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**Author**

Christensen, Matthew J.

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STRATEGIES OF PLACEMENT/PRODUCTION OF IDENTITY:  
ADELAIDE SMITH CASELY HAYFORD AS AFRICAN  
VICTORIAN TRAVELER

Matthew J. Christensen

On July 8, 1920, at the age of 52, Adelaide Smith Casely Hayford along with her niece, Kathleen Easmon, left Freetown, Sierra Leone for what would become a two and a half year sojourn in the United States. This was by no means Casely Hayford's first trip abroad; she had lived in England from the ages four to seventeen, she studied music in Stuttgart for three and half years and, during the next thirty years, traveled back and forth between Sierra Leone, Ghana and London no less than five times. However, as her biographer, Adelaide Cromwell states, "she was. . . embarking on a journey that was to be even more important to her life and more unusual. . . than her voyage to Germany so many years earlier" (Casely Hayford and Casely Hayford 104). Rather than traveling to visit her extended family in Europe, Casely Hayford set off to "learn how Afro-Americans, especially girls, were educated and to raise money for her school in Freetown. America, therefore, was to become an educational venture and a possible source of independence" (104). The sections of her memoirs regarding this sojourn to the U.S. and of a second trip to the U.S. in 1925 are perhaps the most fascinating and fruitful for discussion of the implications of identity production in and through travel narrative. Whether self-conscious or not, Casely Hayford writes against a long and established tradition of imperialist travel writing about Africa by Europeans wherein African subjectivity is often undermined in the interest of ethnography, wildlife specimens and capital gain. It is likely that Casely Hayford met, though neither she nor her biographer say so, Europeans passing through Freetown on their way to various African locales to perform fieldwork for their own travel texts.

Traveling as a colonial subject places Casely Hayford in an ambivalent position where throughout the text she experiences anxiety of identity, of authority and relationship to her colonial and racial "authorities". Casely Hayford continually shows awareness of the lenses through which her American audiences mediate her and she continually negotiates to thwart and undermine their conceptions of her as an African. She draws from her experiences as an exile, a *metis*, a Krio, and an African cultural nationalist in her strategies of self-representation and to forward her project in the United States. By writing her travel and life experiences Casely Hayford interjects herself as a historical subject into the pre-independence history of Sierra Leone, and West Africa at large, and, in doing so, fills the gaps invariably left in imperial histories. Two versions of her memoirs have been

published, the first in serial form in 1953-54 in the *West Africa Review*, a monthly published in London presumably for a West African audience, and the second in 1983 by The Sierra Leone University Press along with a collection of her daughter's poetry titled *Mother and Daughter: Memoirs and Poems*, prepared by Adelaide Casely Hayford's granddaughter Lucinda Hunter (Hunter Interview). In discussing Casely Hayford's travel narrative I will draw on both texts, because there are several events included in each and not the other, in addition to several passages from the unpublished manuscript and letters written home during the trip.<sup>1</sup> I will finish by examining the difference between the two published texts because, as I stated above, there are several differences that, considered in the colonial context, expose very interesting and problematic political strategies by the *West Africa Review* editors.

Before delving into the text, it is important to have an understanding of Casely Hayford's background and what led her to travel to the U.S. in search of money and knowledge about Afro-American education. Casely Hayford is what Francoise Lionnet terms *metis*.<sup>2</sup> Included in her family tree is a successful Hausa trader great-grandmother, a Maroon (half West Indian) grandfather, a white British judge grandfather and a Fanti grandmother from the Gold Coast (Casely Hayford and Casely Hayford 21). She married Joseph Ephraim Casely Hayford, a Gold Coaster thus compounding the international make-up of her family. After her education in England and Germany, Casely Hayford returned to Freetown to teach, an occupation she would continue in one way or another her entire life. In 1898, she and her sister opened their own school with only one pupil. Though they managed to attract as many as eighty students, the school quickly folded. For reasons Casely Hayford either does not know or does not divulge, she faced a great deal of hostility from Freetown's Krio society. This hostility affected both her life in Freetown and her success as an educator (20). Prior to her return to Freetown she expressed anxiety about leaving England stating, "Africa at that time had no attraction for us because by now England seemed more like our real home. . . we had become strangers to the African environment" (19). To be snubbed by her peers could only have increased this anxiety and alienation. The Krio ethnic group, like its language, is a *metis*, a mixture of freed and escaped slaves from the Americas and Britain, and Africans "liberated" from illegal slave ships by the British navy. In the early part of the century Krio ethnicity was still a loosely structured entity, with only strands of "authentic", pre-colonial tradition or history to draw from and, as a result, Krios constructed a combined African and European identity. Akintola Wyse and others have pointed out this identity caused no end of anxiety for the Krio inhabitants of Sierra

Leone.<sup>3</sup> What it meant to be Krio was to inhabit an ambivalent identity, culturally both European and African. Though Casely Hayford should have found in the Freetown's Krio community a shared identity, their rejection of her compounded her anxiety, yet, strangely enough, encouraged her to continue her work toward Africanized girls vocational education. In and out of Freetown for the next twenty years she never gave up her desire to open her Africanized vocational school for Freetown girls and because she was never able to raise funds for the school from the Krio community, she left for the United States.

Casely Hayford enters the United States as all good travelers do, with a "view of the Statue of Liberty, one hand extended in welcome and the other raised to heaven, filled us with great enthusiasm" (Casely Hayford and Casely Hayford 36). Such an arrival positions the text within the genre of immigrant texts. Immediately Casely Hayford and Easmon become objects of interest and curiosity: "There was an array of officials waiting to investigate our passports, our pockets and every detail of our proposed visit. . . The customs house officials, never having seen African women before, were full of curiosity and expressed deep admiration for our collection of African exhibits which we proposed to use in public meetings" (36). Casely Hayford finds herself in a position very similar to many she experienced in Germany where she "occupied the place of curio No. 1" (11), always at the center of attention, always conspicuous and always consumed as exotic object by various Germans she met. Within several hours of their arrival in New York, a Harlem newspaper reported that two African Princesses had arrived (37). Following the appearance of the article a film crew arrived at the boarding house to film the two women:

A projectoscope was installed on the front steps of our boarding house. It attracted a throng of Negro spectators who also wished to be in the picture. We didn't do anything much. Kathleen sat on a chair while I handed her our beautiful exhibits in turn. Later, some Africans came up to be introduced in typical style. That was really the hit of the performance. Unfortunately, we never saw any but the producer and the projectoscope. We considered this rather hard lines, but the film was produced, because when we visited some other American towns, we were often greeted with, "oh, we know you already? We saw you at the movies." (37).

Casely Hayford expresses both pleasure and anxiety in this passage. Coming to the U.S. to collect money, such attention is beneficial and she takes pleasure in the attention shown her; however, the image and its distribution are entirely out of her control. Throughout the memoir

Casely Hayford mentions strategies she deploys to control how her audiences perceive her. The fact that she and Easmon are so quickly thrust into a media spotlight beyond their control must be read as a moment of anxiety and ambivalence. The passage exposes the ways in which identities, especially those as "foreign" as Casely Hayford's, are always already mediated. Casely Hayford is never able to represent herself to her audiences without first demystifying their beliefs about Africa and Africans. Likewise, Casely Hayford operates under certain assumptions about what she believes Americans believe about Africa and Africans and what she believes to be true about Americans.

Located in the passage are stereotypes Americans would have held of Africans. That the newspaper article refers to Casely Hayford and Easmon as African princesses is very interesting. To this day, next to barbarism, poverty, and savagery, representations of African royalty permeate Western images of the African continent. Royalty serves as a mechanism to account for those Africans such as Casely Hayford and Easmon who do not fit into the neat categories of savage or barbarian or the class-based notions of an impoverished continent. At that time in the U.S. there was no lack of savage images of barbarians worshipping fetishes and eating one another. Aside from books and media, missionaries spread stories of heathen practices to raise money to further their "civilizing" and Christianizing missions in Africa. American missionaries had been in Sierra Leone as early as the 1840s and their British counterparts even earlier and through accounts to the churches and associations which supported them U.S. audiences would have been at least remotely aware of the myth of the "Dark Continent" (Abraham 20).

Casely Hayford draws on four strategies to debunk the image-repertoire her audiences held of Africa: (1) she undermines and demystifies commonly held U.S. stereotypes; (2) she presents objects of material culture; (3) she manipulates her physical self-representation; (4) she manufactures and sells picture postcards of herself and her niece. Through these strategies she negotiates a space from which she can ask for money and resources. Additionally, by drawing on these strategies she negotiates a space from which to control discourse regarding Africa and her personal identity. Unlike a traveler such as Richard Burton who shot his revolver into the air whenever he felt his control slip, Casely Hayford relies on rhetoric, charm, and a thorough knowledge of the images her audiences held of Africa.

Casely Hayford's first strategy is to quickly undermine and reposition her audience's perception of Africa. For over two years, she and her niece were on what amounts to a non-stop lecture tour. In between visiting black schools and colleges, the two visited church after church, attended meeting after meeting to present plans for their vocational school. They spoke to aid organizations, political action

groups and social clubs. Though one would expect them to have targeted more elite churches and groups, they generally spoke in middle-class Black churches. Unfortunately there is no written record of any of her talks that I could find or that Cromwell cites in the biography, however she alludes to the general content of her presentations. She writes:

The Negroes had expected to see two half-civilized, illiterate women, but after they had heard us speak, they were overwhelmed with enthusiasm. Our address had dwelt on the good points of our down-trodden race instead of the usual description of barbaric fetish practices and devil-worshipping rites to which they were accustomed (38).

And again at Tuskegee Institute:

I spoke for thirty minutes, dwelling lengthily on the fine side of African life which had hitherto been a closed book to my hearers, since other speakers were prone to narrate only the barbarities, fetish rites and devil worship. No doubt, they did this to arouse sympathy; but its affect was to make the American Negroes ashamed of their heritage (43).

Her rhetorical strategy assumes the worst images of Africa as given and instead of presenting her audience with what they would have expected, she represents an Africa that is neither barbarous nor a Pan-Africanist gloriana. This strategy of undermining and repositioning places Casely Hayford in a seat of control wherein she commands the discourse. She presents her audience new information about Africa, exhibiting material cultural evidence to back her claims, and, with her discourse, draws her audience's attention back to herself. The objectifying gaze directed at her earlier by the newsreel camera is transformed into one of awe of her authority as a speaking knowing subject.

The second strategy she and Easmon utilize is to present objects of African material culture during their public talks. Integrally linked to the first strategy the exhibition of these objects serves much the same purpose of representing Africa as a culturally sophisticated continent. In the memoirs, Casely Hayford mentions by name only one of the catalog of objects: a woven blanket (*kpokpoi*) from the southern region of Sierra Leone which was stolen on board the steamer from Freetown. *Kpokpoi* cloth is an elaborately and beautifully woven blanket, one which in a western context would signify a certain complexity of culture and civilization. In the school Casely Hayford eventually opened, the students were required to learn vocational skills which incorporated traditional West African crafts, cloth making, etc. with Victorian

homemaking. She continually emphasizes the Africaness of her school and it is likely the exhibits she displayed reflected the types of objects her students would learn to make. Again her strategy attempts to undermine American held notions of African culture; rather than discussing charms and scarification as primary forms of cultural production, she brings physical examples of industry and art. It is difficult to judge her audience's response to the artifacts, but whether they showed sincere admiration or mere curiosity Casely Hayford believes them to have been effective.

In their effort to undermine perceived notions of Africa's cultural products Casely Hayford and her niece Kathleen Easmon problematize the traditional economic exchange between Africa and its imperial exploiters. (Though technically not an imperial power, the United States' economically exploitive relationship during slavery and with neighboring Liberia requires its inclusion as an imperial conspirator). With few exceptions, trade between Europe and Africa has taken, and continues to take, the continent's raw materials back to the metropole for manufacture, after which the manufactured goods are returned to African markets. Casely Hayford and Easmon, during their sojourn, do just the opposite. They take Africa's manufactured cultural goods to the United States in return for raw materials for their school--money and knowledge. This mode of exchange is not without its problems as any form of exchange within a unbalanced economic context cannot escape implication in the skewed imperial power structure. Casely Hayford never actually sells any of her cultural exhibits, even had she, it is difficult to imagine transporting enough to last two and a half years. Without an actual sale, however, she creates an exchange wherein her audience gets a glimpse of her somewhat exoticized wares and they, in turn, donate money to her school. She also manipulates the consumption of African material culture already present in the West via European and North American artists and museums. The complex economics of her program reflect the overall complexity of her text.

Casely Hayford's third strategy for negotiating her position in the United States is through a manipulation of her physical self-representation. As she states, "In our picturesque African costumes, we came to Indianapolis, saw and conquered" (38). Both the *West Africa Review* serial and Cromwell's biography include photos from the United States and in each, Casely Hayford wears Ashanti kente cloth, an interesting choice considering she claims a Sierra Leonean identity (though both her husband and father were Gold Coasters). Kathleen Easmon likewise wears a West African style buba and lappa. The choice in clothing points to an attempt to portray an "authentic" African identity. Casely Hayford herself grew up in "frilly white drawers under stiff plaid dresses with removable sleeves, and scarlet cashmere shawls crossed over the chest and tied in a bunch at the back" (4). Among Krio

society of the day British fashion was still the rage. This is not to say that Casely Hayford is somehow misrepresenting the Freetown she wants to help. In 1887, over thirty years before her trip to the U.S., the Dress Reform Society formed in Freetown whose members encouraged the Black Englishmen, as the Krio elite were often called, to adopt African style clothing and to Africanize their names (Wyse 52). Casely Hayford herself, during a 1923 visit to Freetown by Prince of Wales, "approached all the African ladies whom [she] knew would be asked to meet him, begging them to put on native costumes. . . They all turned [her] down. Nothing daunted, [she] wore for the occasion, a plain black, satin *lappah* and a most beautifully embroidered *boobah*. . ." (Casely Hayford and Casely Hayford 52). On the one hand, wearing African style clothing increases the drama and effect of their appearance in front of American audiences, lending an air of authenticity to their project and, on the other, allows the two to maintain their African identities in the United States.

The fourth strategy Casely Hayford utilizes is the manufacture of picture postcards of herself and Kathleen which she in turn sells. At the National Baptist Women's Convention in 1920, they are not placed on the program but the organizer of the conference suggests they take advantage of a photographer attending the convention and have postcards of themselves made. Casely Hayford states, "Before the evening session, we were reinforced with a huge pile and amassed a considerable sum" (39). Having the photos taken allows Casely Hayford to do what the newsreel producer did, but on her own terms. She attempts to mediate the public consumption of her image. Again, this is a site of real ambivalence: to what extent is commodifying one's self and culture politically responsible and to what extent is this an act of self-representation and self-definition in a foreign and potentially hostile culture? Unfortunately, Casely Hayford mentions the postcards only this once and Cromwell does not linger on the topic, so the continued practice and its affect cannot be fully ascertained.

Always at the edges of her attempts to mediate U.S. audience's conceptions of Africa, race surfaces at several points in the text to further complicate her project. When race proves to be an issue in her fund-raising, it affects her process of self-identification. She states, "I liked Chicago least of all the many cities we visited" (41). The displeasure arises not from any aesthetic problems but because, "we sensed a superiority complex from the well-to-do, off-white Negroes who abounded on every side" (41). She deflects her racial discomfort onto the city itself. Discussion begins and ends with this sentence which makes this one of the most frustrating absences in the entire text. Casely Hayford is no stranger to racial prejudice and discrimination; in New York, for example, she goes to Harlem because all of the other hotels were segregated (37); as a young woman in Germany she



describes the deep melancholia she felt as a result of always being conspicuous (14); and on the train to Tuskegee in an episode that appears in the unpublished manuscript of the memoirs and in shortened form in *The Sierra Leone University Press* version and not at all in the *West Africa Review* version she states:

We traveled in the Jim Crow car, which, of course, could have been easily avoided, had we only proclaimed our nationality to the Railway officials, as only American Negroes were barred from the other carriages. Such a procedure was entirely out of the question, because we could not possibly wound the feelings of all the kind, generous, coloured folk who had opened their homes and hearts to us (Cromwell 111).

And politically, Casely Hayford had been the president of the Women's Branch of the United Negro Improvement Association, Marcus Garvey's political organization and the mailing address she used in the United States was that of the NAACP's New York offices (96, 120).

Casely Hayford's shared racial identity with the students and faculty of the Tuskegee Institute provides a space in which she displaces the stress of her travels. She describes at some length the chapel service at which she speaks at Tuskegee:

We took our places on the platform with the Faculty, three hundred strong, directly behind us, and a magnificent orchestra behind them. In addition, the platform was thronged with visitors from many parts of the world. We sat there and my eyes filled with tears as we watched the students, two thousand of them, take their places. . .

The Negro Spiritual "Deep River" to Coleridge Taylor's immortal setting, rang through chapel and almost reduced me to tears at the memory of his genial personality and loving friendship. It took me all my time to regain my composure before I stood up. As for poor Kathleen, the entire proceedings were too overwhelming for her (Casely Hayford and Casely Hayford 43).

The Coleridge Taylor she refers to is Samuel Coleridge Taylor, a prominent Anglo-Sierra Leonean composer with whom she had been friends in London (23). Even in the United States she finds herself enveloped in the Sierra Leonean and African Diasporas. Throughout the U.S. sections of the narrative, the chapel service is the only time she describes feelings of homesickness or sadness. That she experiences homesickness and melancholia at a Black vocational college results from at least two sources: first, the Tuskegee Institute is the embodiment of

her proposed school; second, Casely Hayford feels a racial solidarity with the students and faculty of the institute. She is at home despite the geographical distance between Tuskegee Institute and Freetown. Hence, at an institution such as Tuskegee Institute, Casely Hayford would have felt comfortable and safe enough to express sadness and melancholia.

Cromwell argues that in the United States Casely Hayford expresses a stronger sense of self than at any other point in her life abroad. Drawing on letters from the U.S. to J.E. Casely Hayford, from whom she had legally separated several years before Cromwell contrasts the content and rhetoric with those of earlier letters. Whereas the earlier letters from England describe illness upon illness and a need for money for their daughter Gladys' education, the letters from the U.S. never once mention health and her voice strengthens in regard to Gladys' education. She appears much more forceful and unwilling to cede any control to Mr. Casely Hayford (Cromwell 128). As I have argued here Casely Hayford achieves a great deal of success in her strategies of self-representation which is all the more supported by Cromwell's argument concerning the letters. From the *Memoirs* and from other letters home Casely Hayford feels she succeeds in narrating a strong self. These same letters, however, point to the anxiety and ambivalence Hayford feels about this identity.

Nowhere in the memoirs does Casely Hayford mention her estranged husband, though she is in continual contact with him and, as she discovers, his name is quite well known in America's political circles. The *Crisis*, the official organ of the NAACP, announced shortly after Casely Hayford and Easmon's arrival, "Mrs. Casely Hayford, wife of the Hon. Casely Hayford, is expected to arrive in New York from Sierra Leone. . ." (121). In a letter to Mr. Casely Hayford, she writes, "I never miss an opportunity of rubbing in who you are. I understand that *Gold Coast Native Institutions* is now in Yale University but I should like you please to send me a copy as soon as possible. . ." (121). More telling yet, she writes in a later letter to him, "People out here think that we are a very united couple, and I want them still to continue to think so. That is why [the *Crisis*] have applied to me for these facts." (123). *Gold Coast Native Institutions* is the book her husband wrote in which he defends traditional political structures against colonial power and, apparently, *The Gold Coast Leader*, a newspaper Mr. Casely Hayford edited, was known and circulated among Black political circles in the U.S. During the second year of Adelaide Casely Hayford's tour, Marcus Garvey visited Ghana and knighted Mr. Casely Hayford for his political activities and for his work in founding the National Congress of British West Africa (120). Adelaide Casely Hayford's written text conveniently leaves this information out, an absence which directly contradicts the beliefs and

attitudes about Africa by Americans she claims they held. Also, she conveniently leaves absent the real nature of her relationship with her husband. There are at least two strategies she may have hoped to accomplish by maintaining the appearance of a successful marriage: first, gender politics may have made it a necessary deception, her church audiences may not have been as receptive and giving to a fifty year old woman from a "failed" marriage; second, Casely Hayford may have found Joseph's reputation a boon for her project. Leaving her husband absent from this section of the written text also lends her a high degree of power and control. Allowing her Freetown audiences full knowledge of Black America's familiarity with J.E. Casely Hayford and with African political movements could have only diminished the respect she sought to maintain. She describes several occasions where she experienced hostility from her Freetown peers with whom she wanted respect and friendship. It is not until the early 1970s that she begins to receive historical and cultural recognition (Metzger 47-53) and not until the 1980s that she is canonized in histories of Sierra Leone (Turay *et. al.* 52-3).

The absence and difference between her rhetoric and action uncovers an anxiety that she must have felt as one, a West African traveling in the United States, and two a West African who had little lived experience in West Africa. The United States—the Black middle-class one she most often experiences—provides a space in which she can maintain a strong solidified persona: an African who dresses as an African and who owns African things. England is the metropolis, it is where she grew up and is a source of her displaced and disjointed identity. The United States, despite its history of apartheid, nevertheless shares none or little of Britain's imperialist stigma. In such a space she can virtually create herself. Nonetheless, as Cromwell and the *Memoirs* point out she never escapes anxiety and ambivalence in her assumed persona. As the letter to her husband suggests, Casely Hayford is afraid to be found out, to be discovered as being someone different from who she presents.

Her anxiety however should not be understood as a detriment to her project and to the creation of her identity; rather, it should be read as a site of productive ambivalence. Turning to Francoise Lionnet's discourse on *metis* women's autobiography, Lionnet argues:

It is at that precise moment of disjunction between inner and outer or past and present reality that the narrative text articulates a dialogue between two instances of the self, the "I" and the "she," the "I" of the here and now, who reconstructs the absent, past "she," the emancipation of the "I" being triggered and actualized by the voice of the "she" taking shape on the page (Lionnet 192).

She goes on, "The *topos* created by this interaction is the privileged textual space where initially unquestioned assumptions about self and other. . . can be examined in dramatic mode: this is where autobiography acquires a meaning and a function not unlike those of fiction with its myth-making and myth-deflating power" (192-3). In short, identity takes its form at the very site of ambivalence. Though in her fifties, Casely Hayford still finds herself in a state of anxiety with regard to who she believes she is. Her travels in the United States allow her to claim an African identity which excludes none of the elements which compose her as *metis*, as Krio. After her trip to the United States she appears before the Prince of Wales in African-style clothing, an act that celebrates both her Europeaness and her Africaness. As much as providing the ability to narrate her life, Casely Hayford's travels in the United States provide a space in which to turn her anxiety and ambivalence into a productive rather than a debilitating asset.

As a point of exit I want to examine the differences in the published versions of texts because, as stated earlier, there are several problematic differences. Published texts are always already beyond the control of their creators. Each reader brings to the text cultural and intertextual baggage through which it is mediated. Even before the public ever has access to a text it faces an editor's razor. The first version of Adelaide Casely Hayford's memoirs appeared in serial form in the *West Africa Review* in beginning in October, 1953 and ending the following June. The *West Africa Review* was edited and published in London for presumably an African audience and carried stories about all of Britain's colonies in West Africa, and in addition to the articles, there appeared photos of various philanthropic British citizens performing good deeds in Africa. The second version was edited by Adelaide Casely Hayford's granddaughter (by marriage), Lucinda Hunter, and published by The Sierra Leone University Press thirty years later in 1983 in Freetown. Though there are differences between the two accounts of the American travels—the *West Africa Review* excludes the entire description of Tuskegee Institute—the most interesting differences occur in the first few pages of the narratives.

The *WAR* text begins with a delineation of her father's side of the family, whereas the Sierra Leone version begins with her mother's side. Her grandfather, as the *WAR* text carefully points out, was a "good old Yorkshire man" who went out to the colonies to help enforce the end of the slave trade. It isn't until the eighth paragraph that any mention of Casely Hayford's maternal and African lineage is described (Casely Hayford 1058). In the later version, both the maternal and paternal lineages make their way to the beginning of the text. Without a complete copy of the unpublished manuscript it is difficult to say how Casely Hayford began. Clearly though, the *WAR* version manipulates

the text and consequently inscribes her memoirs into a colonial discourse. Casely Hayford's audience reads her life mediated through the lens of colonialist paternalism; she owes her life to the graces of a British judge who came out to civilize the colonies by putting an end to the savage slave trade. A second tactic employed by the British editors of the text is a manipulation and ordering of the chronology. It is not until after her father moves the family from Freetown to the Isle of Jersey and her mother's death do the family resources begin to dwindle (Cromwell 40), however the *WAR* text convolutes the chronology and makes the Smith's life in Freetown one of near squalor, "whereas we youngsters were sentenced to daily ration of locusts and wild honey." (No mention at all is made to the children's having had to eat locusts in Hunter's edited text.) Then, one paragraph later they are moving on to Britain to "the best education they could afford" (Casely Hayford 1060).

Long before Casely Hayford's identity blossoms as an African, as an educator, and as a traveler in the United States, she is fully inscribed as a British colonial subject which can only adversely affect reading the remaining text. I have argued, however, the text is much too slippery to be completely reinscribed into colonialist discourse. Absences, reorderings, excessive emphases and the like can only maintain an incomplete seal around the text because its sites of production—the moments of ambivalence and anxiety—break open and rupture the colonial veneer. As Lionnet argues, "the self-portrait is the medium of subversion par excellence, which relativizes the fetishistic recourse to a foundational world beyond its discourse. . . It thus simultaneously demystifies the writing of both the self (auto) and the culture (ethno) because it involves the self and its cultural contexts in a dialogue that transcends all possibility of reducing one to the other" (Lionnet 121-2). The most productive site of the *WAR* memoirs then is the third figure of the dialectic between the writer's pen and the editor's razor, which given Adelaide Casely Hayford's fighting spirit is probably right where she would have liked it.

In 1960, at the age of 92, when she died, Adelaide Smith Casely Hayford had crossed the Atlantic 22 times. She had met Paul Robeson, W.E.B. DuBois, Samuel Coleridge Taylor and the Prince of Wales, and she had made successful inroads toward de-colonizing the Sierra Leonean curriculum. Upon returning from the United States she established the Girl's Vocational School which she oversaw until her retirement, and its closing, in 1940. The following twenty years she spent writing and speaking about cultural nationalism and women's education (Turay et. al. 52-3). Though not consciously aware of its European counterparts Adelaide Casely Hayford rewrites and reinvents the entire tradition of travel writing. As a combination autobiography and travel narrative, *Memoirs* asserts a subjective voice unbound by imperial constraint and through its successful strategies to assert a self

and a new discourse on Africa the text exposes the inability of colonialism to ever fully inscribe its cultures and subjects into ahistoric passive recipients of British culture.

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NOTES AND REFERENCES

- <sup>1</sup> I draw the unpublished accounts and the letters from Cromwell's biography.  
<sup>2</sup> See Françoise Lionnet, *Autobiographical Voices: Race, Gender, Self-Portraiture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989).  
<sup>3</sup> See Akintola Wyse, *The Krio of Sierra Leone: An Interpretive History* (Freetown: W.D. Okrafo-Smart & Co. 1989). Also, Spitzer, Leo, *The Creoles of Sierra Leone: Responses to Colonialism, 1870-1945* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1974).

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