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Landscaping Englishness: Respectability and Returnees in Mandeville, Jamaica¹

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Abstract

Since the early 1990s, the town of Mandeville has become a haven for returning residents² (henceforth returnees), particularly Jamaicans who migrated to England in the 1950s and 1960s and subsequently returned to Jamaica in the 1990s to retire (See Nettleford 1998). As Harry Goulbourne (1999, 164) observes, "...The hill town of Mandeville has acquired the reputation of being a desirous destination for returnees who create a prosperous ghetto characterised by some English pastimes: tea in the afternoon,

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² "Returning resident" is a government category for a person who leaves Jamaica for five years and claims the title for customs purposes upon moving back to the island. In this chapter, I use "returning residents", "returned migrants" and "returnees" interchangeably to refer to individuals who migrated to the United Kingdom in the 1950s and 1960s and remained there up to the 1990s when they opted to retire in Jamaica, unless otherwise specified. Although exact numbers are difficult to determine due to the transient nature of "returning resident" status and the requirement of only *one* returnee per household to register with customs, 20,085 individuals enrolled for returning resident status between 1993 and 2003 (Planning Institute of Jamaica 2004). While only 250 individuals joined Mandeville's two Returning Resident Associations in the year 2000, estimates suggest that there are enough returning residents in Mandeville to create at least six active associations. Moreover, the 250 does not count spouses or the returning residents who did not wish to formally enlist in the association(s), but often participate in the group's organised activities (Personal Communication 2001)

the cultivation and display of well manicured lawns and gardens ordered for more aesthetic pleasure than practical use, which stand in sharp contrast to the utilitarian kitchen and fruit gardens of rural Jamaica. Some would see an irony here because the town of Mandeville in the parish of Manchester, like Simla in the Himalayan foothills, used to be the retreat for British Administrators in the colonial past during the hottest months.” Referring to returnees as “the English”, many Jamaicans and others attribute returnees’ choice to move to Mandeville as a deep internalization of English values and aesthetics as well as a sense of superiority over the “local” Jamaican population.

Introduction

While Mandeville has always been a choice retirement location for those Jamaicans and expatriates who could afford to purchase property in the town, it has not always been viewed as a sanctuary for returning residents. In fact, it was only with the relatively large remigration of individuals who lived in the United Kingdom (8,634 between 1993 and 2003) that the prominence of Mandeville increased, an association that Jamaicans and others presume reflects the town's unique British heritage as a hill station (Planning Institute of Jamaica 2004). In this paper, I consider how the idea of Mandeville as an "English place" resonates with *returnees'* sense of being an "English people". Recognising place as both a geographical location as well as a particular location within a social hierarchy, I interrogate the ways in which the "respectability" — a value which emerged in the transition from the plantation system to emancipation — accorded to Mandeville is intricately tied to the gendered experience of migration, return migration and landscapes. I begin by tracing the production of Mandeville as an English place, with particular attention to the ways in which respectability was honed through the cultivation of (English) family life, homes and landscapes. Drawing upon ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Mandeville in 2000 and 2001³, I then turn to the experience of return migration, with particular attention to the gendered relationship between the attainment of respectability and returnees' sense of identity and belonging.

The English heritage of Mandeville

Located 628 metres above sea level on the Manchester plateau, Mandeville and its surrounds remained isolated until the English and Spanish contest⁴ over the island. H. P. Jacobs (1994) marks the Spanish arrival into the present boundaries of Manchester at Porus, located twelve kilometres from the centre of Mandeville, in 1656. Despite the early Spanish presence, Manchester remained relatively uninhabited until 1814 when the freehold landowners of the parishes of Vere, St. Elizabeth and Clarendon appealed to the House of Assembly for the creation of a new, centralised administrative centre. The measure (approved in Act 55 George III C 23) resulted in the establishment of Manchester, named after the governor of the island, the Duke of Manchester, Williams Montagu⁵ (Brathwaite 1971). The parish remains the youngest parish in Jamaica.

At its outset, Manchester comprised 250 landed proprietors, 750 free people of colour and 15,000 slaves (Sibley n.d.). Two years later Mandeville, named for Montagu's eldest son Lord Mandeville, was appointed the capital. In order to purchase land in Mandeville, the vestry (six vestrymen and two magistrates) determined that a man should hold British nationality and must own at least ten slaves or alternatively earn a salary of £160 per

³ Research was based upon ethnographic fieldwork in Mandeville in 2000 and 2001 which included (but was not confined to) participation in Returning Resident Association meetings and functions, living in a returning resident neighbourhood as well as in-depth interviews with twenty returnees concerning their return and the material culture of home.

⁴ Before the Spanish landed in Jamaica in 1494, the island was inhabited by Arawak Indians who arrived from South America between AD 600 and AD 900 (Sherlock and Bennett 1998).

⁵ Montagu was a governor of Jamaica between 1808 and 1827.

annum in 1819 (Grant 1946, 11). The next year the vestry raised the requirements to £200, or twenty slaves, a condition which continued to increase annually.

Once the capital was established, the vestry planned four buildings in the town: the courthouse, parsonage, gaol/workhouse and church. The courthouse, noted today as an historical monument, was completed in 1817. Ornamented with Doric columns and a double staircase, the Georgian-inspired courthouse was built by slaves out of limestone bricks. The courthouse still stands today as a symbol of the law and order established under British rule. Across the village green (now a park named after the long-standing mayor Cecil Charleton) stands St. Mark's Anglican Church⁶. The accompanying rectory, the first official house built in Mandeville, was rented out as a tavern by the first rector, the controversial Reverend George Wilson Bridges. In the mid-nineteenth century, a number of English troops living at the garrison in the town centre were buried in the parish churchyard after a yellow fever outbreak.

Unlike the rest of the island which was dominated by large sugar (and later banana) estates, the parish of Manchester became known for the presence of small coffee plantations established after the prohibitions were lifted on coffee importations to Britain (Hall 1959, Braithwaite 1971, Jacobs 1994, Higman 1995). The rocky limestone soil and the cooler climate enjoyed throughout Manchester set the environmental conditions for coffee to thrive in the Carpenter Mountains, the May Day Mountains and in the area north of Mile Gully. With its relatively more flexible labour system⁷, the emergence of coffee plantations resulted in two distinct features of colonial Manchester. In contrast to the predominance of owner absenteeism on sugar estates, two-thirds of the proprietors lived on or near their coffee plantations⁸. Shepherd (2002) attributes this pattern to the small size of the plantations as well as the expense of employing others to oversee the property, which made living abroad less feasible for the coffee proprietors who did not share the wealth, prestige or political influence of the absentee sugar estate owners who could afford to return to Europe. This residence pattern resulted in closer supervision of the slaves by the estate owners who married and brought their wives to the area. Although there are debates surrounding the extent to which Creole or African slaves rebelled more frequently (see Braithwaite 1971, Higman 1995), Jacobs (1994) suggests that coffee plantation proprietors encouraged marriage, European family patterns and participation in religious life. Catherine Hall (2002) has revealed that while frontiers and discovery remained colonial men's domain, the wives of plantation proprietors, missionaries and other white women played an important role in colonial Jamaica. While men took charge of the economic and political, white women were tasked with conveying the values of Englishness and whiteness. In particular, the cultivation of homes and of gardens by white women were viewed as moral "object lessons" which were designed to

⁶ Completed in 1820, one of the church's unique features is the lynch gate, "a roofed gate in the churchyard under which the bier traditionally rests during the initial part of a funeral" (Bowen 1986). It also possesses a gleaming cross, constructed out of local alumina.

⁷ Higman (1995, 26–27) suggests that "the organization of labour was less strictly regimented" and its division more flexible on the coffee estates; in Manchester human labour was often supplemented by livestock that were used to power the coffee mills due to the "very few streams and rivers present from which water power could be accessed" (Monteith 2002, p 12; Delle 1998).

⁸ For a comparison of sugar plantations, see Austin-Broos 1997 and Harrison 2001.

teach “order, civilization, Christianity, domesticity” (Hall 2002, 113) to the emergent creole class⁹. After emancipation in 1838, the large upheavals occurring across Jamaica between slaves and planters were relatively absent in Mandeville and Manchester¹⁰, and many of the freed slaves became independent farmers who grew coffee and other small crops. Jacobs further observes that in 1950 the parish of Manchester held the third lowest illegitimacy rate on the island, behind the Kingston-St. Andrew Metropolitan area and the parish of St. Ann (Jacobs 1994). In the following section, I turn to contemporary Mandeville and the ways in which male and female returnees grapple with the tensions between the English heritage of Mandeville and their own legacy of Englishness derived through the experience of living in England.

A respectable retirement

Currently over 161,000 people live in the parish of Manchester, with just under one-third of Manchester’s residents residing in greater Mandeville. Mandeville continues to maintain its reputation for civility, education and order. Alongside the more established schools such as Manchester High School, Bel-Air Academy serves the expatriate community as well as the children of the town’s wealthy elite. Bible colleges recruit young men and women to the area, as does Northern Caribbean University (NCU) which is the first university on the island located outside Kingston. Local Jamaican artists’ works appear in Bloomfield Great House, a renowned steakhouse and former coffee plantation, and there is an annual art fair sponsored by the Catholic Centre. The charity event and opening night dinner feature Mandeville’s most prominent citizens. Corresponding with this English heritage is a narrative of wealth and status. Mandeville possesses a large population of highly educated citizens, many of them individuals with foreign degrees and honours. It is also the wealthiest parish on the island because of the development and influence of the bauxite industry¹¹. As a result, the town offers a wide range of services, such as supermarkets, small grocers, pharmacies, hardware stores, florists, banks, insurance and investment services, as well as local and foreign fast food

⁹ In nineteenth century Nevis, Olwig (1993) reveals that “it became common to consecrate a new house, or a house which had been enlarged or rebuilt by holding a social gathering” by the Methodist church rather than through the common practice of celebrating a new house with a secular (African) celebration. (83).

¹⁰ There is some controversy over the extent to which the large-scale rebellions were experienced throughout Mandeville and Manchester. Hall (1959) argues that the Moravian churches of Manchester actually initiated what later became known as the Baptist Revival. While Hall presents the spread of the revival throughout the island as reasonable, he is perplexed by its Manchester origins. As Hall queries, “It is difficult to explain why the movement began where it did. Manchester contained no sugar estates. It was a relatively prosperous parish of small settlers. It is unlikely that the religious feeling arose as a reaction to any peculiar economic distress. In part, it may be described as a desire to break away from the rather hum-drum routine of daily labour. Social amenities and recreational facilities were limited. The chapel was usually the social centre. An intense emotional appeal by the local preacher might well sway a congregation, and the response, as well as the appeal, might prove infectious” (237).

¹¹ Bauxite strongly redefined the dynamics of life in Mandeville after WWII. The bauxite industry commenced in 1942 when Mr. R. F. Innes, the Jamaican Government Senior Agricultural Chemist, informed the government of the rich alumina content of the soil. Alcan Aluminium Ltd (Montreal) subsequently surveyed the soil on behalf of the Jamaican government. After the content of the soil was formally confirmed, Alcan carried out a second survey, shipping 2,500 tonnes of bauxite ore to North America in October of 1943. When the Jamaican government decided to commercially develop the land, Alcan started building a site at Kirkvine, just outside of Mandeville, in 1950 under the name of Jamaica Bauxite Limited, which was a fully owned subsidiary of Alumina Canada Limited. Windalco purchased the Kirkvine site (and corresponding site at Ewarton) from Alcan in 2007.

chains and numerous shopping malls. Many of these shops, supermarkets and groceries have taken advantage of the presence of the “new English” in Mandeville by importing lamb, British-style baked beans and special tea biscuits.

Throughout my research, I talked at varying lengths with one hundred returnees about their return and why they decided to move to Mandeville. For those returnees I interviewed in detail, three-quarters had lived in the greater London area for an average of 37 years, returning to Jamaica around 1996. This date reflects that returnees from the United Kingdom represented the largest single group of returnees between 1994 and 2001. Eighty per cent of the individuals I interviewed and talked with returned to Jamaica as married couples in their mid-60s, although the number of widows and widowers continues to increase with time. In our discussions, the English heritage of Mandeville remained evident to returnees, particularly in the town’s architecture and town planning. On the morning walks in Ingleside (“English side”), a local neighbourhood, returnees enjoy identifying the beauty of the large, modern homes alongside the vestiges of the English past, such as bricks and chimneys. Returning residents often remark upon the green hills of the surrounding countryside and delight in the fog of the winter mornings which remind them of their days in England. In fact, returnees’ interpretation of the landscape is not unlike the British troops who transformed the area into a hill station and summer retreat in the 1800s because it reminded many returnees of the green rolling hills of the English interior.

However, despite the seemingly self-evident association with Englishness, returnees described their decision, priorities and motivation to return to Jamaica quite differently. The first motivation involved the possibility of attaining an ideal retirement lifestyle. Most returnees felt they had spent their lives working hard and had earned the right to retire. Besides being familiar, Jamaica represented a place that, unlike England, was enjoyably warm year-round. Because many returnees endure arthritis, a condition complicated by the cold English climate, Jamaica also improved their health and ability to stay active. For example, the Thompsons represent a typical example of a couple who made decisions to relocate to Mandeville based upon lifestyle (Horst 2006). When they first started making preparations to return to Jamaica, the couple contemplated living in Hanover where Mrs Thompson’s family originated. In Hanover, they envisioned a life at the seaside, enjoying the ocean breeze, surrounded by extended family members. The couple also considered living in the hills of Kingston where they had easy access to shopping, cultural events and aspects of urban life they had become accustomed to in London. However, they disliked the need for extensive security systems and the traffic and pollution in Kingston itself. The Thompsons eventually decided upon Mandeville because it possessed cultural events, was only a short (two- to three-hour) drive from Kingston and had all of the modern conveniences such as health care, water and electricity, without the crime of Kingston. In addition, and after living so many years in England, they had become accustomed to its climate and found that Jamaica’s north coast and Kingston made their hands and feet swell, an uncomfortable physical side effect of the heat which could potentially restrict their ability to enjoy life in Jamaica.

Proximity to family and the parish of birth helped to determine where other returnees relocated. Thomas-Hope (1992) notes that in the 1950s and 1960s, the rural areas of Manchester experienced a significant rate of migration¹² and, not surprisingly, half of the individuals I interviewed at length were from the parish of Manchester, a pattern which Chevannes and Ricketts (1997) also observed in their study of returnees in Kingston and on Jamaica's north coast. In fact, individuals who lived in Manchester as children referred to Mandeville as "my town" and could tell childhood stories about visiting the large market or shopping over the Christmas season. Likewise, individuals relocated to areas where their family house or property remained, although many were unable to build on family land due to its inaccessibility and lack of facilities. Other returnees moved in or near their home parish and recreated a version of family land in Mandeville. For example, three siblings who returned from England built homes on individual plots adjacent to each other while their other two siblings moved five minutes away on adjacent streets. While the direct proximity between the siblings remained unusual, most returnees thought it ideal to live in the same town where they could easily visit their brothers, sisters, cousins, aunties and uncles.

Finally, returnees opted for Mandeville because they learned that there was a relatively large returning resident community. For example, Mr and Mrs Brown went back to their home parishes in eastern Jamaica only to discover that very few of their family or their friends were still living there. Mr Brown, who was more reluctant to return to Jamaica than his wife, worried that he would feel lonely and trapped in the parish of their birth. He also managed to convince his wife that Mandeville would be a better place to move to because they could make friends with other returnees who had shared their experience of living in England. In addition, two of their close friends moved to Mandeville as they were contemplating their return. The ease of attaining land and a building contract while living in London solidified the Browns' choice.

The decision to return to Mandeville appears to be based upon familiarity with place and people as well as the ability to obtain a particular lifestyle, a lifestyle of leisure which reflects an English-influenced desire to tend to home and garden in retirement (See King, et. al. 2000). Yet what remained noticeably absent from the discussions of returnees' relocation to Mandeville was the English factor popularly touted as an explanation for their choice by scholars and other Jamaicans. In fact, when I directly asked returnees if they moved back to Mandeville because it was so much like England (or alternatively described Mandeville's noted English qualities), returnees appeared quite puzzled by the association between a decision to return to Jamaica and the idea that they were moving back to some version of England¹³. Other returnees asserted that while, certainly, there were English aspects of Mandeville that remained, Mandeville simply was not England. Noting the dramatic changes in the town over the last thirty to forty years, returnees

¹² Peach (1968) notes that 11.2% of Jamaica's population migrated to the UK between 1956 and 1960.

¹³ This is not to suggest that returnees were not equally critical of Jamaica. Many returnees lamented about the crime and violence in Jamaica and the "indiscipline" of Jamaicans generally. Some returnees even suggested that Jamaica was better off when the "Queen mum ruled Jamaica". Their disappointment and the idea that they were moving back to live with other returnees could suggest that returnees wanted to return to a little England. However, they did not wish to live with the wider English population. They wanted to live with people who shared their experiences and perspectives.

contended that what remained were mere vestiges of English life captured in the chimneys and buildings of old Jamaica. While returnees generally held positive sentiments about Mandeville and their choice of Mandeville for their new home, they mentioned that Mandeville was not as “nice” or “cool” as it used to be because of the erection of concrete buildings, the reduction in trees, increased traffic and poor roads. At least half of the returnees I talked to claimed that the bauxite industry had not helped the situation and had caused environmental damage to the area which affected the water and air quality in the town. One-third of the returnees went so far as to say that Mandeville has become a “little America” with all the shopping malls and fast food chains — the once quaint country town destroyed by modern consumerism.

In addition to criticising the notion of English Mandeville, returnees consistently denied that Englishness played any role in their decision to return to the town. Many returnees were even offended by the suggestion that they were at all English. Furthermore, although they admitted to being somewhat amused in the beginning, returnees complained about how “locals” insisted upon calling them “English”; they thought it ridiculous that an English accent or drinking tea changed who they felt they were. But if Mandeville is not English and calling returnees “the English” causes offence, what does it mean to be an Englishman or an Englishwoman? In the following section, I trace how male and female returnees’ concept of Englishness has been transformed over the past 40 years, in order to discern how returnees view Englishness and, by extension, the importance of Mandeville’s English heritage today.

Shades of Englishness

When most returnees left for England, a white bias permeated Jamaican society, particularly within the aspirant classes. Henriques (1953) describes the valuation of individuals considered “fair”, a term associated with light skin colour, European features and straight hair (See Hoetink 1985). Jamaicans also utilised terms such as “good” (i.e. “European”) and “bad” (i.e. “African”) to describe the features and physical characteristics of an individual, particularly before the Black Power Movement gained momentum in Jamaica in 1968. As Chevannes (1995) delineates:

Ideologically speaking, to this day, hair in Jamaica is either *good* or *bad*. *Good* hair is described as *pretty*, not soft or fine, but *pretty*, or sometimes *nice and straight*. *Bad* hair is *nati-nati* (knotty). These ideologically laden terms are often used purely descriptively, and do not necessarily reflect the outlook of the user...The matter did not end at the level of values. Society produced for the grooming not of ‘bad’ hair but of ‘good’ hair. The purveyors of hair pomades and oils assumed that everybody either had or wanted to have ‘good’ hair, and the combs manufactured or imported into Jamaica were designed for grooming only ‘good’ hair (105–106, *author’s emphasis*)

Women’s internalization of this valuation of European images of beauty was made particularly evident through the painful process of straightening the hair with the application of hot oil, creams and use of a hot metal comb, as well as lightening the skin

with creams and face powders, in order to “lift up” themselves within society through the erasure of colour and texture on their skin and bodies. Henriques (1953) notes that fair women were particularly concerned with any permutations in their skin colour, such that women of fair complexion might avoid the sun for fear of darkening. This white bias extended to the practices involved in social reproduction, such as marriage and education, wherein many men sought fairer women for marriage. In addition, families with restricted budgets granted children of lighter colour greater access to education and other opportunities than their darker-skinned children. As Austin-Broos (1997, 150) argues, in Jamaica “culture, class and race do not merely coincide. They merge as phenotype is rendered through culture; inheritance made potent through environment and experienced inscriptions on the body.” To think of oneself as English was therefore one step closer to being white.

There is clear evidence of scepticism concerning the continued acceptance of colour discrimination and the valuation of whiteness, such as in the adult suffrage movement which fought to give black Jamaicans the right to vote and self-govern and movements led by Marcus Garvey, Claudius Henry and the Rastafarians in the first half of the twentieth century (Chevannes 1994, 1995). Yet, many returnees I spoke with admitted that when they travelled to the “Mother Country”, at some level they carried these positive views of whiteness (See Deakin 1970). Just the act of seeing white people who were poor, living on the streets and begging, jarred many returnees’ worldview when they first arrived in England. They never imagined that they would be sitting next to a white person while working in a factory. These images were not what returnees learned before venturing to England and were not in keeping with how they were taught to view the English.

Most returnees’ education about being English and the English way of life came through the work environment and on the street. Nurses (which comprised one-quarter of the people I interviewed) offered particularly poignant stories: for instance, a patient with a stab wound who was bleeding profusely, protested and refused treatment when he saw a black nurse coming to attend to him. The man almost died before the doctor told him that he had no choice but to receive treatment from her because a white nurse was unavailable. Even in nursing school when England was desperate for their services, female returnees reported being made to share the smallest boarding rooms, work the least desirable hours and carry out the dirtiest duties, such as bedpans. They endured verbal abuse not only from their fellow students but also from their supervisors who sometimes made jokes about how the black nurses needed to use Sno Mo, a bleaching detergent, to become clean enough to touch the patients. Even the high achievers and individuals from more privileged backgrounds acknowledged that they were often passed over for promotions. One returnee noted that she received the highest marks in her nursing class, an honour which normally accorded the student a prestigious award. The year that she won, the award was mysteriously cancelled.

Men characterised their early years in England as filled with tension and antagonism. A man living in one of the neighbourhoods I frequented sat down one evening and told all the neighbours about his life in England as “the fighter”. In the early years, he was dating

an English woman from a working-class English family. No one liked it. Her family did not like the fact he was black and his family thought that he was in for trouble trying to date a white woman, particularly if he had any intention of marrying her or starting a family. Even when they went out on the street, he was accosted by strangers who launched racial slurs at the couple and tried to coax his girlfriend into leaving him. One night he recalled dropping his girlfriend off at her door and being beaten by white youths as he made his way back to the bus stop, simply for the audacity of dating a white woman. He managed to give them “a few good licks” and ran home, but he also said that every time he went on the street as a young man in England, he took on the role of “the fighter”. As Winston James (1993) argues, what is most significant about the daily encounters with whites (particularly working-class whites) throughout the 1950s and 1960s was the ways in which these changed West Indians’ conceptions of colour and race, resulting in disillusionment with the esteem accorded to whites and with their conceptions of whiteness learned through socialisation in the Caribbean.

In the 1970s, returnees’ attention shifted to the plight of their children growing up and making their way through the British education system in an increasingly conservative climate (typified by Enoch Powell’s infamous “Rivers of Blood” speech in 1968). The growth of the conservative movement, which sought to restrict the development of the black population in the UK, was compounded by massive unemployment across the country. Gilroy (1987) argues that this environment fostered the growth of a new form of racism which reflects a transformation from a biological view of race and nation to a cultural approach to nationhood. Gilroy (1987, 60) characterizes British and English attitudes towards nationhood and racial integration as follows:

Alien (i.e. black) cultures have been introduced into this country with disastrous effect ... The increased competition for limited resources and the variety of disruptive behaviours introduced by the immigrant population create problems for the national community. The most profound difficulties are uncovered by trying to dilute our nationhood and national culture so that they can accommodate alien interlopers and their formally but not substantively British children.

Mrs Taylor’s experience certainly mirrors Gilroy’s portrait of this era. Indeed, she describes the 1970s and raising her four children as the most difficult time of her life, to the extent that the family contemplated moving back to Jamaica or remigrating to the United States. Mrs Taylor spent five nights per week working as a nurse while her husband came home every evening, cleaned up from dinner and put their children to bed. Each morning Mrs Taylor came home from work, prepared breakfast and sent the children to school. However, one of her sons had a learning disability. Mrs Taylor spent days travelling back and forth between home and school trying to fight for her son’s right to learn. In the end, she felt that the schools underestimated his potential and sent him to a school for the “dumb” because he had a learning disability and was black. Twenty-five years later, she still wonders what would have happened if she had sent him back to Jamaica, but realistically Mr and Mrs Taylor never had the option because “the money wasn’t there”.

Returnees also felt that the 1970s and early 1980s were difficult for their children who, although born in England, were denied full access to their rights as British citizens. Unlike their parents, the second generation lacked the attachment to their West Indian heritage that played a significant role in their well-meaning parents' negotiation and tolerance of racism (Gilroy 1987). Mrs Grant, for example, could recall the disappointment and shame the first time she received a call from the police saying that her son (normally a "good boy") had a run-in after attending a club, and Mrs Tulloch remembers constantly worrying about her son getting "mixed up" with the wrong crowd, the ones involved in ganja smoking. Cashmore (1995) argues that during this time Rastafarianism became a particularly cogent symbol of resistance for disenfranchised British black youths¹⁴. The global popularity of Bob Marley served to further enhance Rastafarianism's appeal, and Cashmore contends that while the US-based Black Power movement "in its overtly political form might have captured a few minds...Rastafari, by contrast, phrased its critique in a religious form" (Cashmore 1995, 184–185). Rastafarianism explicitly addressed the ideological use of Christianity by white European culture, rejecting the concept that one must endure through hardship because salvation will come in the afterlife. In terms of racial consciousness, particularly the valuation of blackness, Rastafarianism turned away from the painful use of the comb and, similar to the development of the Afro in the Black Power movement, allowed the hair to grow naturally into dreadlocks. Moreover, the features, colour and texture of hair associated with blackness were recognised as beautiful rather than something to be erased or hidden (Chevannes 1995).

Getting your colour back

The new experiences and developments within the UK's West Indian community prompted many returnees to interrogate their assumptions about the meaning of being black. Mrs Clarke, a fifty-year-old returnee reflecting on the change in racial consciousness, told me how shocked she was to hear one of the older returnees she went to church with lamenting over her "brown" grandson's choice of a "black" wife; Mrs Clarke openly questioned how the woman could make such a statement after the years of mistreatment due merely to skin colour in England. For Mrs Clarke, there was a general acknowledgement that blackness and being black could be positive, reversing (or at the very least altering) the "white bias" of the 1950s and 1960s. As Goulbourne (1998) describes, "The paradox is that black and brown people often share the same culture with whites who determine the nature of incorporation, but the racial affinity is nearly always stronger than cultural ties...race relations pivoted upon the divide of the colour-line remain relevant in Britain" (152–153). Clearly, the experience of racism in England transformed the Jamaican returnees' conceptions of what it means to be English, or more specifically for the post-WWII generation migrants, what it means *not* to be English. Although most returnees lived over half of their lives in England, they continued to be asked where they were from. If they responded like the English and mentioned their locality, such as East London or Croydon, they were met with the response "no, where

¹⁴ Sutton and Makiesky-Barrow (1987, 96) attribute transformations in racial consciousness in Britain during this era to the "rhetoric and symbols...[of] the Black Power movement in the United States" and state that "Black American forms have been transplanted and reworked in a new environment" and "provid[e] a ready-made vehicle for expressions of Black consciousness".

are you *really* from?” For this generation, however, where “you born and grow” shapes one’s identity and sense of self and, for many returnees, such questions concerning their origins did not disturb them, particularly as their plans to return concretised¹⁵. Many returnees acknowledged that these issues would be much more difficult for their children, some returnees advising their sons and daughters that “the English can be funny” and that England remains “a strange country in as much as you were born there”, one more indication that returnees did not feel they were English.

In addition to altering returnees’ ideas of Englishness, the experience of racism in England also changed the meaning of being Jamaican. For example, when Mrs Cole, Sister B and I were talking about a recent visit to England, Sister B looked up at the sky and flung her arms out embracing the sun and proclaimed that it was “so wonderful to be back in the Jamaican sun and get my colour back.” Hearing Sister B’s comment, Mrs Cole started chuckling about how fair she had become sitting in her job in a factory in England, so fair that every time her English workmates returned from holiday they felt compelled to compare their new tans with her sun-deprived brown skin. Noting how ironic it was that her white workmates were so keen to brown their skin, but were reticent about accepting brown or black people, Mrs Cole acknowledged that she too felt, and indeed welcomed, the idea that she had regained her colour once she returned to Jamaica; they often described their skin colour in England as grey or “ashy”. Mrs Cole and Sister B’s discussion reveals none of the sun avoidance and bleaching measures described by Henriques and further suggests that pigmentation change, particularly turning darker, appears to indicate for many returnees that they are not only back on the island but also *belong* in Jamaica. There is, therefore, a curious symmetry with the arrival in England turning Jamaicans into blacks based on colour and not background and the re-arrival in Jamaica turning them into “the English” but which returnees deny because being English now represents a colour category. Calling returnees “the English” negates the physical, mental and emotional transformation returnees underwent while living in England.

Reframing Respectability

Throughout this paper, I focused on the experience of migration and return, with particular attention to the ways in which moving between places — Jamaica, England, Mandeville and home — correspond with transformations in returnees’ understandings of respectability.¹⁶ For English colonial planters and their families, Mandeville became a location where they could create a home away from home, and the wives of the planters could demonstrate Victorian-inspired norms of domesticity and respectability. Mandeville’s association with Englishness certainly suggests a degree of success. Noting the prevalence of “fair”, “coloured” or “upper class” residents living in Mandeville,

¹⁵ However, James (1993) observes that for the elderly who could not return, the fact that they would never be seen as belonging, or as being English, was quite painful (See also Byron 1999).

¹⁶ A concept first elucidated by Peter Wilson (1995, 1964), respectability, or the realm of legal, official and “respectable” (i.e. European) culture and its associated institutions (e.g. marriage, the church and the educational system), is often juxtaposed with the concept of reputation. In Wilson’s configuration, men tend to dominate the public nature of the reputation system, or the realm of “local” culture which is based upon equality and the display of verbal skill (among other characteristics); women become the cultural bearers of respectability. Among a range of other critiques, Jean Besson (2002) suggests Wilson’s reputation-respectability model negates women’s presence in activities such as peasant’s resistance and participation in the labour market (see also Freeman 2000, 2007).

Henriques (1953) described Mandeville as “Jamaica’s Cheltenham” and historian H. P. Jacobs (1994, 1) observed that “Manchester was the only area in which the English ever came anywhere near to achieving their original idea of establishing a tropical New England”. The landscape of Mandeville, with its historical Anglican church, well-appointed homes and carefully cultivated domesticity, effectively came to embody a particular version of respectability.

Returnees underscore Mandeville’s importance for the attainment of a respectable lifestyle in retirement in terms of the climate, sense of community, as well as the area’s economic prosperity and status. Living in the salubrious hills of Mandeville signals achievement and a feeling of accomplishment, and returnees are keen to realise a respectable lifestyle associated with Mandeville, particularly by maintaining a proper house as well as participating in the community through church, voluntary and charitable associations. Whereas Peter Wilson (1964) might have tied the return of post-WWII Jamaican migrants to England to the continued “mental colonialism” of the Jamaican elite (and returnees), returnee women reframe their notion of respectability by questioning the connection between Mandeville, colour and culture. As the discussion of getting one’s colour back reveals, female returnees reject the notion that attaining the symbols of a respectable retirement in Mandeville reflects the internalization of English values, or the reproduction of Victorian values of respectability. Due in part to a general disenchantment with the English, particularly the English working and middle class, many women noted that the benefits of returning to Jamaica included the appreciation of their achievements while working and raising a family in England, and their experience of the positive aspects of Jamaican culture as they had remembered and imagined them while abroad, such as the accordance of respect to the elderly, the valorisation of mothers in the family as well as the proper expression of success, or attainment of respectability.

Yet, the emphasis on the symbols of success and the maintenance of the respectable home does present particular dilemmas for many female returnees. Unlike in England where, given accessible public transportation or use of their own vehicle, Jamaican women readily moved through their neighbourhoods and cities and husbands were forced to participate in housework and childcare, the stress on living a respectable retirement curtailed many women’s mobility. Most returnee women spent the majority of time at home cooking and, in most cases, monitoring the activities of their helpers. The stress on maintaining a large home, with tiled floors and white paint indicative of a returnee home resulted in a great deal of work and reveals what, in many returnees’ lives, emerged as the tyranny of respectability. While there were a variety of strategies to subvert and escape this tyranny — participation in church and civic associations, regular visits to children in England or America and the creative re-tiling and re-painting of floors and walls — there remains the sense among many returnee women that the seemingly inherent respectability of Mandeville often works to exacerbate the gendered dimensions of respectability.

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