living during the war.[65] Compounding such dire straits, a 1944 hurricane wrought devastation on the north of the island, destroying around 90 percent of banana trees along with homes and local businesses.[66] One Jamaican migrant to England stated it bluntly: 'there were no jobs'.[67]

The situation in Barbados was akin. Here, 'one had to wait quite a little while before you could pick up a job',[68] and the London Transport recruitment scheme set up on the island in 1956 was interpreted by both the colonial and newly-minted independent governments merely as a "safety valve" to 'assist people who are willing to work but who cannot readily find employment'.[69] Trinidad's socio-economic story, though slightly more diversified than its

[62] The first Act provided for a wholly inadequate total of £5 million to be spent on colonial development, which included British colonies outside of the Caribbean. It is, however, important to read such imperial parsimony within the context of the wartime economy within which the bill was drafted. The Colonial Development and Welfare Act 1945 extended this to a total of £120 million over a ten-year period, but even this massively upwardly revised figure was ineffectual. See E. R. Wicker, 'Colonial Development and Welfare, 1929-1957: The Evolution of a Policy', *Social and Economic Studies* 7, no. 4 (1958): 183-91.

[63] Williams and Brown, *To Live It*, 27.

[64] Charles Wilton Wood, letter to the editor, *Times*, 24 June 1948.

[65] Eggington, *Living*, 55.

[66] For statistics, see H. C. Sumner, 'North Atlantic Hurricanes and Tropical Disturbances of 1944', *Monthly Weather Review* 72, no. 12 (1944): 238. See also Sam King quoted in Grant, *Homecoming*, 75.

[67] Cecil Holness quoted in Francis, *Hope*, 195. See also Ethlyn Adams quoted in Grant, *Homecoming,* 64: 'in Jamaica at the time there was high unemployment and no work'.

[68] "Vernon" quoted in Chamberlain, *Narratives of Exile*, 182.

[69] Hinds, *Journey*, 31. The safety valve is a common concept in migration studies, whereby emigration becomes a political tool to mitigate civil unrest generated by unemployment, poverty, and political dissidence. See Stephen Castles and Raúl Delgado Wise, eds., *Migration and Development: Perspectives from the South* (Geneva: International Organization for Migration, 2008), 10, 19; Hein de Haas and Simona Vezzoli, 'Migration

neighbours, was written in the same ink. When the People's National Movement began contesting elections within the colonial political framework in 1956, its leader Eric Williams was aware of the 'existence of substantial unemployment and considerable underemployment', a problem not yet solved by 1981, when the nation's greatest calypsonian Mighty Sparrow railed against 'the unemployment levy murdering everybody'.[70] Three years later, Sparrow again turned his caustic pen to the same subject in *Capitalism Gone Mad*, intoning that 'with unemployment and high inflation/some ah we go dead, before the end of this recession'.[71]

The inquisitional thrust of most histories of emotions hinges on the varied routes through which the cultural is historically translated into emotional experience, and how this experience feeds back into cultural norms, values, and practices. Much less historiographical attention has been paid to how the *economic* conditions translate into emotional experience. Yet felt experiences of poverty and precarity, of ennui, of hunger and hurdles to upward social mobility – these are derived principally from economic contexts and go on to generate a spectrum of negatively-conceived, historically-specific feelings; it was, after all, in a fury of disappointment' that the Jamaican unemployed dismantled the labour recruitment offices in 1947.[72] This bridge between economic context and situated feeling is clearly articulated in the following, highly moving anonymous letter submitted to Jamaica's *Gleaner* in 1948:

> My experiences since I am unemployed are awful. My sufferings are terrible. I have absolutely no money, because my savings are exhausted and as I have not been employed for seven months. I cannot pay rental. I cannot buy enough food and live at the expense of my friends. Sometimes, I go to bed so hungry that I have no guarantees I

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and Development: Lessons from the Mexico-US and Morocco-EU Experiences', IMI Working Paper No 24., (Oxford: International Migration Institute 2010).

[70] The Williams quote is from Eric Eustace Williams, *Forged from the Love of Liberty: Selected Speeches of Dr. Eric Williams*, ed. Paul K. Sutton (Port-of-Spain: Longman Caribbean, 1981), 13. Mighty Sparrow sang this line on his 1981 calypso "We Like It So". See Mighty Sparrow, 'We Like It So', track 2 on *Caribbean Express*, Charlie's Records, 1981, 12" record.

[71] Mighty Sparrow, 'Capitalism Gone Mad', track 2 on *Margarita*, Charlie's Records, 1984, 12" record.

[72] Wood, letter to the editor, *Times*, 24 June 1948.

will be alive the next morning. I have to sacrifice personal belongings. My worries are enough to drive me mad.[73]

Through experiences like these, suffering and its associative affective states – hunger, stress, pain – become potent migratory drivers. Alfred Williams, a poor agricultural labourer from Jamaica who migrated to Britain, had his toenails regularly ripped off for want of a pair of shoes but knew that 'in the Mother Country there is no bare-foot, no more torn away off nail'. By coming to Britain, he would 'be away from Jamaica where we had know so much Hell'.[74]

These were not the only emotivational outputs tied to economic context: Unemployment and lack of opportunity produced feelings of frustration, disillusionment, or ennui. One migrant remembered losing his job in 1952 and, remaining unemployed for over a year, was unable to 'invent anything else but to migrate',[75] whilst Tornado – the virulently Anglophobic RAF veteran returning to Britain in George Lamming's *The Emigrants* – rages: '"this blasted world … is a hell of a place. Why the hell a man got to leave where he born when he ain't thief not'in, nor kill nobody"'.[76] Ethlyn Adams surmised the general listless tone or atmosphere among many, and revealed the linkages between felt experience and migratory motives when she admitted that 'there was no future in Jamaica at that time. It's not a nice feeling. So I was glad to get away and try somewhere else'.[77] It was an economic environment writing the obituaries of their futures before they were even realised, and it employed the built environment to do so. Jamaican Alfred Harvey recalled that 'they were building a prison in Jamaica … no work, nothing to do. When you stand up and you look in it, and you say that's the prison Bustamante is building for us. We got to find somehow to counteract it'.[78] A desire to migrate becomes the affective and defiant product of the intersections between political and economic contexts and their architectural projections.

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[73] 'Letter to the Editor', *Daily Gleaner*, 23 February 1948.

[74] Williams and Brown, *To Live It*, 78.

[75] Wallace Barrymore Collins, *Jamaican Migrant* (London: Routledge, 1965), 51.

[76] Lamming, *The Emigrants*, 39.

[77] Ethlyn Adams quoted in Grant, *Homecoming*, 64.

[78] Alfred Harvey quoted in Phillips and Phillips, *Windrush*, 114. Alexander Bustamante was the leader of the Jamaica Labour Party, the second of Jamaica's main nationalist political parties next to Norman Manley's People's National Party. Bustamante rose to prominence as a labour leader championing working-class causes during the unrest of the 1930s.

Into this tumult came, after 1945, thousands of newly-demobilised Caribbean veterans. As if returning to oversaturated labour markets within societies suffocated of possibility was insufficient, on a psychological level the cultural knowledge acquired of Britain and their experience of mechanised total warfare meant a discovery for many 'that they did not fit in'.[79] Moreover, instances of colonial mismanagement helped underwrite the disappointment and disillusionment which coloured their experiences of return. In Jamaica, the island which had contributed the lion's share of personnel to the war effort, veterans were 'assured that jobs would be awaiting us' only to find 'nothing at all',[80] and even promised tracts of land to cultivate in Greenhill. This worked roughly as well as it had for the Roman Empire two millennia before, with veterans finding that Greenhill's land was 'fit for nothing but maybe a few goat'; many simply glimpsed their parcel only to 'turn round and walk away'.[81] Jamaican veteran Norman Hamilton said that he and his comrades were 'completely disillusioned' after being demobilised in Jamaica, deciding to migrate anew and 'look to Britain for a brighter future'.[82]

1.2.2: Pigmentocracies and their affects

These envisaged brighter futures were not only bankrolled by poverty, so to speak, but also by certain socio-cultural practices. In this period, complicated attitudes toward skin shade constituted one of the central cultural value systems and form of social hierarchicalisation in the Caribbean.[83] Historically-specific conceptions of race, shade, and whiteness which had traditionally provided the moral and epistemological underpinnings of colonialist practices became the primary mechanism of social delineation, resulting in a clutch of pigmentocratic societies which revered and privileged lighter skin tones and which translated these values into organisational principles around which they arranged their social compositions.[84]

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[79] Hinds, *Journey*, 52.

[80] Norman Hamilton, letter to the Editor, *South London Press*, 25 June 1948.

[81] Williams and Brown, *To Live It*, 66.

[82] Hamilton, letter to the Editor, *South London Press*, 25 June 1948.

[83] Stuart Hall's grandmother, for instance, could 'differentiate about fifteen different shades between light brown and dark brown'. See Stuart Hall, 'Old and New Identities, Old and New Ethnicities', in *Culture, Globalization, and the World-System: Contemporary Conditions for the Representation of Identity*, ed. Anthony D. King (University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 49.

[84] For a first-hand account of how this functioned in Trinidad, see Alton Watkins, 'Interview with Alton Watkins', *Caribbean Takeaway Takeover,* 12 February 2018, caribbeantakeawaytakeover.wordpress.com/alton-watkins. The roots of this undoubtedly lay in the monopolisation, by white colonialists in the Caribbean, of power,

On the ground this became a powerful tool of exclusion and negation, denying to darker-skinned Caribbeans the educational and occupational opportunities of their lighter counterparts whom would generally 'fare better'.[85] 'It is no secret', Donald Hinds wrote, 'that West Indian families have at times spent more money on the education of their children with the lightest complexion'.[86] The reason for this perhaps came down to a question of pragmatics: Caribbean parents with limited resources would undoubtedly have possessed situated knowledge of the interaction between these cultural values and their environment's economic landscape. Employers, already possessing a muscular ascendancy within a superabundant labour market, could afford to tailor their recruitment practices toward those with desirable lighter skin. This was certainly the case in Barbados, where jobs 'were very selective, and they had this thing about not employing too dark a person … you had to be very fair to really get through'.[87] The same held true for Jamaica, where one migrant in Britain spoke of having to be 'fair of colour to get the jobs you wanted'.[88] In Trinidad and Tobago, where racial composition mirrored its more diversified economy, things were more complicated. There, the significant population of those with South Asian ethnicity experienced not so much the privations of exclusion along pigmentocratic fault lines, but along more well-known racial ones. But in the accompanying foreclosure of social and economic opportunities, the ultimate outcome was the same. Racial exclusion became a push factor in migrating to Britain.[89]

For darker-skinned Caribbeans, these were environments which sounded the death knell of their ambition. One migrant to Britain remembered that back in Guyana she aspired to be a typist 'but never dared to tell anyone, for working in an office meant pale skin', and living and emoting in contexts so culturally constrictive to one's own being meant that migration

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status, and wealth. Whiteness became synonymous with these concepts, and by association became a culturally desirable attribute. The basic tenets of this dynamic were not unique to Caribbean societies, although specific localised configurations and permutations of this existed there, just as it did in Latin America. See Edward Telles, *Pigmentocracies: Ethnicity, Race, and Color in Latin America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014).

[85] Don Sydney, 'Interview with Don Sydney', *Caribbean Takeaway Takeover,* 5 December 2017, caribbeantakeawaytakeover.wordpress.com/don-sydney.

[86] Hinds, *Journey*, 103.

[87] "Beryl" quoted in Chamberlain, *Narratives of Exile*, 189.

[88] "Devon" quoted in Hinds, *Journey*, 20.

[89] Jerome Teelucksingh, 'A Global Diaspora: The Indo-Trinidadian Diaspora in Canada, the United States, and England — 1967–2007', *Diaspora Studies* 4, no. 2 (2011): 140-41.

offered an avenue of escape, escape from 'the frustration of a colonial society' – paradoxically by migrating to the very place responsible for entrenching such cultural values.[90] One remarkable account comes from a woman writing to the editor of a British black community newspaper in 1962. She admitted that she had 'never regretted' coming to Britain, and that she had left the Caribbean because she 'was made to feel inferior at home. I am dark … and I would not mention the names I was called by even my own cousin … Until I came here I always had an inferiority complex … Sometimes I even tried to bleach myself'.[91] For these migrants, there existed a curious transnational interplay between localised cultural values of colour and race, interplays whose locus resided within individual felt experience. The fact that one would be considered "merely" black in Britain became an attractive prospect – ideas of race so rigid and calcified there that the excluded and shunned became the social equals of their lighter-skinned peers. And significantly, this woman's account highlights the ways in which the evaluative hierarchies embedded within notions of race and shade, of whiteness and lightness, worked to produce negatively-ascribed emotional experiences which became motivations to migrate.

The feeling historical subject's navigation of these economic and socio-cultural contexts thus produced a gamut of unwanted feelings. Hopelessness or worthlessness, frustration or exasperation, disappointment or disillusionment – these were to be pared away through the practice of migration, attenuated through sheer kinetic force, exorcised by forcibly changing the cultural and economic configurations which shape lived realities and situated experience. It was as much about escaping the limitations of their environment and the emotional consequences of these limitations as it was about hope, ambition, or a breast-beating sense of duty. One can rightly point to the historical role of colonialism in laying the foundations for the limitations within these environments: the peripheral role of the Caribbean in the world system, and Britain's vested interest in fostering underdevelopment so that it might better pin down their roles as suppliers of raw materials to the centre;[92] the white monopolisation of key cultural and political positions within the

[90] "Veronica" quoted in Hinds, *Journey*, 170. "Devon" quoted in Hinds, *Journey*, 25.

[91] W. Alexis, letter to the editor, *Flamingo*, January 1962. Her testimony hints at migration's role in the creation, within diaspora, of a black identity in Britain, and a pan-Caribbean identity, which transcended notions of shade and pigment.

[92] The framework briefly enumerated above comes from Latin American dependency theory. See Andre Gunder Frank, *The Underdevelopment of Development* (Boston: New England Free Press, 1966). This theoretical

colonial framework so that lighter skin came to possess a certain mystique, a certain cachet, certain associations of social status.[93] To read Frantz Fanon, Homi Bhabha, or Gayatri Spivak is an exercise in how colonialism contributes to the production of, on the level of subjectivity, certain psychological and psychoanalytical effects within the subaltern, and it then becomes possible to view the emotional outputs of such interactions as driving one to migrate to the very country responsible for the production of these dynamics. These are consequences which George Lamming in *The Pleasures of Exile* extends past motivational impetus when he writes that 'when the chosen residence is the country which colonised his own history, then there are certain complications'.[94] Britain's colonial chickens were coming home to roost.

1.4: Hope and ambition

1.4.1: Hope

Nevertheless, these situated feelings of frustration, disillusionment, hopelessness, and inferiority only give us a fragment of the story. On its own, suffering is not enough to impel movement away from a certain place in a certain time – it must be hitched to a belief that one's destination will provide some measure of improvement upon previous experiential content. This is precisely where hope and ambition interceded.

Many journeyed to Britain because they saw it as 'a golden opportunity for a better life', and it was this word – "better" – which surfaces and resurfaces in otherwise enormously distinct migrant accounts, providing a common comparative denominator woven into this flow's emotivational fabric.[95] Migrants hoped for a 'better financial opportunity',[96] a 'better

approach was crucial for Emmanuel Wallerstein's later formulation of world-systems theory. See Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System*, 4 vols (New York: Academic Press, 1974-2011).

[93] Watkins, 'Interview with Alton Watkins'; Lenore Marcano and Pearl Marcano, interview by author, London, 12 November 2021.

[94] George Lamming, *The Pleasures of Exile* (London: Allison and Busby, 1984), 24.

[95] Lee Arbouin, *The Nottingham Connection* (Birmingham: AuthorHouse, 2012), xii.

[96] Dubes 52, *Black & Confused in the UK 53/60* (London: Xlibris, 2011), 19.

break',[97] a 'better life',[98] and a 'better future';[99] migration was an opportunity to 'better'[100] one's self or 'better' one's position.[101] George Lamming, perennially sensitive to questions of the body and of embodied experience, spoke of 'the cage' within which his migrant characters in *The Emigrants* 'were born and would die'; for them, the narrator states, 'the only tolerable climate of experience was the reality which was simply an irreversible instinct to make things better'.[102] After all, Higgins admits, '"tis why we all here on this boat. In search o' some way to make the future better"'.[103] The contextual conditions of the Caribbean and the emotional experiences which flowed from them provided would-be migrants with the raw experiential material to imagine better futures *through* hope and ambition, and the act of migration became a means of furnishing them with these futures.

But these were not conceptualised as *immediate* futures. Almost to a person, these migrants envisaged their relocation as a temporary measure, a stopgap with a determinate lifespan, a practical measure which involved raising enough financial or occupational capital to return to the Caribbean and realise the diverse objects to which their hope and ambition were attached. 'Their dream', British-Jamaican Lee Arbouin explains, 'was to work in Britain for five or so years and then return to their homeland'.[104] Back in Guyana, Victor Waldron realised that migration 'was the only way of fulfilling my ambition', but explained to his acquaintances that such a measure was temporary and he would soon be back.[105] Chiming with Arbouin's assertion, five years was how long Alford Gardner had hoped to spend in Britain – enough time to accumulate the capital to return, 'raise five children, and watch my vineyards grow'.[106] For Ben Bousquet, the Caribbean community never came to Britain with

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[97] Lamming, *The Emigrants*, 50-1, 74.

[98] Carol Sydney, 'Interview with Carol Sydney', *Caribbean Takeaway Takeover,* 11 January 2018, caribbeantakeawaytakeover.wordpress.com/carole-sydney; "King Dick" quoted in Phillips and Phillips, *Windrush*, 114.

[99] Sydney, 'Interview with Don Sydney'.

[100] Ethlyn Adams quoted in Grant, *Homecoming,* 64.

[101] Roger Waite quoted in Stephen Bourne and Sav Kyriacou, eds., *A Ship and a Prayer: Celebrating a Hundred Years of the Black Presence in Hammersmith and Fulham*, Hammersmith & Fulham Community History Series (London: Ethnic Communities Oral History Project, 1999), 36.

[102] Lamming, *The Emigrants*, 105.

[103] Ibid., 61.

[104] Arbouin, *Nottingham Connection*, xii.

[105] Victor Waldron, *The Undiminished Link: Forty Years and Beyond* (London: Hansib, 2007), 17.

[106] Alford Gardner quoted in BBC News, *Windrush Generation: Three Stories - BBC News*, 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NME-9ot2Lqw.

any intention other than ‘to save some money, educate our children and return home’,[107] money which would enable Tornado in *The Emigrants* to realise his hope of going ‘right back to Trinidad’ and building ‘a little parlour an’ set up some kind o’ business’.[108] The imagined objects of the hope which drove some 330,000 bodies across the Atlantic to “colonise England in reverse” were temporally deferred and geographically located from whence they came.[109] It was for a better life, in the future, *back in the Caribbean.* Moreover, their hope and the delayed gratification inherent within it straddled both sides of the migratory act, existing before as an emotivation and after as an affective coping mechanism allowing them to bear the privations and challenges they faced. Belief in an eventual, triumphant return to the Caribbean – whether realised or not – helped migrants emotionally and psychologically deal with the cultural dislocation, attacks, abuse, humiliations and rebuffs that were to come.[110]

Just as their hope was not necessarily tied to notions of immediate improvement, it was not necessarily tied to notions of *personal* improvement. In 1948, Harold Wilmot was standing deckside on a docked SS *Empire Windrush* before the gaze of Pathé newsreel cameras. In the telling exchange that followed, the reporter asked Wilmot: ‘are you a single man?’. The question both alluded to the hypersexualised motif of race embedded within colonial cultural structures and surmised, in encoded form, the nation’s own emotional dispositions toward this migration flow. But Wilmot’s answer is as instructive as the enquiry: ‘I’m trying to help myself and also help my mum’.[111] This was not only a reconfiguration of imperial notions of blackness – with its exclusion from normative familial values and essentialised linkages to voracious sexual hunger – it was also a remarkable historical signpost toward a specific way that hope was experienced and articulated by these migrants and the motivational power it possessed. Lee Arbouin, who migrated to Britain from Jamaica in the late 1950s, reminds us that Jamaican migrants ‘*hoped* that their hard-earned money

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[107] Ben Bousquet quoted in Phillips and Phillips, *Windrush*, 140.

[108] Lamming, *The Emigrants*, 68. See also the account of “Devon” in *Journey to an Illusion,* in which one of his cabinmates wanted to ‘save enough money to buy machinery for a cabinet workshop he intended setting up when he returned to Jamaica’: “Devon” quoted in Hinds, *Journey*, 35.

[109] The allusion is to Louise Bennett Coverley’s poem “Colonization in Reverse”. See Louise Bennett Coverley, *Jamaica Labrish* (Kingston: Sangster’s, 1966), 54. For figures see Ceri Peach, *The Caribbean in Europe: Contrasting Patterns of Migration and Settlement in Britain, France and the Netherlands*, Research Papers in Ethnic Relations 15 (Warwick: Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations, University of Warwick, 1991), 13.

[110] See the account of Connie Mark in Kyriacou, *The Motherland Calls*, 4.

[111] ‘Pathé Reporter Meets’, 24 June 1948, British Pathé newsreel footage (*British Pathé*, 1948).

would improve the lives of their families'.[112] It becomes a weighty reminder of the role the social plays in emotional experience, and its intersections with notions of love, care, and the familial unit. Attending to these thus, the remittances generated by migrants – Jamaica's second-largest source of GDP in 1966 – can be read as material expressions of these emotions, capital infused with affective value.[113] Just as colonialist practices and epistemologies sought to disperse, deny, fracture, or undermine the black Caribbean family unit, so the family unit strikes back as a site whose affective bonds generated emotivations of hope, projected onto others, which transported breadwinners to the heart of Empire.

1.4.2: Ambition

Not easily separable from these permutations of hope was an ambition most commonly manifesting itself in a desire for occupational or educational advancement, for as Guyanese Sybil Phoenix remembered 'lots of people took that opportunity to come and be trained'.[114] Journeying to Britain became a practical method of attaining objectives to which one was orienting their life, and the hunger or desire underlying these objectives represents another emotional force in these migrants' motivational patterns. From cabinet making[115] and tailoring[116] to nursing,[117] professional cricket,[118] and locomotive driving,[119] Caribbean men and women alighted in Britain fired by specific vocational ambitions, imagined futures of their working lives, shaped by their individual peculiarities and preferences, backgrounds and contexts, and relative access to previous opportunities. The fact that Britain represented a space for them more conducive to the realisation of these ambitions returns us to historical contexts of colonialism. In order to realise her nursing ambition, Barbadian Irene's first choice of destination was not the "mother country", but Canada. It was only after being told by her headmaster that a Canadian nursing certificate would not permit her to work

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[112] Arbouin, *Nottingham Connection*, xii. Emphasis added

[113] Hinds, *Journey,* 147.

[114] Sybil Phoenix quoted in Phillips and Phillips, *Windrush,* 122.

[115] 'Pathé Reporter Meets', 24 June 1948, British Pathé newsreel footage (*British Pathé*, 1948); "Devon" quoted in Hinds, *Journey,* 35.

[116] Clifford Fullerton quoted in Kyriacou, *The Motherland Calls*, 8-9.

[117] "Irene" quoted in Chamberlain, *Narratives of Exile*, 146-51; Marcano and Marcano, interview by author; Majorie Rennie, interview by author, London, 27 September 2021.

[118] Connie Mark quoted in Kyriacou, *The Motherland Calls*, 3-7.

[119] Sybil Phoenix quoted in Phillips and Phillips, *Windrush,* 122-23.

abroad that she migrated to Britain.[120] Migration to Britain became a functional decision: 'being under the English', Lenore Marcano explains, 'they did not really provide a lot of facilities for us to move on. The only way you could have got to where you wanted to be was to move out, do it and come back home'.[121] Migrants employed situated knowledge of their historical environments to satisfy emotional goals; cogmotion stimulated motion.[122]

Opportunities for education comprised the second main flavour of motivational ambition. The primary cause of Alton Watkins' migration to Britain 'was because I wanted an education. I wanted to educate myself',[123] an ambition which Don Sydney extends to the whole Caribbean diaspora in Britain: 'we hoped to improve ourselves, go and get a better education, that's why we came'.[124] In his 2011 memoir, Alphonso Roberts from Tobago strikes a similar chord. He and his wife's 'ultimate goal' was education, and this became the cardinal purpose for their migration to the West Midlands in 1957. This shared ambition for educational advancement even served as the unifying spark which ignited the Roberts' relationship. Such are the intersections between love, companionship, and ambition.[125]

In many ways, migrants' educational ambitions were even more extensively the product of transnational historical contexts. Unlike in Britain, where elementary education had been *gratis* since the end of the nineteenth century – secondary following suit from 1945 – the Caribbean's educational structures comprised a complex mixture of fee-paying institutions, controlled by either a one of a number of religious organisations (who had assumed responsibility for mass public education since the abolition of slavery), or increasingly the colonial government.[126] The limited number of scholarships available could not meaningfully alter either the huge number of Caribbeans who could not afford school fees, or problems of

[120] "Irene" quoted in Chamberlain, *Narratives of Exile*, 148.

[121] Marcano and Marcano, interview by author.

[122] "Cogmotion" was coined by the psychologists Douglas Barnett and Hilary Horn Ratner in a 1997 paper to better articulate the 'interactive and inseparable nature of cognition and emotion'. See Douglas Barnett and Hilary Horn Ratner, 'The Organization and Integration of Cognition and Emotion in Development', *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology* 67, no. 3 (1997): 303.

[123] Watkins, 'Interview with Alton Watkins'.

[124] Sydney, 'Interview with Don Sydney'.

[125] Alphonso Roberts, *The Great Partnership of Vesta Malvina Irvine and Alphonso Irenius Roberts, 1954-2004* (Brighton: Book Guild Publishing, 2011), 67.

[126] Austin Clarke, *Growing Up Stupid Under the Union Jack: A Memoir* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1980), 31-8; Rush, *Bonds of Empire*, 21-46; Moore and Johnson, *Neither Led nor Driven*, 205-44; Ruby King, 'Introduction', in *Education in the Caribbean: Historical Perspectives*, ed. Ruby King (Mona: University of the West Indies Faculty of Education, 1987).

access for those in rural areas. One Barbadian remembered that for his mother, providing the single penny per week for his elementary education 'was as hard as going up the hill Golgotha where Jesus travel',[127] whilst Alfred Williams recalled that in interwar Jamaica 'some kids live so far away from school (which is in a church) that they just never ever go'.[128] This meant that, in Jamaica for instance, a large minority of adults were without an elementary education and less than 1 percent a secondary.[129]

Such lack of opportunity combined with lived experiences of poverty to establish education – particularly secondary – as a Caribbean cultural value of inordinate import, creating successive generations fuelled by an intense, single-minded ambition to school themselves and their children. Growing up, Majorie Rennie was never given chores around her home in mid-twentieth-century Trinidad – the categorical imperative was to study and complete small investigative projects set by her father.[130] Never receiving an opportunity for secondary education himself, one Barbadian migrant 'made an oath, if I walk the road, pick paper bag … my children got to get a secondary education … I will do every kind of work to see my children … get a secondary education'.[131] What the above makes clear is that educational ambition mirrored the format of hope in that they did not necessarily possess a subject-oriented intentionality. Toward this end, postwar Caribbean parents went to painstaking lengths to guarantee or underwrite their children's education, uprooting or splitting cohesive family units into transnational cells. These actions also complicate received notions of agency, traditionally seen as the locus of decision-making and motivational processes: children often had little choice in migratory practices, being driven largely by the emotions of parents. And yet these emotions loop back, for they are felt *for* and *through* these children, directed toward those who possess little say in the decision-making process.

Moreover, concrete mechanisms and cultural legacies of colonialism helped shape how these experiences of educational ambition were felt and acted upon.[132] This was, in the first

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[127] "Herman" quoted in Chamberlain, *Narratives of Exile*, 179.

[128] Williams and Brown, *To Live It*, 40.

[129] Rush, *Bonds of Empire*, 25; Charles C. Hauch, *Educational Trends in the Caribbean: European Affiliated Areas* (Washington: US Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Office of Education, 1960), 34.

[130] Rennie, interview by author.

[131] "Charles" quoted in Chamberlain, *Narratives of Exile,* 143.

[132] This both worked alongside and buttressed the cultural clout Britain possessed in the Caribbean at the time: more's the better, Irene's father thought of her predicament, for if she was going to train as a nurse she 'might as well go to England and do it properly'. See "Irene" in Chamberlain, *Narratives of Exile,* 149. It was a

instance, a question of directionality. The cracked representational spyglass within colonial societies through which knowledge of Britain was filtered led to the metropole's acquisition of a certain level of cultural clout in the Caribbean, and a privileging of metropolitan methods and structures. In no social arena was this truer than in education. Caribbean schools were based around similar pedagogical practices, taught an Anglocentric curriculum by Anglophilic educationalists, utilised the same Cambridge examination framework (subsequently shipped to Britain to be marked), and modelled themselves in structure and practice off of elite British institutions. Whilst those who could afford higher education had the option, from 1948, of studying at the newly-minted University of the West Indies, it was Britain's universities – particularly Oxford and Cambridge – which were revered. At all rungs on the educational ladder, then, the prestige of the nation's educational credentials was widely accepted. One migrant remembered that in Barbados, 'you always heard of England, the education and the universities they have here'.[133] Britain was a 'seat of learning' for contemporary Caribbeans,[134] a place chosen by parents who sought a 'good education' for their children.[135]

Aside from controlling the topical content of Caribbean education and outsourcing its assessment to the metropole, the colonial system possessed other concrete mechanisms for entrenching the pedagogical cachet of Britain. The Barbados Island Scholarship and University of Oxford's Rhodes Scholarship – the latter founded by arch-imperialist Cecil Rhodes – brought some of the Caribbean's most dazzling intellectual lights to Britain, simultaneously entrenching the conflation of the metropole with élite achievement and stymieing the growth of the region's local artistic and scholarly spheres in a remarkable historical instance of "brain drain".[136] Those who came under these schemes were also

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sentiment shared by the parents of another woman who came to train as a nurse, Majorie from Trinidad. When Majorie informed them of her decision to come to Britain she encountered no pushback, for 'England was seen as the be-it of all, you're going to England, you're going to the motherland'. See Rennie, interview by author. Colonial structures blanket and colour patterns of feeling, and by extension patterns of migration.

[133] "Beryl" quoted in Chamberlain, *Narratives of Exile*, 192.

[134] "Oswald 'Columbus' Denniston" quoted in Phillips and Phillips, *Windrush,* 62.

[135] Esther Bruce's cousin and his wife migrated from Guyana because they 'wanted their four children to have a good education'. See Stephen Bourne and Esther Bruce, *The Sun Shone on Our Side of the Street: Aunt Esther's Story*, Hammersmith & Fulham Community History Series (London: Ethnic Communities Oral History Project, 1991), 32.

[136] Norman Manley came under its auspices in 1913. See 'The Rt. Hon. Norman Washington Manley (1893 – 1969)', *The National Library of Jamaica* (blog), accessed 21 May 2021, https://nlj.gov.jm/project/rt-hon-norman-washington-manley-1893-1969/; Stuart Hall in 1951: see Stuart Hall

drawing upon cultural precedent, for it was during the interwar years that CLR James, Learie Constantine, Harold Moody, George Padmore, Amy Garvey, and Marcus Garvey broke bread in Britain. Little wonder, then, that Stuart Hall's mother saw the University of Oxford as a place 'where she thought a son of hers had always belonged'.[137] Similar apparatuses were in play for the Caribbean Anglophone literati. Driven in no small measure by the platform the BBC's World Service provided with its *Caribbean Voices* programme, writers such as George Lamming, V. S. Naipaul, Samuel Selvon, Andrew Salkey, and Edward Kamau Brathwaite migrated en masse to Britain in the postwar period, sparking a *belle epoque* of Caribbean diasporic literary output in 1950s London. For any Caribbean feeling the affective thrust of ambition, Britain was the place to be. Not only because such migrants lived and emoted within specific colonial contexts of signification, but because seeking personal improvement or achievement within colonialism's confines often meant running with the centripetal forces inherent to its structures, if only to disassemble those structures. Edward Said characterises the intellectual migration from colony to metropole as a "voyage in", a destabilising process whereby thinkers were able to address 'that world from within it, and on cultural grounds they disputed and challenged its authority by presenting alternative versions of it'.[138] Whether from educational or vocational ambition or a visceral sense of injustice, the so-called "brain drain" is here grounded in filtered cultural knowledge of the metropole, ordered around a set of concrete contextual mechanisms, and driven by emotion.

Yet for all the talk of colonial societies riven by epistemological distortion, these migrants had a point. This was a practical application of transnational knowledge of Britain to satisfy a certain emotional state: shelve the "mother country" ideology, shelve the reverence for Britain's educational systems – British education was still free, and they were still British citizens with unhindered freedom of movement.[139] Although some families used remittances

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and Bill Schwarz, *Familiar Stranger: A Life Between Two Islands* (London: Allen Lane, 2017), 20; Rex Nettleford in 1957: see 'Nettleford, Rex — Choreography, Education (1933 – 2010)', *The National Library of Jamaica* (blog), accessed 21 May 2021, https://nlj.gov.jm/project/nettleford-rex-choreography-education-1933-2010/.

[137] Stuart Hall, *Personally Speaking: A Long Conversation with Stuart Hall* (London: Media Education Foundation, 2009), 7. It is a phenomenon one also sees in that other major – and disintegrating – colonial empire of the twentieth century, France's, with Frantz Fanon, Albert Camus, and Jacques Derrida all making the journey to the metropole.

[138] Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 248.

[139] Until, of course, the first Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1962 which imposed a stratified voucher system corresponding to level of occupational skill upon immigration. For historiographical treatment, see Perry,

from Britain to fund secondary education locally,[140] the majority saw migration to Britain as a bridging mechanism between educational ambition and the financial difficulties they faced in paying for it. Such migrations increased exponentially once the Caribbean community had established a bridgehead in Britain by the early 1950s. Not only did this allow information of British educational fees (or lack thereof) to flow more readily back to the region through transnational knowledge networks, it provided systems of support for those – usually children – who arrived to exercise their imperial birthrights. Both of these upshots were present in the experience of thirteen-year-old Olga, from Jamaica. Her mother, anxious for but unable to afford education for all three of her children, appealed to Olga's father, already in Britain, for assistance. He suggested that 'it would be cheaper for me to live with him, as secondary education was free in England'.[141] Similarly, Barbadian Beryl 'badly wanted' a secondary education, which her family couldn't afford – it was only by coming to Britain that she 'felt' that she 'had the opportunity … of the education that I wanted'.[142] The consequences of these emotivations would, in time, produce their own emotional issues as Caribbean children encountered the realities of British schooling. But here, suffice it to say that this contextual knowledge, functionally applied to serve emotional states, reveals the limits of postcolonial postulations on cultural systems and the self.

These hopes and ambitions existed as emotivations which coexisted with, buffered, and ran parallel to the negative emotional states produced within certain contextual domains of the Caribbean. Through the objective- or object-oriented emotions of hope and ambition, Caribbean migrants were able to remap negative feelings onto a broader canvas of meaning, attenuate or transmute suffering into epherma. Emotions *do* things, but humans *do things with emotions.* Hope and ambition were used as much as felt, and in this regard migration became a vehicle through which to attenuate, alter or attain emotional experiences, both a neutralising agent for negatively-experienced feelings and a springboard to achieve imagined futures of prosperity, fulfilment, satisfaction, and stability. This entails an enormous scholarly reconceptualisation of so-called "economic migration" by situating the inordinate

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London, 137-62; Rieko Karatani, *Defining British Citizenship: Empire, Commonwealth and Modern Britain* (London: Frank Cass, 2003), 106-78.

[140] See, for example, the story of "Louise" in Chamberlain, *Narratives of Exile,* 188: 'My son went to secondary school. His father used to give me money every month'.

[141] "Olga" quoted in Arbouin, *Nottingham Connection*, 20.

[142] "Beryl" quoted in Chamberlain, *Narratives of Exile,* 189.

focus on wage differentials or relative deprivation within historical contexts, and revealing the ways in which affectivity underpins such seemingly transactional thinking.

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