

REPRESENTATIONS OF
WOMEN IN SELECTED
WORKS OF HERBERT
GEORGE DE LISSER
(1878 – 1944)

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This thesis is dedicated to my
beloved husband,
who never stopped believing in me.

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the intellectual significance of early Caribbean writer Herbert George de Lisser in his literary writings and as such is a work of recovery and criticism. Each chapter concentrates on a specific, predominantly European, literary genre and investigates how de Lisser experiments with these genres in order to not only support and recognise the emergence of a local national literature, but also to create a cultural national identity based upon the symbolic use of women to define Jamaica as a nation. Situating de Lisser within colonial discourse and the socio-political arena of the British Empire, the introduction sets out the postcolonial theoretical framework and relocates de Lisser within the context of West Indian literature, debating his literary neglect alongside his need to be reclaimed. Chapter I debates the traditional notions of nationhood and examines the dislocation and (re)gendering of nation and nationhood through the lens of women as founders of a nation with the main emphasis on his novel "Anacanoa." Chapter II concentrates on de Lisser's "historical" novels and explores the representation of heroism and the search for a national identity in two of de Lisser's novels, *Revenge* and *Psyche*, written at the beginning and the end of his career. This chapter examines the way in which the novels' (re)negotiation of the representations of heroism is explored within individual characters. Chapter III examines women as a symbol of Jamaica through the lens of female independence and national identity. The focus of this chapter rests on de Lisser's literary works that have received a limited amount of literary investigation, namely *Jane's Career* and *Susan Proudleigh*, with a third novel "Myrtle and Money" which is not only a sequel to *Jane's Career* (although written some 30 years later), but also creates a trilogy of texts that serves to represent the political complexities of early twentieth century Jamaica. Chapters IV and V act as sister chapters and examine the representation of women through the (re)clamation and (re)creation of folk legends and the commodification of literature in the novels *Morgan's Daughter* and *The White Witch of Rosehall*. These chapters consider how de Lisser's appropriation of a legend encourages that legend to evolve into a symbol for nationalism and historical heritage. Experimenting with the genres of sentimental literature and gothic fiction respectively, de Lisser investigates the dichotomy of European and Jamaican cultures. Chapter VI focuses upon the general constructions of nationhood which are founded upon traditional hegemonic public and private spheres. With an in-depth investigation into his periodical *Planters' Punch* which was produced from 1920-1945, this chapter analyses how de Lisser continuously blurs these spherical boundaries by creating strong women who are capable of fulfilling the "role" of the male in civilised society and therefore relocates them into the public arena. Finally, the conclusion explores de Lisser's perception of women and highlights how by investigating his literary works through his representation of women, de Lisser is able to be reconciled within a more delineated and inclusive Caribbean literary canon.

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INTRODUCTION

The Forgotten Works of Herbert George de Lisser.¹

Critical terminology evolves and what was once formally known as West Indian literature is now Caribbean literature. Although the terminology may have changed, the search for identity and roots within the literature of the region has not. Antonio Benitez-Rojo argues that it is impossible to define the Caribbean, claiming that it is a self-perpetuating phenomenon that continuously repeats in on itself. However, with our eyes on the prize of transnationalism, globalisation and cultural plurality, it is now appropriate to (re)investigate and (re)examine our colonial heritage. For while geopolitical borders are expanding and issues of migration, immigration and globalisation are destabilising our preconceived notions of nation and identity, it is important that we still recognise and accept some traditional geographical and national boundaries, in order to further understand our movement across, from, to and through them. Although contemporary scholars have examined the impact of transnational studies on the transmigration of West Indian intellectuals during the early twentieth century, I argue for the intellectual significance of the West Indian writers who remained in the Caribbean. Inevitably this thesis does not allow for the examination of all the Caribbean writers who wrote prolifically during this period but examines the intellectual significance of Jamaican born, coloured conservative writer Herbert George de Lisser.

¹ Throughout my research, de Lisser's surname has been written in various stylistic formats by different scholars and critics. For the purpose of this thesis, I shall use the format that de Lisser himself used and place the "de" in small print with a capital "L" preceding the second half of his name, while leaving a space between the two.

A prominent and prolific Jamaican writer, author and journalist, his influence on Jamaican society was far-reaching. He was the editor of the leading Jamaican newspaper *The Daily Gleaner* (1904-1944), during which time he also wrote 26 novels, and was one of the first Jamaican writers to attempt to attract a popular readership for locally produced fiction.² In addition he published an annual magazine *Planters' Punch* (1920-1945), which contained, amongst other notable articles and short stories, a full novel written by him. In 1919 he received the Musgrave Silver Medal for Literary Work and in 1920 was awarded the C.M.G of the British Empire for Journalistic and Literary Achievement. An influential businessman, in 1910 he was elected a member of the Board of Governors of the Institute of Jamaica, Jamaica's most influential cultural institution, serving on the Board for 22 years — 17 of those years as Chairman. In December 1917 he was one of the founding members of the Jamaica Imperial Association, which was an Association that sought to promote Jamaican business interests in Britain. He was appointed General Secretary, a post he was to retain until the end of his life.

Considering de Lisser's prominent public career and influential contacts, it is difficult to reconcile his phenomenal influence upon Jamaican society in terms of his literary achievements and business acumen, with his relative obscurity. de Lisser was one of the few notable writers to emerge during the first half of the twentieth century, who along with his

² During the continuous publication of this popular newspaper, its heading has changed from *The Gleaner* to *The Daily Gleaner*. However, for the purpose of maintaining consistency throughout this thesis, I have adopted the title *The Daily Gleaner*.

contemporaries Thomas MacDermot (Tom Redcam) and Claude McKay sought to promote the cultural uplift of the local Jamaican population. Writing within the socio-economical confines of colonialism, they began to translate into literary form the increasing debates about how Jamaica should be governed both locally and globally. However, while there has been a willingness to recognise de Lisser's contemporary Thomas MacDermot as the "father of West Indian literature" (Walsh 47), de Lisser has fared less favourably. Although credit has been afforded to his two early works, *Jane's Career* and *Susan Proudleigh* by scholars as being amongst the first West Indian literature to depict accurately the black working class in Jamaican literature, de Lisser's reputation as a colonial conservative, has ensured that he has been denied any literary recognition. Furthermore, the inaccessibility to some of de Lisser's finer works, alongside the popularity of *The White Witch of Rosehall*, has continued to persuade scholars to arrive at a somewhat biased conclusion relating to his literary merit, and has encouraged scholarly lacunae.³

In contrast to these literary scholars, social historians offer an alternative interpretation to de Lisser's writing. Marilyn Delevante and Anthony Alberga, in their book *The Island of One People: An Account of the History of the Jews of Jamaica*, focus on de Lisser's Jewish connections and regard de Lisser as one of three Jewish historians who were "visionaries who

³ Of the 26 novels that de Lisser wrote only 10 were published in book format. Of these 10 novels, only six were published in England, four during his life time and two were published posthumously. All were available for purchase in Jamaica. The other 16 of de Lisser's novels remain, to this day, within the pages of *Planters' Punch*. Therefore, in accordance with the guidelines as set out in the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers: Seventh Edition*, where a novel has been published in book format its title will be italicised. For the sake of consistency, this will also include any references to the version within *Planters' Punch*, e.g., *The Cup and the Lip* (1931-32). When a reference is made to a novel that has not been published and therefore remains within the pages of *Planters' Punch*, it will be referenced between quotation marks, without italics, e.g., "Anacanoa."

saw clearly the great importance of documenting events,” in order that “future generations would be able to discover their roots” (192). As a result, they believe that a “debt of gratitude” is owed to these “chroniclers of our life in this island,” whose work “tells us our heritage and history” (192). To date, no biographical or widespread scholarly research has been completed on de Lisser and therefore this thesis aims to recover de Lisser “the author” and (re)establish him within the framework of early twentieth-century Jamaica.

Covering the period 1910-1944, de Lisser was writing during a critical period of colonial and world history when the social perspective of Jamaica was altering from a passive acceptance of colonialism to a more aggressive militant nationalism. de Lisser was writing during this politically provocative time period, and contested in his novels many of the socio-political situations that affected Jamaica, including miscegenation, intra-racial snobbery and class stratification. Fundamental to de Lisser’s literary oeuvre was his use of satire and satirical practices. As Matthew Hodgart postulates:

The satirist engages in the troubles of the world and expects his readers to do the same. He does so even though he is aware that he is incurring a double risk, of being unpopular in his own time and of being forgotten by later generations, to whom the day-to-day issues of his time may be of merely academic interest. The satirist appears in his noblest role when he accepts the

challenge of obligation, by taking on an ephemeral and unpleasant topic. (31)

When applying this observation to de Lisser and his writing, this self-fulfilling prophecy is understandable. Although his politics made him unpopular and have encouraged academic neglect, de Lisser's novels engaged "in the troubles of the world," and he did expect "his readers to do the same." Furthermore, as this thesis will aim to demonstrate, there is strong evidence presented within his texts which suggests that de Lisser actually took on a number of "ephemeral and unpleasant topic[s]" and this in turn further suggests that de Lisser's writings were more layered and complex.

His first novel *Jane's Career* (1912) alongside *Susan Proudleigh* (1915) received critical attention for their significance in terms of their content, in that for the first time in West Indian literature, a working-class black Jamaican woman was foregrounded and de Lisser also used local dialect in his literature to bring a level of realism to these texts. *Jane's Career* charts a peasant girl's migration from the country to the city, highlighting both her social mobility in terms of her marriage to a man of good standing and her independence in an emerging independent Jamaica. A later text "Myrtle and Money" (1940-41), which is a sequel to *Jane's Career*, examines the social consciousness of black Jamaicans within modern Jamaica and allows these three novels to be read as a trilogy, which further expands their significance. Myrtle is Jane's daughter who is part of the emerging coloured middle class. She is respectable, well educated and employed. By re-mapping these novels

against the context of their social and political backgrounds, de Lisser is able to comment on the political crises that were affecting Jamaica during the early part of the twentieth century.

Furthermore, by writing trilogies, and family sagas, whereby a family is traced over a long time period, de Lisser not only captures a realistic portrayal of the lower working class but also highlights the intra-racial and intra-class social snobbery that was prevalent throughout Jamaican society, and the desire for social mobility. The novel series was a trope that de Lisser favoured in his literature and he adopted it often. He reintroduces the Proudleigh family in three further novels entitled “The Jamaican Nobility” (1926), “The Sins of the Children” (1928), and “His Granddaughter” (1943), which focuses upon Susan Proudleigh’s daughter, while charting the trials and tribulations of another working-class family, the Jenkins, in his trilogy of novels, “Christina’s Dream” (1920), “The Rivals” (1921) and “The Adventures Abroad of Mr. Jenkins” (1924-1925). While these novels are successful in highlighting the hypocrisy of colonial society, it is his novel “The Sins of the Children” (1928), which focuses upon the issues of race and miscegenation in a distinctly political forum. The recurring themes of migration and local politics illustrate the growing awareness of politics within Jamaican society and this is the only novel where the political framework is not overtly satirised. His other political novels, “The Jamaican Nobility” (1924-1925) and “Triumphant Squalitone” (1916), not only satirise the intra-racial snobbery of the coloured middle class of his roots, but also highlights the petty squabbles amongst the classes and their obsession with social hierarchy. At the same time, these novels also

ridicule Garveyism and the “tin-pot” nature of local politics. Equally, his social satirical comedies examine and ridicule the social snobbery of the white Jamaican middle class, and their desire to be more British than the British. *The Cup and the Lip* (1931-1932) serves as a social commentary on the white middle class and provides a microscopic examination of perceived social expectations and mannerisms, while *Under the Sun* (1935-1936) parodies the Jamaican man’s desire for social prestige and elevation.

Although limited by satirical techniques, de Lisser was not restricted in literary forms. Throughout de Lisser’s fictional and non-fictional writing he was apt at adopting the framework of an established European genre to suit his own literary ends and de Lisser’s novels were primarily based within the genres of historical novels, gothic literature, social realism and political satire. For example, during his writing career, de Lisser wrote eight historical novels: *Revenge* (1919), *The White Witch of Rosehall* (1929), *Morgan’s Daughter* (1930-31), “Anacanoa” (1936-1937), “Conquest” (1937-1938), “The White Maroon” (1938-1939), *Psyche* (1942), and “The Return” (1943). For de Lisser, historical novels were an opportunity for him to reawaken and investigate Jamaica’s rich historical and folkloric past. They were a sphere where he not only entertained, but sought to educate his audience. Jamaican national heroes Paul Bogle, George William Gordon and Sam ‘Daddy’ Sharpe are re-awakened in the “classic” historical novels *Revenge*, *Psyche* and “The Return.” de Lisser’s re-telling of these rebellions through the genre of the historical novel, highlights not only Jamaica’s historical past but its incendiary political future. In addition, Jamaican folkloric legends, such as those of Three-finger’d Jack

and the infamous Annie Palmer are restored to their national status in the sentimental “historical romance” *Morgan’s Daughter* and the “gothic literature” of *The White Witch of Rosehall* respectively. By (re)telling Jamaican folk myths and legends, de Lisser allowed for the folk imagination to find a voice in literary discourse. de Lisser recognised that folk legends and myths were instrumental in uniting the country from within and creating national identities, therefore the last three historical novels serve as a trilogy that creates and establishes the history of the Jamaican people. “Anacanoa” foretells the (re)created history of the Arawak Indians, whereas “Conquest” and “The White Maroon” delineate the Maroon community in Jamaica.

Using the form of satire encouraged de Lisser to employ a number of its techniques across his fiction and non-fiction writing. By employing the satirical tropes of imitativeness, mimicry, irony, exaggeration and parody, de Lisser was able to expose the shortcomings of either an individual or society and to shame them into improving themselves. Taking his cue from Jamaica’s political landscape, de Lisser did indeed adopt a conservative rhetoric, and therefore was a harsh critic of the emerging nationalism of the time. However, with the ability to reproduce “liberalizing trends and social changes...accurately in his novels” (Birbalsingh, “H.G. de Lisser” 148), it cannot be denied that de Lisser’s novels closely reflected the socio-economic and political situations that spanned his literary writing career and therefore it is essential that his oeuvre is examined in its entirety. Through a critical analysis and literary interpretation of a number of de Lisser’s selected works, it is my intention that de Lisser will cease to be seen as *just* an Imperialist novelist and thereby

dismissed as an uninspiring writer and will instead begin to be seen in terms of his intellectual significance, his influence on Jamaican society and upon the development of a local literature. Unfortunately this thesis does not allow for a complete and comprehensive critical analysis of all of his 26 novels and therefore, an annotated bibliography complete with each novel's publishing history and any critical appreciation is situated at Appendix III of this thesis.

With all of his novels foregrounding strong women as the main protagonists, and for the most part these women are either black or coloured, it would be very easy to construct an image of de Lisser as an anachronistic black feminist radical. It would be equally easy to continue to accept the representation of de Lisser as an anti-nationalist conservative. Therefore, it is essential that we see beyond the "labels" that have become attached to de Lisser and examine the significance of his literature and literary practices, and to this end let me be clear. de Lisser was first and foremost a Jamaican. He believed in the distinctiveness of a Jamaican identity. His deeply held beliefs that one does not read the same papers...hear much the same sort of talk...eat the same food...enjoy the same recreations, without one's mind becoming assimilated to the minds of one's countrymen" (*Twentieth Century Jamaica* 48), encouraged him to write a "national" literature that was aimed at *all* his fellow countrymen. As Anthony Boxhill confirms, de Lisser had "a strong sense of community, his responsibility to it and his desire to communicate with it" (32). A complex figure, he at one time or another occupied more than one "social" position and held two divided political beliefs. Therefore, coming from a background of relative poverty, and ascending to a social position

whereby he lived at the exclusive Myrtle Bank Hotel for free, it is incontrovertible that not only was de Lisser capable of understanding the needs of the Jamaican population, but that he was also able to influence a broad spectrum of Jamaican society through his penning of “national” literature. Once again, for the sake of clarity, it is important that I set out what I mean by “national literature.” When I use the term “national literature,” I am using it within the late nineteenth century context of national literature as set out by Belinda Edmondson. She writes: “these late nineteenth-century efforts at a national literature were therefore not assigned to the realm of serious literary endeavour: “national” here meant local, comic or sentimental, entertaining, as well as instructive” (*Caribbean Middlebrow* 27). With de Lisser’s novels falling into all of these categories, it is my contention that de Lisser sought to reflect a distinct Jamaican identity, albeit within the British Empire, and therefore produced local novels that both educated and entertained the local Jamaican population, thereby creating a “national” literature that served to culturally uplift *all* of his countrymen. This thesis suggests that de Lisser’s novels are far more revealing and complex than was initially realised and as such, he needs to be restored to a more central position within early Caribbean or West Indian literature. By applying a post-colonial understanding of debates centred on mimicry and imitation alongside notions of nationhood, with a particular emphasis on de Lisser’s representation of women within these texts, this thesis aims to re-establish de Lisser as an early Caribbean writer with nationalist ideals, in so far as he advocated a distinct Jamaican identity; his public politics may well have overshadowed his literary achievements, but should in no way detract from them.

In what follows, the aim of this thesis is to engage critically with the various observations regarding de Lisser as a means of establishing a fresh interpretation of de Lisser's often under-examined and over-simplified political and literary narratives. The limited body of scholarly research already undertaken often presents conflicting information regarding de Lisser's life and work and as a result complicates any research on de Lisser. Therefore, this thesis is also a work of excavational recovery and endeavours to collate these varied sources in order to produce a comprehensive record of de Lisser's personal history and literary works. So who was Herbert George de Lisser? Scholars and people who knew de Lisser personally have described him as "a haughty individual" who was not popular (Cameron 283). H.P. Jacobs recalls de Lisser as a man "who always remembered small civilities and was not jealous of other writers" (Cameron 283). In an article for the *West India Review* Jacobs continues by describing de Lisser as "gifted, egocentric, but with a saving grace of genuine humour," concluding that "he wielded a powerful pen and behind the scenes, a very real influence upon the destinies of the old colonial Jamaica" (Cameron 283). Jacobs' opinion of de Lisser as an influential and staunch imperialist is contradicted by Amon Saba Saakana who in turn acknowledges de Lisser's bourgeois nationalism through his "love of the Jamaican people and of a romantic notion of a "happy ending" (58), thereby simultaneously labelling him as "progressive and reactionary" (58). Therefore, whatever we do "know" about de Lisser, it would appear, continues to be shrouded in contradictions.

The few scholars who have sought to produce a biographical account of de Lisser's life have, without exception, cited the sketchy account set out in W. Adolphe Roberts's *Six Great Jamaicans*. According to Roberts, de Lisser was born on 9 December 1878 in Falmouth, Jamaica, and to date this has been the only detailed account of de Lisser's personal history. However, de Lisser's family history and ancestry are shrouded in mystery, and this thesis has recovered evidence that suggests that de Lisser was descended from the Jewish "de Lisser" family of the 1700s. According to Delevante and Alberga, there were three brothers who came across from England. Their mother Elizabeth remained in England and re-married a Joseph Levy. Of the three sons who went to Jamaica, Matthew/Moses was disinherited from the Levy fortune and brothers Aaron and Ellis were clock and watchmakers. Roberts confirms de Lisser's Jewish ancestry — "The family was of very old Jamaica ancestry, Portuguese-Jewish on the paternal side...Hebrew strain on the other side, H.G.D's mother having been a Miss Isaacs, of Kingston" (105) — but complicates the heritage by stating that the paternal ancestry also had "a modicum of African blood" (105).⁴ Dr. Everard A de Lisser (Jack), who has done extensive research into his family history, believes that Herbert de Lisser was descended from the brother Aaron who had six children. According to Jack, Herbert George de Lisser Snr and Marianne Issacs had six children, four daughters and two sons, with Herbert being the youngest of the sons. Although Roberts mentions that de Lisser spent time with his brother-in-law and his elder

⁴ de Lisser's father's name is well documented as he is named after him, Mr Herbert George de Lisser, Senior. However, Roberts only gives us his mother's maiden name. Extensive research has uncovered her first name to be Marianne Issacs, although *The Daily Gleaner* misspelt her name in her death notice as Morrisanna. She died in 1950. I am unable to find any evidence either to support or contest Roberts' other claims. Roberts was a personal friend of de Lisser's, so I accept the possibility that this information is accurate.

brother Barrett (who was named so after a family connection with the Barrett-Brownings), there is no further information on his siblings. Equally, there is no documented evidence as to why it was left to de Lisser to go to work to provide for his family after his father's death, and not his elder brother Barrett. These inconsistencies about his own heritage and family history serve to further complicate de Lisser's own historical roots.

While some of the material recovered may be unreliable, given the paucity of resources available it seems worthwhile to draw it to the attention of the reader. With that in mind, recent research and the obituary of de Lisser's aunt confirms de Lisser's ancestry and provides the names of his sisters and parents. It reads: "only daughter of the late George and Elizabeth de Lisser of Falmouth, Trelawny, sister of the late H.G. de Lisser, sometime editor of the "Gleaner," and aunt of Herbert G. de Lisser, Grace Parker, Evelyn Valverde and Margaret Philips" ("Alice" 2).⁵ Sources suggest that Grace was married to another newspaper man, Walter Parker, while both Evelyn's and Margaret's husbands were men of industry. Roberts confirms that Walter Parker was de Lisser's brother-in-law and Parker's obituary in *The Daily Gleaner* confirms his marriage to Grace. An article in *The Daily Gleaner* titled "Electricity for You," contains information on Oscar B. Valverde, and a further article in the same newspaper "Doing His Bit," which is accompanied by a photograph, refers to a Herbert Valverde and confirms his parents to be O.B. Valverde and Mrs. E. Valverde (7). This confirms the link between Mrs E. Valverde, nee

⁵ Jack confirms the names of de Lisser's sisters but cites the same source. However, Jack also mentions that Evelyn and Margaret were twins. It is through Jack de Lisser that a further sister has been revealed, but for whom I can find no reference. It is possible that both this fourth sister and Barrett never survived beyond infancy which is why there is no further record of them.

Evelyn de Lisser, and her brother Herbert G. de Lisser, which is further validated in her obituary. Finally, the obituary in *The Daily Gleaner* of “Mrs. Margaret de Lisser Philips” confirms her marriage to Mr Louis Philips and her relationship to Herbert de Lisser, Evelyn Valverde and Grace Parker (“Death” 8). Although his sisters had various children, the copyright to de Lisser’s novels reverted to his niece on his wife’s side, Rita Landale, nee Gunter. Further research from this thesis is the discovery of a vibrant, proud and currently active Facebook community of “direct descendents” of Herbert de Lisser. Considering the fact that de Lisser and his wife Ellen remained childless, at the time of submitting this thesis, I have not been able to ascertain the accuracy of these claims.

de Lisser’s father Herbert George de Lisser, Senior was editor and proprietor of a local newspaper in Falmouth called *The Trelawney*. It was a successful newspaper which was mainly aimed at the local plantation community. Unfortunately, due to a difference in opinion in relation to the importation of East Indian workers, de Lisser Snr lost the support of the community and his paper folded. de Lisser began his education in Falmouth at a private school which Thomas MacDermot also attended. His education continued under the tutelage of William Morrison at the Collegiate School in Kingston. His father died unexpectedly when de Lisser was 14, pushing the family into relative poverty and de Lisser had to quit school in order to secure a job and support his family. According to Roberts, he worked as a clerk in a drug store and at an ironmonger’s before securing a position as a library assistant at the Institute of Jamaica. de Lisser grasped the opportunity that had

been presented to him as a library assistant and read voraciously. Through self-education he immersed himself in political economy, biology, philosophy and general psychology, as well as teaching himself French and Spanish.

de Lisser remained at the Institute for three years before securing a position at *The Daily Gleaner* as a proof-reader. From there, he moved to *The Jamaica Times* and then to the *Daily Telegraph*. In 1903 the then editor of *The Daily Gleaner*, W.P. Livingstone, left to create his own newspaper and made de Lisser his assistant. In 1904, at the age of just 26, de Lisser became editor of *The Daily Gleaner*. However, excavational research has uncovered various sources that confirm that de Lisser was in fact the lead writer (and the editor in name only). One such source is an article written by Clifton Neita which confirms that de Lisser “did not succeed Livingston as editor, but was brought in as Leader Writer; and he in fact never did become editor though he was so regarded by one and all” (*The Daily Gleaner* 14-17). Neita goes on to comment that it was actually Michael deCordova, the Managing Director, who was also the editor, but that he did not assume the title of editor until after de Lisser’s death in 1944. What this article serves to highlight is that de Lisser’s writing and assumed role as editor brought the paper an enormous amount of prestige and influence over the country, and therefore the owners of the newspaper were happy for this perception to be maintained. In addition, de Lisser’s influence on and support of the various influential business leaders of Jamaica (many of whom were Jewish) may have relied more upon his “Jewish” family connections and mutually beneficial partnerships, as opposed to his “conservative” tendencies. As Delevante and Alberga are quick to point out,

“his most precious legacy is his writing about the [Jewish] families and their businesses that made significant contributions to the economy and development of the island” (192).

In 1909, de Lisser married Ellen Gwendoline Gunter. Her father was a former director of the Jamaica Government Railways. Her mother was part French and came across from Haiti during the revolution, and her brother was Sir Geoffrey Gunter C.B.E, who was a former Custos of St. Andrew. Although they remained childless, Ellen took a keen interest in many local charities and foundations and home-schooled her nieces. In 1910, de Lisser published his first non-fictional work *Jamaica and Cuba* and continued to write approximately a book a year until the beginning of his ill health in 1943. In 1942, a heart condition began to affect his health, and he was forced to retire from the editorship of *The Daily Gleaner*, although he remained an active scribe. In December 1943, he became seriously ill, and in some quarters it was announced that his illness was fatal. de Lisser saw the humorous side to this but he died six months later on May 18 1944 and was laid to rest at the Halfway Tree Churchyard, Kingston.

de Lisser was a self-publicist and self-reflexive performer; therefore the ambiguities surrounding him have never been satisfactorily resolved. His life was always complicated, not least by his own personal and public interests and his work brought him into contact with many of the politicians and businessmen of this period. de Lisser was close personal friends with Sir Sidney Olivier and became an advocate of Fabian Socialism ideals. He also

went to Panama while the canal was being dug and interviewed President Roosevelt (Roberts 111) and there can be no doubt that many of his experiences found their way into his articles and books. As the eminent scholar Rhonda Cobham commented to me during a telephone conversation at the beginning of my research, de Lisser “never let his public persona slip,” and there is no doubt that de Lisser occupied a unique position within Jamaican society.⁶ His close relationship with the enigmatic Olivier affected not only de Lisser’s politics, but also his writing. Olivier’s influence firstly as Colonial Secretary (1900-1904) and then during his Governorship of Jamaica (1907-1914) was long lasting and Cobham suggests that Olivier was directly responsible for the increase in local writers due to his “sympathetic and sincere championing of the Jamaican masses and [as] an influential patron of the Arts” (“The Creative Writer” 23). To underscore Cobham’s observations and further establish Olivier’s influence upon the Jamaican literati, I agree with Cobham that *Jane’s Career* (1913) and Claude McKay’s *Songs of Jamaica* (1912) were “the two most important publications to come out of this era” (“The Creative Writer” 24). However, what is of more interest is that these two books written by a black writer and a man of colour were both dedicated to Olivier. McKay was already patronised by an eccentric English aristocrat, Walter Jekyll, who encouraged him to write in local dialect and arranged for his first book of poems to be published in England. However McKay chose to dedicate his 1912 collection of poems *Songs of Jamaica* to “his Excellency Sir Sydney Olivier, K.C.M.C., Governor of Jamaica, who by his sympathy with the black race has won the love and admiration of all Jamaicans.” de Lisser, who shared a close

⁶ To my knowledge, Rhonda Cobham is one of the few people who has written and published on de Lisser in the last 25 years. I was fortunate enough to be able to establish contact with Rhonda early on in my research and her insights have been invaluable.

relationship with Olivier, not only dedicated his first fictional novel *Jane: A Story of Jamaica* to him, but continued to send him personal signed copies of his later books. An example of this is the 1916 copy of *Triumphant Squalitone* which is held at the British Library. It is Olivier's own copy with a hand written note from the author which reads "To Sir Sidney Olivier with the author's compliments."

These dedications serve to draw attention to Olivier's wide reaching influence upon Jamaica, both in terms of his encouragement of local authors and in his political liberalism towards colonialism. Both de Lisser and McKay refer to Olivier's "sympathetic" personality and comment upon Olivier's interest in the black classes, McKay directly "...with the black race" and de Lisser implicitly through his acknowledgement that Olivier's "praise was encouraging" when he was writing *Jane's Career* and that he "took a deep interest in every phase of the island's life and fortune" (*Jane's Career* Dedication). Olivier in turn included de Lisser in his social circle, crediting himself with encouraging de Lisser to write *Jane's Career* in the first place and hailed it as a "literary masterpiece." He favourably reviewed *Susan Proudleigh*, de Lisser's second novel and bestowed his thanks onto de Lisser in his acknowledgements to his own book on Jamaica, *Jamaica: The Blessed Island*. Finally, upon investigating a number of Jamaican novels, he concluded that de Lisser's novels were "the best as far as they go" (54). It is through Olivier's influence as part of the Fabian Society that de Lisser's politics leaned towards liberalism and he met notable Fabian figures such as Sir Bernard Shaw. When the political landscape of Jamaica changed to favour Conservatism after

Olivier's departure in 1914, de Lisser's political rhetoric also altered and while his political conservatism has continued to fill column inches in contemporary Jamaican newspapers, it has affected any critical appreciation of his literary oeuvre.⁷

Whereas Olivier influenced de Lisser's political affiliations, his literary writing was influenced by the major writers of English literature, specifically Sir Walter Scott, along with the home grown talents of his Jamaican contemporary Thomas MacDermot.⁸ With similar writing styles de Lisser respected MacDermot's writing skills and "selected" a number of his ideas and developed them into his own literature. In particular, MacDermot's 1907 and 1909 novels *Becka's Buckra Baby: being an episode in the life of Noel* and *One Brown Girl and...* are precursors to de Lisser's *Jane's Career*, while his play *San Gloria* which sets out the shipwrecking of Christopher Columbus in 1503 is replicated by de Lisser in his 1936 novel "Anacanoa," and both wrote on the Morant Bay Rebellion.⁹ Sir Walter Scott provides a white British point of origin for some of de Lisser's literary practices, and Scott's influence on de Lisser is clearly evidenced through de Lisser's experimentation with the genre of the historical novel. However, one cannot help but wonder if Scott's impact

⁷ Although not an exhaustive list, see George Panton, "The arch-conservative who was also a pioneer," *Sunday Gleaner* 14 July 1974: 31. Print. Clifton Neita, "The 'Gleaner's' Influence on Jamaican Politics," *Daily Gleaner, 150th Anniversary Supplement* 13 Sept. 1984: 14-17. Print. Terry Smith, "Self-Govt. 'Over My dead Body,'" *Sunday Gleaner* 12 Dec. 1993: 7B. Print.

⁸ Thomas MacDermot (Tom Redcam) was Jamaica's first poet laureate. A number of his early works have recently been made available through the Digital Library of Jamaica. Rhonda Cobham and Leah Rosenberg have examined some of MacDermot's early narratives but a comprehensive thesis which investigates MacDermot and his influence on early Jamaican literature, especially as founder of the All Jamaica Library, would not only make a compelling thesis but would further expand the field of early West Indian literature.

⁹ I have no date for when Thomas MacDermot originally wrote this drama, or indeed if it was ever published before 1951. However, it was published in Tom Redcam, *Orange Valley and Other Poems* (Jamaica: Pioneer Press, 1951) 40-94. Print.

was also on a personal level. David Brown suggests that Scott's historical imagination was able to interface with the complexities of the "three great social systems in Scottish history" (184), namely the clan, the feudal aristocracy and the commercial classes, as a result of his historical knowledge and his "conversations with old Jacobites as a boy" (184), which he translated into his literature. Brown also recognises David Daiches' further positioning of Scott's "contradictory class position" as a result of his "mixed aristocratic and bourgeois ancestry" (184). de Lisser for his part experienced the same comingling of identities within his own personal makeup, and therefore it is possible that de Lisser felt a closer kinship to Scott as a man, rather than just as a writer.

Although party politics were not a driving factor within his career, it is clear that de Lisser was profoundly political and examinations into de Lisser's life and work raise questions regarding his apparent cultural duality and self-contradictory writing. From the way that de Lisser constructs racial identities in many of his writings, it is clear that de Lisser is attempting not only to destabilise racial boundaries but also to interrogate his own boundaries, position and identity within Jamaican society. de Lisser, for all of his conservative attitudes and political leanings, ultimately was a man who was struggling to come to terms with his own identity and that of his country. Frantz Fanon comments that a "national culture under colonial domination is a contested culture...[which] very quickly becomes a culture condemned to secrecy" (*On National Culture* 46), and outlines the tentative progressiveness of "native intellectuals" in terms of their literary significance by suggesting

that "...the native intellectual used to produce his work to be read exclusively by the oppressor, whether with the intention of charming him or of denouncing him through ethnical or subjectivist means, now the native writer progressively takes on the habit of addressing his own people" (*On National Culture* 47). de Lisser's novels work on these two levels, a point which will be developed in succeeding chapters. This multi-layering of texts, effectively allows for a double audience of the "oppressor" and the "oppressed" and therefore as a "native writer," de Lisser utilised and adapted the satirical techniques of irony and mimicry to produce a national literature that spoke to "his own people" i.e., the local Jamaican population. Put another way, through the self-reflexive and complex novels, as they were produced in *Planters' Punch*, the "oppressor," although "charmed," accepts and is indeed deceived by the superficiality of de Lisser's novels, while the "oppressed" are able to see behind the deception and catch the hidden meaning behind the words and mimicry and are able to laugh at the expense of the deceived. This ambiguous narrative layering and complex relationships to audience and socio-political contexts are part of what makes de Lisser so enigmatic and complicated.

According to Masao Miyoshi, "it was not until years after the end of formal colonialism between 1945 and 1970 that theory was enabled to negotiate issues of colonialism as an admissible factor in criticism" (727). Traditionally, the study of West Indian literature has focused on writers from the 1950s. In his introduction to *West Indian Literature*, Bruce King acknowledges that as a result of the ending of the Empire after the Second World War, many characteristics of Jamaican literature were similar to those of

other new literatures which were emerging, namely: “the creation of myths of the past; the use of local scenery; the study of local, especially peasant lives; and emphasis on the community” (7). King goes on to recognise that authors such as George Lamming, Edgar Mittelholzer and Sam Selvon contributed “to the tradition of the West Indian novel through their use of local speech, delineation of social problems, and sense of comedy” (4). Furthermore, in conjunction with King, the scholar William Walsh believed that “the literature of the West Indies is, with notable exceptions, an expatriate literature” (48). Of the distinguished writers who emerged during the first half of the twentieth century, such as Thomas MacDermot, C.L.R. James, Alfred Mendes, Claude McKay and Herbert de Lisser there is little mention; at best they are relegated to nondescript passages on “early literature.”¹⁰ Walsh continues to comment that for these writers “the life of the West Indian peasant...is the centre of West Indian experience” (48). Yet, if Walsh had taken a closer look at the earlier Jamaican writers, instead of just dismissing them out of hand, he would have recognised that many of the early West Indian writers wrote about the West Indian peasant some thirty years earlier and that the “inner experience of the West Indian community” (55) can be found not only in the yard fiction of C.L.R. James’ (*Triumph* 1929, and *Minty Alley* 1936) and Alfred Mendes’ (*Pitch Lake* 1934 and *Black Fauns* 1935), but also in the peasant fiction of de Lisser’s (*Jane’s Career* 1913 and *Susan Proudleigh* 1915), MacDermot’s (*Becka’s Buckra Baby* 1903 and *One Brown Girl And ...* 1909) and McKay’s (*Banana Bottom* 1932).

¹⁰ C.L.R. James and Claude McKay have been recognised within other scholarly fields, and there is a wealth of critical material available regarding their works.

Similarly, when King praises these later writers by claiming that they were amongst the first to “capture the picaresque quality sometimes characteristic of West Indian lives” (*West Indian* 4) and further that this “local material could be given dignity and significance in literature” (*West Indian* 6), while simultaneously dismissing the earlier writers, he is confirming that these writers are not considered as being of any literary merit. In actuality, early Jamaican and West Indian writers in general were contributing to the tradition of the West Indian novel and de Lisser was himself using history and myth to interrogate and challenge dominant paradigms of nationalism. It is worth noting that they were writing within the confines of colonialism, which makes their achievements even more significant. de Lisser’s satirical comedies as well as his social realist fiction capture not only a realistic portrayal of the lower working class but also highlight the intra-racial and intra-class social snobbery that was prevalent throughout Jamaican society. The poetry of MacDermot, McKay and, later, Louise Bennett focused on the use of local dialect and the “yard” fiction of Trinidadian authors Mendes and James highlighted not only the social problems of the 1930s, but also the trials and tribulations of communal living.

Collectively, West Indian literature, as a result of its continuous evolution and trans-Caribbean community, has been concerned, as postulated by King, with the contrasts of the:

poor and middle-class; history and the present; the
desire for and suspicion of education; dispossession and

freedom; racial difference and creolisation;
metropolitan and regional culture, local pride and
embarrassment. (*West Indian* 7)

These themes were as relevant to the early Jamaican writers at the turn of the century as they were to the other West Indian writers who began to emerge in the inter-war years. Although recognising that de Lisser and MacDermot were the first significant writers to come out of the West Indies, King continues to relegate de Lisser's writings to "exotic historical novels about pirates, witchcraft and romantic love" (*West Indian* 2), and again Walsh harshly critiques de Lisser by claiming that he cannot be taken in any serious sense as a significant writer, but accepts that there is some historical value in *Jane's Career* in that it brought a "Jamaican peasant into the centre of the fiction" (47). Finally, one of the more prolific critics writing on de Lisser during the 1970s, Kenneth Ramchand is equally dismissive of his literary merit. Even though Ramchand included de Lisser and his writing in his seminal work, *The West Indian Novel and its Background*, wrote the introduction to *Jane's Career* in the 1971 republication, and his unpublished paper "Herbert G De Lisser, a rediscovery" (which he wrote in October 1970 and presented to the Library of the University of West Indies in November of that year) sought to "rediscover" de Lisser, he ultimately concludes that "de Lisser is not a major West Indian artist" (*WINB* 19). Although Ramchand begrudgingly recognises de Lisser's talent and early literature in this paper, as evidenced though his acknowledgement that de Lisser's 1916 (not 1917 as referenced by Ramchand) novel *Triumphant Squalitone* "anticipates V.S. Naipaul's *The Suffrage of*

Elvira (1958) and *The Mimic Men* (1967) in attitude and intention, although not in style and technique,” he never really “rediscovers” him (*An Introduction* 2). Biased by his own anti-colonial views, he (along with a number of other critics) continues to categorise de Lisser’s later work reductively. Ramchand even goes so far as to question why de Lisser wrote novels in the first instance, especially as “he did not need to earn his living as a writer” (*WINB* 3), and holds the opinion that his “prose fiction...reveal[s] changes of attitude...that correspond to a marked extent with his *evolution* (my emphasis) into a flexible spokesman for wealth and political conservatism” (*WINB* 3). Lizabeth Paravisini-Gerbert, Patricia Harkins and Laura Lomas continue to pigeonhole de Lisser’s work within these colonial constraints through their insights into *The White Witch of Rosehall* which are interesting as far as they go.¹¹ Finally, Kenneth Ramchand, John Figueroa, Mervyn Morris, Michael G. Cooke, Victor Chang and Amon S. Saakana collectively display a limited amount of interest in de Lisser’s oeuvre, but concentrate primarily on his early published novels.¹² Further explanation of these scholarly lacunae resides in scholars’ blanket acceptance of de Lisser’s unyielding conservatism. Citing an editorial that de Lisser wrote in June 1938 (a month after the May riots of 1938), when he penned the immortal words “from complete self-government for Jamaica, Good Lord, deliver us” has prevented any further investigation or indeed questioning of his politics and continues to overshadow his literary writings and intellectual significance. It is this excessive focus on a few of de Lisser’s novels alongside de Lisser’s political conservatism that skews any appraisal of

¹¹ Please see Chapter V of this thesis for a more in-depth critical debate on these articles.

¹² For a comprehensive account of the limited body of critical writing on de Lisser, please refer to the bibliography. His early published novels refer to his novels published before 1920, eg., *Jane’s Career* (1913), *Susan Proudleigh* (1914), *Triumphant Squalitone* (1916), and *Revenge* (1919).

his works, and therefore it is essential to examine his complete body of work in order to contextualise and examine his multifaceted aesthetic and self-reflexive practices in depth.

In terms of genre, Roberts in the foreword to de Lisser's *The Arawak Girl*, places de Lisser's novels into three categories: "his early tales in dialect...his studies of contemporary life...[and his] novels based upon Jamaican history." A formidable writer and respected critic, Roberts's sweepingly obvious representation of de Lisser's work belies any literary merits in his writings and encourages a reluctance to investigate his novels more deeply. Equally, Walsh was so keen to praise the contemporary writers for their range and variety that he did not recognise that all of these varieties were actually exhibited by de Lisser in his own literary range, decades earlier. In the same vein, Birbalsingh is equally dismissive of de Lisser's literary achievements as he "conveniently" places de Lisser's novels into two groups, regional and historical, although he is the only scholar to critique de Lisser's novel *The Cup and the Lip*. However, while Birbalsingh may have been influenced by his own political bias against de Lisser's novels, he appears to have respected de Lisser the man and at least some of his literary intentions. Birbalsingh's entry on de Lisser for the *Dictionary of Literary Biography* acknowledges that de Lisser was a "distinguished figure in Jamaican intellectual, artistic, political, and social circles" (142), and goes on to suggest that a number of his novels investigate and dramatise the "problems resulting from the injustices of racial discrimination, colour prejudice and social inequalities" (142). Birbalsingh further praises de Lisser for his understanding

of the social and historical issues that were affecting contemporary Jamaican society, stating that de Lisser's knowledge of history and his skill in lucid commentary are impressive. Therefore, although de Lisser's literary work may not necessarily be superior in quality to the contemporary writers of West Indian literature, it was certainly accessible to a wider audience, and as a consequence, his work should not be dismissed so sweepingly. Unfortunately the popularity of de Lisser's works could also have been a determining factor in their exclusion from the literary canon as they were not perceived to be sufficiently "high-brow" enough to merit any intellectual analysis or scholarly debate. Edmondson supports this opinion in her recent study into the creation of middlebrow culture when she suggests that "scholars unwittingly reinforce the high/low binary when we ignore the role that popularity and pleasure play in determining the meaning of books or other artefacts of culture" (*Middlebrow Culture* 6). The fact that de Lisser's novels were hugely popular as they did not require the complexities determined by highbrow literature, nor the mastery of complicated linguistics, placed his novels within the binary of low (or the newly emerging middlebrow) literature. Although de Lisser may have attempted to write highbrow literature in that he wrote in local dialect or within European genres, from an academic point of view, he was not successful. de Lisser's novels were simple in format and were read and (one assumes) enjoyed by an increasingly literate population. Although serious themes were included within his novels, because they were simple in format and there was no status attached to them, past scholars have relegated his literature to obscurity.

Of late, a new wave of post-colonial theory and critical models have developed as a way to (re)interpret and debate many of these earlier Caribbean texts, and revision of the Caribbean literary canon has finally begun. Scholars such as Rhonda Cobham and Reinhard Sander began to revisit these early twentieth century Caribbean texts, while more recently there has emerged a limited body of anthologies and volumes on early Caribbean literature.¹³ Accordingly, contemporary critics writing on de Lisser have begun the process of reclaiming de Lisser by reinserting his work into a more inclusive Caribbean canon. This reorientation of de Lisser is necessary in order to understand his intellectual significance and the effect his novels had on the *entire* Jamaican community in creating and defining a national literature as well as instilling a sense of Jamaican pride and unity. Leah Rosenberg's recent study brings de Lisser to our attention through her recovery of him as an early nationalist writer. Although her analysis has been limited to *Jane's Career*, and a small selection of *Planters' Punch*, her more recent work covers a number of de Lisser's books as tourism and travel literature. Edmondson's perceptive observation into the creation of a middlebrow culture in Caribbean society also reclaims de Lisser. Recognising de Lisser's imperialist leanings, she also acknowledges his complexities and cultural duality, concluding that *Jane's Career* is a novel that "best reflects an aesthetic 'brownness'" (*Middlebrow Culture* 80), and confirms my own strongly held beliefs towards de Lisser and

¹³ Although not an exhaustive list see Rhonda Cobham, "The Creative Writer and West Indian Society Jamaica 1900-1950." diss., U of St Andrews, 1981. Print; Daryl Cumber Dance, *Fifty Caribbean Writers A Bio-Bibliographical Critical Sourcebook* (London: Greenwood Press, 1986). Print; Bernth Lindfors and Reinhard Sander, *Twentieth-Century Caribbean and Black African Writers, First Series* Dictionary of Literary Biography Vol. 117 (Detroit: Gale Research Inc, 1992). Print; Mervyn Morris, *Making West Indian Literature* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2005). Print; Alison Donnell and Sarah Lawson Welsh eds, *The Routledge Reader in Caribbean Literature*, (London: Routledge, 1996). Print; Leah Rosenberg, *Nationalism and the Formation of Caribbean Literature*, (Palgrave: Macmillan, 2007). Print.

his writing that the “ideological brownness found here, so out of critical favour, flying as it has under the canonical radar, is nevertheless a constitutive element of popular Caribbean nationalism” (*Middlebrow Culture* 85). Their repositioning of de Lisser as an author whose work has been fundamental in creating a middlebrow culture and early national literature goes some way to strengthen my own position regarding de Lisser as set out throughout this thesis. As Rosenberg contends: “his work needs to be included in literary history in its entirety” (89). Therefore my inspiration in writing this thesis is to recover de Lisser and reincorporate his work in the literary history of Caribbean literature.

Jamaican politics during the early part of the twentieth century saw a stronger divide between the coloniser and colonised, and as a result Rosenberg recognises that the “beginning of the twentieth century...placed a priority on the formation of national literature” (2). As already suggested earlier, this desire to create a Caribbean identity by the early Jamaican writers resulted from increasing debates about how Jamaica should be governed both locally and globally and while this thesis focuses on de Lisser, a brief mention of his contemporary Thomas MacDermot is necessary in order to map the emerging nationalism of these early Jamaican writers. Although McKay was another early Jamaican author of outstanding significance, his voice was heard on a wider stage of internationalism and negritude, so it is not included here.

MacDermot throughout his lifetime wrote for numerous magazines and publications. Other than these articles, the only other three works that were

published were a poem entitled “Jamaica” that he wrote when he was about nineteen or twenty, and two full length novels, *Becka’s Buckra Baby*, and *One Brown Girl And...*, none of which remain in print. In addition to being a novelist in his own right, he, along with de Lisser, was also an editor of a local newspaper *The Jamaica Times* (1900-1920) and as a result, both writers were able to facilitate the establishment of a distinct literary tradition and inspire future literary production in the region by printing locally written literature within their newspapers. They both printed McKay’s early poetry and MacDermot published some of de Lisser’s early work. Further attempts were made to make local writing accessible to the masses through the emergence of poetry leagues and other writing groups and in 1904 MacDermot founded the All Jamaica Library. Sponsored by *The Jamaica Times*, the library was established to bring local literature to the local population within a variety of different formats. MacDermot’s aim was to bring this literature “written by Jamaicans” to the “Jamaican public, at a price so small as to make each publication generally purchasable” (qtd in Morris, *The All Jamaica Library* 47). The concept was that by producing local literature by local successful writers to the public for an affordable cost, they would be able to develop and promote the culture of the country unaffected by race, class and gender. Morris’s work on the library gives a comprehensive account in relation to the works that were produced for the library. Unfortunately the library only ran to four volumes. However, what is more significant is not the fact that only four volumes were published, but that MacDermot had attempted to bring local literature to the local Jamaican public. Rosenberg has examined MacDermot’s literature and his influence in terms of how he “fostered Jamaican national

literature through the Jamaica Local Literary Association, *The Jamaica Times*, and other venues” (1), and as a result “led the first attempts at literary nationalism” (33). Rosenberg’s chapter on MacDermot entitled *The Accidental Modernist* is the most comprehensive analysis to date of MacDermot’s literary credentials and she analyses and traces the trajectory of his oeuvre by “linking a literary movement with national politics” (35). This has allowed her to produce a nationalistic historiography through his works and highlight his influence and inspiration in creating a Jamaican literary tradition.

In propinquity, de Lisser’s nationalistic attitudes and his desire to reflect a distinct Jamaican identity were also reflected in his own attempts to bring his national literature to the local population through the introduction of advertisements that filled the “white pages” in his early novels in order to subsidise the printing cost. In doing so, the Jamaican reader was able to obtain “the work much more cheaply than he otherwise could” (de Lisser, *Triumphant Squalitone* Author’s Note). Along with MacDermot, by selling his book at “fully 50 per cent below its cost of production” (*Triumphant Squalitone* Author’s Note), de Lisser was supporting this desire to promote the culture of his country and engage in a sense of cultural nationalism. Furthermore, by confirming to the reader that there is “no financial profit to its publishers” (*Triumphant Squalitone* Author’s Note), de Lisser was able to bring to the readers’ attention the idea that *all* Jamaicans, were supporting the need for a Caribbean or indeed Jamaican identity.

Ania Loomba argues that “anti-colonial nationalism is a struggle to represent, create or recover a culture and a selfhood that has been systematically repressed and eroded during colonial rule” (217). I would take this argument one step further and suggest that de Lisser’s aim in publishing his novels for a wider audience enabled him to juxtapose his nationalistic ideals against his public conservatism as a means of creating a nationalism for Jamaica that was not a political movement, but, according to Partha Chatterjee, operated as “a cultural construct which enables the colonised to posit their difference and autonomy” (qtd in Loomba 190). Put another way, through de Lisser’s ability to use all of the literary resources available to him, in the form of folk legends, recovered history and the sociological climates of an ever-changing Jamaica, de Lisser was able to mass market his own novels, to reach *all* of his countrymen as well as those of the colonising class. This passive form of encouraging change and cultural uplift, which in turn highlighted to the “colonised” readers their “difference and autonomy” was camouflaged through his use of satire, which allowed his novels to be read on two levels, with two different interpretations and encouraged de Lisser’s desire for Jamaica to be recognised as its own entity but within the British Empire. This idea of the colonised being able to set out their “difference and autonomy” but remain within the dominant culture of colonialism interconnects with the ideas postulated by postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha.

Bhabha encourages a rethinking of nationalism and resistance by asserting that nations were effectively “constructions” of cultural or national identity. His influential, if in some senses contradictory, theories regarding

identity are based on notions of mimicry, hybridity and ambivalence and focus upon the issue of the written word. Through his various published works he postulates that essentially cultural identity is founded upon the continuous interfacing and exchanging of cultural performances within a liminal space. This “liminal” space, he contends, is a space of hybridity and ambivalence which is written into existence, and he sees the book, specifically the English book, as such a space. Moreover, Bhabha suggests that through the use of mimicry, and its “repetitious slippage of difference and desire,” the colonised is able to destroy the coloniser’s “forms of authority at the point at which it de-authorizes them” (*Of Mimicry* 127). Put another way, Bhabha believes that through the power of the written word and the mimicking of the English book, the colonised “subject” is empowered to resist the power of the coloniser, by being both part and not part of one’s own surroundings, to resemble, but not to differ overtly. Although this mode of resistance raises questions as to the “limit” of resistance in view of the fact that the colonised “subject” is still written within the language of the dominant culture, Bhabha is prepared to credit the colonised “subjects” with a level of linguistic agency.

If we apply Bhabha’s theoretical debates to early Anglo-Caribbean literature in general and de Lisser specifically, it becomes clear that as a result of the colonial legacy, any early national literature necessarily begins within the framework of colonial literature. Bhabha suggests that “in mimicry, the representation of identity and meaning is re-articulated” (*Of Mimicry* 131). This re-articulation as “other” allows for a “splitting of colonial discourse” in order to highlight differences by adaptation, and it is this re-articulation

through mimicry which is essential in understanding de Lisser's multifaceted novels. As a satirist, an essential satirical technique is the form of mimicry, and de Lisser relied upon this trope to re-articulate and adapt traditional colonial discourse, and infuse his novels with a sense of resistance through the building of a distinctive Jamaican identity. Furthermore, as will be evidenced within the succeeding chapters of this thesis, his representation of women as a symbol of Jamaica as a nation also sought to destabilise the traditionally preconceived notions supporting colonial identity and constructions of nationalism. By relying on Jamaica's recorded history and folk legends, he is able to progress towards and expose this "colonised" desire for a cultural and national identity.

Apropos this idea of differences through adaptation finds further voice in Judie Newman's astute observations regarding literature in postcolonial culture. Newman suggests that "rewritings may give the impression that postcolonial culture can *only* rework, that it has no creativity of its own, and is fundamentally dependent for its materials on the colonising culture" (25). As an early Caribbean writer, de Lisser produced a literature written within the confines of colonialism, and therefore to a large extent his novels employed a narrative poetics of indirection. Therefore, if Newman's position is to be applied, then de Lisser's replication of colonial narratives has no sense of individual creativity and as a result they are nothing more than inferior imitations of already well established and received English novels. Rosenberg adds fuel to the fire by suggesting that because "early Caribbean nationalists did not call for a complete break with the mother country and because they

often insisted on Victorian propriety and aesthetics, later anti-colonial intellectuals failed to recognise the power of their politics and aesthetics” (8).

As a writer de Lisser did indeed conform to many of the popular European stereotypes and genres of the time. However de Lisser was also a satirist, and as a satirist, the art of mimicry and imitation goes beyond any postcolonial theoretical assumptions set out by Bhabha and his contemporaries. As Charles Knight points out: “satire...is not a genre in itself, but an exploiter of other genres” (4). In other words, satire is a parasite that performs best when it is using imitation as a reference or as another characteristic. By de Lisser overlapping this closeness between the form of satire and the form of the novel he was able to work within the existing paradigms of popular European literary genres and adhere to the imperialistic values and stereotypes of the first half of the twentieth century. However, it is my opinion that de Lisser also maintained national ideals throughout his writing career and blended these into his literature. As Hodgart suggests, “simple nationalistic satire stresses the distinction of one’s own country from another by exaggerating their negative qualities” (59). Unable to distinguish between two countries, de Lisser used his novels to distinguish between two cultures and he therefore adapted and complicated these established stereotypes and values in order to highlight the differences between the colonised and colonising cultures, thereby creating legitimacy for an *authentic* Jamaican identity.

This ability to imitate and replicate established popular colonial literature, but from a different perspective and for a different audience reveals a

level of creativity and originality which persuades me to conclude that although rewritings *may* give the impression that they can only rework, post-colonial culture *can* and *does* negotiate a continued evolution of creativity through the original re-visioning and rewriting of the colonised history, and not just the colonising culture. This brief digression into postcolonial literary culture has been necessary in order to further explicate de Lisser's literary significance, for while it would be anachronistic to describe de Lisser as a post-colonial author, his texts do, to a limited extent, anticipate later postcolonial narratives, as already suggested by Ramchand earlier in this introduction.

Although this thesis is a work of recovery, it is also a work of criticism and to this end it is necessary to undertake a detailed critical analysis of de Lisser's novels. However, as already mentioned, de Lisser wrote 26 novels and this thesis does not allow for each one to be examined extensively. Therefore, it is necessary that I establish some parameters for my analysis and justify my reasons for selecting the works that I believe merit further critical attention. Boxhill in his overview of the first thirty years of West Indian literature recognises two significant aspects to de Lisser's writing: his "emerging sense of the distinctiveness of the Jamaican identity" (39), and the "fact that all of de Lisser's novels contain a resourceful strong woman" (39) thereby crediting de Lisser with "doing more than most West Indian writers to explore the effect of this dominant female personality" (39). Using Boxhill's perceptive insights as a framework, augmented by Edmondson's argument for the creation of a Caribbean middlebrow culture, my investigation into de Lisser's literary works focuses upon de Lisser's representation of women throughout his fiction and

evaluates how he uses his heroines and his novels to generate a distinctive Jamaican identity and create a middlebrow culture for the emerging middle classes at the beginning of the twentieth century. According to Edmondson, early literary pieces in the form of poetry and short stories were aimed at this emerging middle class, which was rapidly expanding, and made up of black, brown and white members of society. With literacy rates increasing there was an increased demand for literature and women were recognised as the main readers of popular fiction, as they would read for pleasure. As a result, according to Edmondson, the romance novel, a predominantly female genre was the preferred literary form, with detective novels encouraging a male audience (*Middlebrow Culture* 10). Edmondson contends that the romance novel contained social aspirations, nationalism and pleasure (*Middlebrow Culture* 11) and therefore it is no surprise that de Lisser favoured this format and a great number of his novels contained a romantic element. It is therefore equally no surprise that of the ten novels I have selected for detailed critical analysis, seven can be classed as “romance” novels, although all ten do contain a romantic element or indeed entanglement. According to Edmondson, the emerging middle class were disassociated from the cultural traditions of the “peasant” class, and therefore, saw itself as effectively “culturally rootless” (*Middlebrow Culture* 9). Therefore, using women as the focal point in his literature de Lisser appropriates the traditions of the black peasantry, restores Jamaican folk legends and revises recorded Jamaican history in order to translate his national ideas and create a distinctive Jamaican national identity that allowed *all* Jamaicans to recognise and be proud of their roots.

In recuperating de Lisser's work through his different representations of women, female identity and independence, it is important to recognise the role that women play within these novels. Colonialism has been the defining historical event within Jamaican and Caribbean history, which has irrevocably altered the region's racial and cultural identities. Therefore, the novels selected essentially examine women from within this defining moment of Jamaican history. However, before continuing, it is essential that I establish to which colonialism I am referring. Jamaica has been colonised by both the Spanish in 1492 by Christopher Columbus, and then by the British following the successful invasion in 1655. For the sake of a comprehensive outline and understanding of the structure of this thesis, I am referring to when Jamaica was colonised by England and became part of the British Empire. Furthermore, although all of de Lisser's novels contain a strong female character, she does not necessarily drive the action or intentionality of the novel. For that reason, the novels selected within this thesis foreground not only a strong female protagonist through various time periods of recorded Jamaican history, but also place her as central to the historical events and/or socio-political situation within the text.

Working as a trilogy to "frame" British colonialism, the novels selected examine women through 400 years of Jamaican history. Investigated within the parameters of "before the British Empire," "the British Empire 1655-1900," and "the British Empire 1900-1944," each "section" engages with either a trilogy of texts, or "sister" texts which serve to compliment each other within the analysis. The novels analysed within the framework of "before the British

Empire” begin their focus on Jamaican history before the British invasion of the island. The first novel “Anacanoa” centres upon a beautiful chieftain’s daughter, Anacanoa, who encounters Christopher Columbus when he was marooned on the Island at the end of the fifteenth century. The following two novels, “Conquest” and “The White Maroon,” continue the representation of women within this parameter through Anacanoa’s descendant Diego Mendez, but move the action forward to the beginning of British dominance. Although the timeline has moved towards British colonialism, these three novels serve to evoke the history of the Arawaks through Diego’s continuous references towards his Arawak ancestry, their history and his descriptions of their lives. This historical consciousness allows Anacanoa’s spiritual essence to thread itself through these three texts.

The representation and negotiation of female identity during British colonialism is reflected through a number of de Lisser’s historical novels that refer directly to colonialism during the period of slavery or shortly after emancipation. The first two novels that offer significant literary merit within the framework of “the British Empire 1655-1900” are *Revenge* and *Psyche*. These female centred novels both investigate national identity through the renegotiation of female heroism. *Revenge* concentrates upon the Morant Bay Rebellion of 1865 which was instigated by Paul Bogle and George William Gordon. Paul Bogle’s coloured daughter Rachel is the main protagonist of the novel and many of the causes and events leading up to the Rebellion are seen from her perspective. The novel *Psyche* was originally two novels “Psyche” and “The Return.” The first part deals with slavery in the colonies through the

main protagonist Psyche Huntingdon who was brought from Africa, while the second novel “The Return” focuses upon African Psyche’s coloured daughter Psyche Huntingdon initiating the Baptist War rebellion through her involvement with Sam Sharpe, her intention to free her own slaves and her anti-colonial politics.

Continuing within “the British Empire 1655-1900” framework, the folk legends of Three-finger’d Jack and Annie Palmer find a literary space in de Lisser’s novels *Morgan’s Daughter* and *The White Witch of Rosehall* respectively. The social conflicts between coloniser and colonised are intensively examined through these two novels, concentrating upon the dichotomy of European and Jamaican culture as represented through the role of the women within both novels. *Morgan’s Daughter* repositions positive representations of strong female women from oral traditions to literature through the creation of Elizabeth, a coloured woman who is descended from the infamous Henry Morgan and the Maroon warriors. A voice for resistance, she is juxtaposed against Joyce Breakspeare as a means of destabilising racial identities. *The White Witch of Rosehall* examines the legitimacy of an “authentic” Jamaican culture within the Caribbean through the representation of Annie Palmer juxtaposed against the coloured Millie who is representative of an emerging and independent Jamaica.

The final investigation of women within this thesis is through the framing of “the British Empire 1900-1944.” This period refers specifically to when Jamaica was still under the dominance of the British Empire in the first

half of the twentieth century. Although Jamaica was still a colony, the first rumblings of nationalism and independence were starting to be heard and Jamaica began to test its political power. Consequently, within this significant time period, the novels examined focus upon social mobility and the emerging independence of the black working woman. The novels that focus on women within “the British Empire 1900-1944,” namely *Jane’s Career*, *Susan Proudleigh* and “Myrtle and Money” work as a trilogy that examines this politically unstable background of contested colonialism. Through this trilogy de Lisser engages with and then destabilises the traditional colonial constructions of the colonised woman through his depiction of these capable women. All three women are educated, resourceful and of high moral standards. Nationalism and the desire for independence is echoed through these women as they personify Jamaica politically at different time periods and locations, raising questions about Jamaica’s affiliation to England.

This thesis seeks to recover de Lisser through an excavation of his original body of work, which has suffered from significant critical neglect. As de Lisser’s literature did not progress in a linear fashion from anti-colonialism to nationalism, neither does this thesis. This thesis is divided into two sections. The first three chapters offer a literary analysis of de Lisser’s literary writings juxtaposed against Jamaica’s complex socio-political climate and highlight de Lisser’s desire to create a Jamaican national literature. The final three chapters investigate de Lisser’s fictional writing across a broader spectrum of popular discourse which includes myths, folk legends and his periodical *Planters’ Punch*.

An extensive analysis of a number of de Lisser's novels highlights the different genres and literary techniques that he adopts throughout his writing career to produce diverse and multifaceted works. As already suggested, issues surrounding his constructions of female identity and of female centred texts are the focal point of this thesis. Chapter One, "(Re)creation of a Nation: Founding Mothers and the (Re)claiming of Jamaica," reflects upon how de Lisser utilises and adapts the tropes of a national epic in order to examine women as founders of a nation. Focusing primarily on de Lisser's 1936 novel "Anacanoa," this chapter investigates how de Lisser is able to project Anacanoa as a symbol for Jamaican nationalism and unity, in that it is her ancestors who create and delineate the Maroon community. Through his repositioning of Anacanoa as a leader of her tribe, de Lisser is able to examine the dislocation and (re)gendering of nation and nationhood.

Chapter Two, "Through a Political Lens: Female Independence and the Commodification of Jamaica," examines de Lisser's representation of women through the lens of female independence and national identity. The focus of this chapter rests on two of de Lisser's literary works that have received a limited amount of literary investigation (*Jane's Career* and *Susan Proudleigh*). Mapping de Lisser's investigation of female independence through a political lens encourages one to examine *Jane's Career* (1913), *Susan Proudleigh* (1915) and "Myrtle and Money" (1940-41) as a trilogy. This re-mapping exposes another level of de Lisser's aesthetic practices by showing ways in

which de Lisser is able to comment upon the political crises that were affecting Jamaica during the early part of the twentieth century.

Chapter Three, “The (Re)presentations and (Re)negotiations of Heroism in *Revenge* and *Psyche*,” explores the representation of heroism and the search for a national identity through the lens of the historical novel. This chapter examines the way the novels’ (re)negotiation of the representations of heroism is explored within individual characters in two of his novels, *Revenge* and *Psyche*. Utilising the framework of Georg Lukács and his influence in relation to the historical novel, parallels will be drawn with Scott’s *Ivanhoe*, and the mythical tale of “Psyche and Cupid” as set out in Apuleius’s *The Golden Ass* in order to clarify and interrogate de Lisser’s representations of the relationship between female heroism, identity and belonging.

Moving towards the arena of popular discourse, Chapter Four “Race, Resistance and the Reclamation of Three-finger’d Jack” and Chapter Five “The Power of Oral Tradition: Culture, Religion and the Birth of a Jamaican “National” Narrative in *The White Witch of Rosehall*,” examine the representation of women through the reclamation and (re)creation of myths and folk legends. Experimenting with the genres of the sentimental narrative and gothic fiction respectively, de Lisser investigates the complex socio-historical relationship between European and Jamaican culture. Concentrating upon the importance of historiography and the folk imagination, Chapter Four focuses on the historical novel *Morgan’s Daughter*. By foregrounding a strong female protagonist de Lisser continues to shape his vision of women as a symbol for

Jamaica as nation and as such, this chapter debates and investigates how de Lisser uses the literary trope of racial identity in order to develop a national literature.

Chapter Five, “The Power of Oral Tradition: Culture, Religion and the Birth of a Jamaican “National” Narrative in *The White Witch of Rosehall*,” concentrates upon the representation of “women as national legends” through the genre of gothic fiction. The legend of Rosehall has allowed for a sense of pride and unity to be established within the cross-racial and cross-cultural ancestral heritage of Jamaica, and this chapter considers how de Lisser’s appropriation of a legend encourages its transformation into a symbol for nationalism and unity through its own self-perpetuation. Framed by the genre of gothic literature, my reinterpretation of this novel contends that de Lisser drew upon the rich heritage of the folk imagination to create a Jamaican national narrative in his quest to formulate a cultural nationalism.

The final chapter of this thesis continues to investigate de Lisser’s representation of women by analysing the ways in which de Lisser relocates women within the public sphere through his annual periodical *Planters’ Punch*. One of the main arguments of this thesis is that de Lisser continuously blurs the boundaries of these traditional spheres, and Chapter Six, “The Power of the Written Word: *Planter’s Punch* and the Relocation of Women into the Public Sphere,” focuses upon the general constructions of nationhood which allocate men to the public sphere of civilisation and society while suppressing women into the private sphere of nature and domesticity. As a result, this chapter maps

the trajectory of de Lisser's novels as set out in *Planters' Punch*, against Jamaica's socio-historical context in order to highlight the interconnectedness of women and his creation of a national Jamaican literature. By relocating women into the public sphere and providing evidence that de Lisser's representation of women as a symbol for Jamaica as a nation went beyond his popular and recognised literature, I hope to convey that although de Lisser's magazine appeared to work as a voice piece for the white elite, it was in fact aimed more at the emerging middle classes which included white, coloured and black Jamaicans alike, and that he established a national historiography of Jamaican identity by promoting local culture. Through this in-depth investigation of his selected works, his complexities as an author are revealed, and the conclusion to this thesis highlights these complexities.

Upon his death in 1944, the front page newspaper article dedicated to his memory recognises that de Lisser's writing "reflected the thoughts, hopes and aspirations of our people for he knew Jamaica as possibly no other man living in his day and generation did" (*Mr Herbert. G. de Lisser* Frontpage). Admittedly an obituary rarely speaks ill of the dead and the author of this piece, which appeared on the front page, is unattributed which complicates its status. However, it does say how he was perceived. The author goes on to recognise this popular perception by adding that de Lisser "strove mightily" for a better Jamaica, "for deep in his heart was a love for his native land and its people." de Lisser's efforts as a "watchdog" for government expenditure, his geniality as a newspaper man and his outstanding literary talents are also recognised within this obituary along with the acknowledgement that "Mr. de

Lisser played a leading role in the Island's history for so many years." So why has he been so neglected? It is my contention, as already alluded to earlier in this introduction, that while de Lisser's party politics are not the important factor, he was clearly profoundly political and therefore de Lisser has become a victim of both radical and reactionary constructions of nationalism. As a consequence, de Lisser's intellectual significance and literary merits have gone unnoticed for far too long.

In order to restore de Lisser to the position he rightfully deserves, it is important not to attempt to reconcile these contradictory tendencies but instead to work with them via an engagement with his political affiliation and aesthetic experimentation. Through a comprehensive investigation and examination of the literary conventions within which de Lisser was writing, it is possible to acknowledge these conventions on the one hand, whilst simultaneously debating the ways in which he further complicates and destabilises these forms through his experimental use of literary devices and techniques as he sought to ensure "that future generations would be able to discover their roots" (Delvante 192).

CHAPTER I

(Re)creation of a Nation: Founding Mothers and the (re)claiming of Jamaica.

Colonial concepts of nationalism have predominantly focused on the iconography of the female body and women as the protectors of the territory or as the “mothers” of a nation, while the cultural ideology of the nation has remained fully committed to the patriarchal order. The contemporary ideologies and theoretical frameworks of post-colonialism, post-structuralism, gender studies and more recently the re-positioning of nationalistic discourse have enabled us to deconstruct these conventional notions and directly challenge these colonial and male prerogatives. Focusing primarily on de Lisser’s 1936 novel “Anacanoa,” but with critical analysis afforded to his further 1937 and 1938 novels “Conquest” and “The White Maroon” respectively, this chapter will examine the representation of women as symbols of nationhood through the lens of a national epic narrative.¹⁴ Through a repositioning of Anacanoa as a leader amongst her people de Lisser is attempting to dislocate and challenge these conventional gender divides. Early on in the narrative, the reader is informed that “in her father’s absence she might easily assume, and without rivalry, the leadership of her tribe” (24). Although her father may be the chief, in his absence his tribe do not remain under the masculine pronoun; they immediately become “*her* tribe.” Equally

¹⁴ “The White Maroon” is a direct sequel to “Conquest” as set out by de Lisser himself. “Anacanoa” was the novel that preceded “Conquest” in the earlier edition of *Planters’ Punch*. As a result of their sequential appearance in *Planters’ Punch* over three successive periodicals (1936, 1937 and 1938) coupled with Juan’s direct ancestral heritage to Anacanoa and Diego Mendez, it is my opinion that de Lisser meant for these novels to be treated as a trilogy. However, the naming of the trilogy as the “Arawak” trilogy is a term I have created for ease of reference when discussing the three narratives together.

instructive is when the Arawak Indians first encounter the Spanish colonisers, Christopher Columbus and Diego Mendez. For while the “crowd shrank back a little” (25), it is Anacanoa who “stood erect waiting for the strangers to approach” (25). Her “erect” stance upon meeting the strangers reflects her dominance and strength of character in that she is not afraid of these visitors and therefore is reluctant to shy away from them in the same way that the crowd “shrank back.” Equally symbolic is the visual representation that these literary descriptions evoke. Anacanoa is standing erect, the only one, isolated, alone, statuesque but proud. This visual interpretation, in turn, implies that Anacanoa is equally representative of Jamaica the island, which is geographically isolated from the other islands of the Caribbean, while her statuesqueness imitates that of a foundation pillar upon which a nation depends for its support. This re-gendering of stereotypes and treatment of Anacanoa as a symbol for Jamaican nationalism and unity allows de Lisser to celebrate her ancestry across all three novels. Furthermore, through his creation of this trilogy in the guise of a national epic narrative, he sought to recreate the history of the indigenous Arawak Indians, and highlight (especially in the then political climate) the hybridisation of Jamaica’s genealogy, thereby establishing the mixed “roots” of its cultural and national identity.

The origins of national epic literature reside in the epic poetry of ancient Greek literature. National epic narratives aimed to capture the spirituality of a nation by foregrounding a nation’s desire to be independent from colonial rule or a nation state. To further help define a nation, national epics sought to include specific periods from their history or portray a

fundamentally defining event within their history that serves to enhance or further develop a national identity and as a consequence national epic narratives are inextricably intertwined with the ideology of romantic nationalism. This form of nationalism arose in response to the ruling imperial hegemony and romantic nationalism focused upon the customs, language, race, religion and culture of those “born” into a nation. The movement relied upon the concept of a historical patriarchal culture being inherited from a central origin focusing upon national languages, folklore and the spiritual value of traditions. This led to calls for self-determination and the recognition of a national consciousness, and therefore romantic nationalism inspired the retelling of these folk legends, national myths and fairy tales. In addition, the invention of national myths was encouraged if there was an evident void within a specific literary history. As a result, national epic narratives offered an inspiring narrative recounting the origins of that nation through national folklores and the inclusion of founding myths.

de Lisser saw the national epic narrative as a genre that could be reformulated and therefore his attempt at writing an inventive national epic narrative establishes Jamaica’s cultural “roots” in order to define a Jamaican identity. His mythologised (re)creation of a founding myth that transposes the genealogy of the “founding father” (and thus nation) onto the “female” body through Anacanoa also serves as a revisionist symbol of Jamaican nationalism. de Lisser’s national epic begins with the fantastical and mythical novel, “Anacanoa” (1936-37) which (re)negotiates the traditional heroic framework through the deconstruction of the traditional associations of women with

nationhood. The title of his novel is not an accident. Revising the historical narrative already laid down in Washington Irving's 1828 biography *A History of the Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus*, "Anacanoa" focuses upon the year that Columbus was marooned on the island of Jamaica, (1503-1504). Irving's biography was based upon extensive research within the Spanish archives, but it also contained his imaginative interpretation of events. Irving's account of Columbus's time on Jamaica is situated in Volume III of the biography. The historical account begins at Chapter X of book XV and covers the entire book XVI. The following book (XVII) at the second chapter that follows Irving's account, describes the fate of Anacaona, the historical formidable Haitian queen and it is highly probable that de Lisser not only read this chapter on Anacaona, but also based his heroine on her.

de Lisser's novel "Anacanoa" attempts to establish an element of historical verisimilitude by re-creating a complete history of the indigenous Arawak population in order to re-write the story of colonialism from the colonised's point of view. However, this is a task which is often fraught with complications. Peter Hulme in his close study of Columbus's encounters with the Caribbean comments that there are four avenues from which Caribbean historical accounts can be interpreted: "first hand" reports of colonists and missionaries from Columbus onwards; official documents lodged at European archives and then a limited amount of archaeology and anthropology (*Colonial Encounters* 45). However, he goes on to suggest that "underlying the idea of colonial discourse...is the presumption that during the colonial period large parts of the non-European world were *produced* for Europe" (*Colonial*

Encounters 2). Although Columbus's discovery in 1492 has been heralded as the first contact with the New World, Edmundo O'Gorman in his work *The Invention of America* suggests that Columbus did not just "discover" the New World, but he also to some extent invented it through the travel writing and literature that preceded his journey. Hulme concurs, arguing that "first hand" reports are unreliable accounts due to the stereotypes and language used within them. Although the most valuable tend to be the Dominican and Jesuit missionaries reports, Columbus's journal accounts have been the most extensively used. Using Columbus's journal entries, Hulme argues that the language of Columbus is tainted using the descriptions of the "gentle" Arawaks and "man-eating" Caribs as evidence that Columbus effectively wrote within European stereotypical ideals (*Colonial Encounters*). With the presumption that the indigenous population were illiterate and therefore no historical records were kept, the native cultures existed at best in the margins. Therefore, it is virtually impossible to gain authentic historical verisimilitude.

What we do know about the historical Anacaona has been preserved not only within Irving's account, but in the slightly more accurate account recorded by Bartolome de las Casas, a Dominican missionary who accompanied Columbus on his voyages, and published a book *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*. From the historical narratives collated from both accounts, Anacaona which means golden flower in the indigenous language of the Tainos was celebrated throughout the island for her beauty. She was said to have excelled in composing ballads or areytos, and had great influence over her brother Behechio who was ruler of Xaragua. She was married to the formidable

warrior Caonabo, who had destroyed the first Spanish settlement La Navidad and had led constant rebellions against the Spanish throughout the island of Hispanola. Caonabo was captured in 1494 and during the journey to Spain the ship he was travelling on sank. Returning to her parents' kingdom Xaragua, she continued to exert her authority over her brother and ruled the kingdom. Upon his death, she was able to consolidate the governing authorities within the region and Xaragua remained the only kingdom within the island of Hispanola (which is now Haiti and the Dominican Republic) not to succumb to Spanish conquest. Initially accepting of the Spanish, she began to resist them as a result of the destruction and exploitation that the Spanish were inflicting on the Indian population. In 1502 the first Governor of Hispanola, Nicolas de Ovando invited her and some 80 other noble Indians to dinner. During what was one of the worst massacres in the history of the discovery, the Indians were massacred by an army of around 300 soldiers and riders. Anacaona was one of the few Indians to escape. However, she was subsequently captured, tortured, desecrated and hung. Her body was exposed to the indigenous people of the province.

Anacaona has obtained legendary status and been immortalised within the histories of Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Destined “subsequently to make some figure in the events of the island” (Irving 289), Anacaona has become a national symbol and has continued to be eulogised throughout the centuries within other literary formats. Alfred Tennyson’s tribute to Anacaona in his poem of the same name heralds her beauty and that of the natural beauty of the island. Working within a more contemporary framework, (and aside

from the numerous websites which have been created in her honour), the best selling Haitian author Edwidge Danticat in 2005 recreated a fictional historical account of Anacaona's life for The Royal Diaries Series and both Jean Métellus and Davertige, penned a play and a poem respectively in her honour.¹⁵

In comparison, de Lisser's Anacanoa, is the beautiful chief's daughter of a local tribe. Closely following the historical narrative as set out by Irving, de Lisser introduces the character of Anacanoa into the framework. Keeping within a loosely romantic format, Anacanoa falls in love with Columbus's nephew, Diego Mendez, who departs Jamaica in order to affect a rescue of Columbus and his mariners. In his absence, half of the crew mutiny and after a failed attempt to reach Haiti return to Jamaica and begin to bring death and destruction to the Arawak people. Anacanoa, together with Columbus's brother Bartholomew, raises up arms against the mutineers, but the novel ends in tragedy.

Prior to the writing of the Arawak trilogy, MacDermot, produced his own historical accounts of Columbus's arrival in Jamaica and of the English

¹⁵ Although not an exhaustive list, see: <http://www.centrelink.org/anacaonaresources.htm>, and <http://www.laonga.org/anacaona.htm>; <http://thelouvertureproject.org>; Edwidge Danticat, *Anacaona Golden Flower*, The Royal Diaries Series. (New York: Scholastic Inc, 2005). Print; Davertige (Denis Villard) and Carrol F. Coates "Anacaona/Anacaona" *Callaloo*. 15.3. Haitian Literature and Culture, Part 2 (Summer, 1992), pp.637-638. Jstor. Web. 12 May 2012; Jean Métellus "Anacaona," Review by: Hal Wylie *World Literature Today*. 61.3 A Salute to Iowa's International Writing Program at Twenty (Summer, 1987), p. 480. Jstor. Web. 12 May 2012; Jean Métellus and Carrol F. Coates, "Anacaona" *Callaloo*. 15.2. Haitian Literature and Culture, Part 1 (Spring, 1992), pp. 328-337. Jstor. Web. 12 May 2012; Mohamed B. Taleb-Khyar Reviewed work(s): "Jean Métellus" *Callaloo*. 15.2. Haitian Literature and Culture, Part 1 (Spring, 1992), pp. 338-341. Jstor. Web. 12 May 2012; David G. Riede "Tennyson's Poetics of Melancholy and the Imperial Imagination," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*. 40.4. The Nineteenth Century (Autumn, 2000), pp. 659-678. Jstor. Web. 12 May 2012.

invasion of 1655 through his poem “San Gloria” (and subsequent dramatisation of the same name) and “Don Arnoldo Sasi.” Many of MacDermot’s works were unpublished, and I am unable to confirm whether these works were published during his lifetime. In addition, there is no timeline for these works, but as MacDermot was in England from 1922 until his death in 1933, it is conceivable that they were written then. J.E. Clare McFarlane in his introduction to *Orange Valley*, confirms this suspicion by suggesting that during this period MacDermot missed Jamaica desperately and wrote many nostalgic poems referring to his “muse,” which were reprinted by Pioneer Press in 1951. Although McFarlane concedes that MacDermot’s poems exhibited an “intense patriotism” it is my opinion that his works are not as entertaining or as vivid as de Lisser’s depiction of this marooning.

MacDermot’s poem and subsequent drama “San Gloria” both refer to Columbus’s shipwreck on the island. The former is written directly to Columbus: “Oh, Captain of wide western seas.” The drama outlines the tensions aboard the ship between the captain and his crew along with the attempted mutiny. Although the poem provides descriptive imagery of the bay of “white-sanded curves” and “spice-censed breeze,” the drama “takes place on board the two ships wrecked on the reefs off St. Ann’s Bay, and on shore close by this spot” (MacDermot 43). There is no room for colourful descriptions and both literary interpretations also lack any historical balance through the absence of the Arawak Indians in both texts. MacDermot’s poem “Don Arnoldo Sasi” centres on Sasi as a “gallant knight of Spain,” and the action of the poem clearly focuses upon Sasi’s attempts at regaining control of Jamaica

from the Spanish. Once again, there is no attempt to reclaim Jamaica or its founding history. In contrast, de Lisser's trilogy not only laments the exploitation of Jamaica by colonialism, but also attempts to recapture a time when the Arawaks were heroic and resourceful. de Lisser utilises the genre of the national epic narrative and implants a founding myth into the historical consciousness through his recreation of the Arawak Indians. However he then reformulates the genre by replacing the masculine hero within a female hero. This re-gendering of the "founding myth" recognises that the subsequent creator of the Jamaican nation is a woman — Anacanoa.

In keeping within a colonial framework of an adventure narrative, de Lisser includes within his narrative, the common colonial literary trope of "naming" but then adapts the trope to suit his own needs. The familiar colonial literary trait of names and naming brings to the reader's mind the traditional representations of domination. Before Columbus had arrived the Arawak tribe had not given this beach a name and had not been aware of its beauty. To the indigenous population "the water's wonderful colouring" (11) was the "seashore" where they washed, communicated and hunted for food. Given the colonial belief that if something can be named then it can be controlled, Christopher Columbus on his arrival in Jamaica is quick to give the beach he lands on a name "Santa Gloria" which is further transmuted to "St Ann's Bay" during British colonialism.

However, de Lisser's subsequent renegotiation of the colonial concept of (re)naming and therefore (re)claiming is excavated through his "naming" of

his protagonist Anacanoa. *Anacanoa*'s name is a purposeful misspelling of the fifteenth Century Haitian Queen *Anacaona* and de Lisser uses this as a literary device to call to the reader's attention the historical *Anacaona*, while simultaneously creating a Jamaican *Anacanoa* who symbolises the foundations of creating a Jamaican nation. The other similarities between the two are evidenced through their mutual beauty and they both have husbands whose names begin with the letter C, *Caonabo* and *Cotaban*, again aligning the fictitious *Anacanoa* with the historical queen (although it needs to be pointed out that where *Caonabo* is a formidable warrior and *Anacaona* was his favourite wife, *Anacanoa*'s husband is weak and she quickly divorces him in favour of *Diego Mendez*). Finally, both *Anacaona* and *Anacanoa* on first meeting the Spanish colonist are welcoming. However, both quickly turn to resistance towards the Spanish, once it becomes apparent that the Spanish are here to exploit and enslave and not to establish any peaceful trading treaties. They are also united in their tragic deaths at the hands of the Spanish.

In addition, the historical reference to Haiti reminds the reader that these lands were not unpopulated. There were villages and communities across the islands that traded with each other and fought with each other, they were organised communities with tribal leaders and social hierarchies. More specifically, de Lisser implies that *Anacanoa*'s own ancestry is tied up with Haiti when it is suggested that her matriarchal ancestor, may well have been the legendary *Anacaona* herself:

Once, long, long ago, a big canoe of man-eaters came here. They came from there; she pointed vaguely in the direction of Haiti, where a colony of Caribs had established themselves, hailing originally from one of the small, distant Carib islands. My people fought them and killed them all except one. She was a woman, and very beautiful, and my father's father's father's father's father married her. The man-eaters never came back again. (37)

Although Anacaona was a Taino, de Lisser, along with European colonial assumptions revises her as a Carib in order to introduce a shocking element to the novel, which is the savagery of flesh-eating humans — cannibals. This passage serves a number of purposes. Firstly, it establishes Anacanoa's potential ancestry with the Anacaona who resisted Spanish colonialism. Secondly, it revises Columbus's stereotype of the Arawak Indians as peaceful and agricultural and transforms them into strong, formidable opponents who were able to resist an attack from the "man-eaters" to the point where they "killed them all," the inference being that the Arawak Indians are also capable of colonial resistance. With Anacanoa metaphorically representing Jamaica as a nation, the further implication is that the Jamaican people of the twentieth century are also capable of colonial resistance. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, Anacanoa may have been descended from a long line of Arawaks, but she (or at least it is intimated) is also of "Carib" descent. Therefore, de Lisser calls into question the idea of what constitutes a nation

and subsequent nationalism. Through this establishment of Anacanoa's cultural "roots" her ancestry and culture are never challenged and therefore this (re)gendering of the Jamaican nation as female, rather than just in relation to the physical land, supports the argument that de Lisser was simultaneously deconstructing the traditional associations of nation and exposing the cultural hybridity and complexity of nationhood.

As already mentioned, colonial attitudes and discourse determined that traditional associations of nation and nationhood tended to focus upon the conformity of gender divisions, which centred on the representation of the female cult of domesticity and the masculine traits of heroic exploration and scientific discovery. Patriarchal dominance ensured that the representation of the female remained synonymous with the home and domesticity, and therefore the iconography of these traditional tropes of nation and nationalism invites female conventions to be linked to birth and motherhood, while men fulfil the political space and encompass notions of conquering heroes and discoverers. In her introduction to *Motherlands*, Susheila Nasta examines these traditional gender appropriations in relation to nationalism and focuses on the "female" colonised nation that is in need of "paternal governance" (xiii), suggesting that the "mythologized femaleness of the nation culture was perpetuated in the works of male writers who created stereotypes of woman: the 'mulatto figure'...or the powerful matriarch in Caribbean literature" (xiv). Anne McClintock adopts the same position suggesting that the "themes of colonial discourse" amongst other things include "the feminizing of the land, the myth of the empty lands, [and] the crisis of origins" (17). What these theorists

clearly demonstrate is that colonial literature was determined by these patriarchal parameters that continued to subjugate women within these traditional stereotypes and ambivalent colonial ideals, and therefore, Caribbean authors would have been subjected to the same restrictions.

Colonial representations of women portray them in terms of their ideological reproduction of the collective, or protectors of the earth in the guise of mother nature/earth mothers, while perceptions of men are constructed as the all conquering hero. Although in keeping with these stereotypical ideals and colonial concepts, de Lisser's vision of women as a symbol for Jamaica as a nation, refutes the iconography of these colonial images that portray women as "natural mothers." Although there is an odd exception to the rule, many of de Lisser's female protagonists remain childless or produce only one offspring, whose gender is generally female. Anacanoa herself has only one daughter: "...she had borne Cotaban but one child. Other young women of her age had already had six or seven children, perhaps more..." (24). Equally, while the literary descriptions evident in "Anacanoa" evoke colourful landscapes and vivid descriptions of the natural beauty of the land, its purpose is to return the reader to a time before the land had been scarred by exploitation and colonisation: "they had no word for all this beauty, yet they enjoyed it as part of their lives; the vivid green and the grandeur of the mountains" (11). Finally, the "mighty backbone of the mountains," "the slim bodies crowned with green" along with the "glittering fronds" of the palms and the "limbs" of the giant trees create fantastical and allegorical motifs interconnecting the unspoken voice of the land to that of the Arawak people. However, this representation of

the land in “Anacanoa” is not gender-specific and there are no obvious “feminised” representations. As further evidence of de Lisser’s rejection of women’s colonial stereotype, Anacanoa’s ancestral “son” Juan Mendez in “Conquest” and “The White Maroon” actually informs his wife that “Jamaica is not a woman” (“The White Maroon” 89). Furthermore, it is Juan who is more “in touch” with the land in a way that Anacanoa is not. He is able to use “the disguise of vines and leaves that had swathed and hidden his body” (“The White Maroon” 24), he can emit “a squawk, like one of the little green parrots that lived in the trees” (“The White Maroon” 68), and as a result of sleeping “night after night in the open air” has “unconsciously acquired knowledge and habit” of his natural surroundings in order to be able to distinguish “between friend or foe, man or beast” (“The White Maroon” 104).

In terms of the traditional ideologies of heroism, de Lisser renegotiates this notion and in “Anacanoa” masculine heroism is noted through its absence. Although Diego Mendez’s heroism feeds the background story, and it is implied that he is the archetypal hero of the novel. The marginalisation of Diego allows for the deconstruction of the traditional associations of women with nationhood, because it places Anacanoa in the foreground. This destabilises the traditional representations of heroism and allows Anacanoa to personify the true hero of the novel. In “Conquest” and “The White Maroon,” Juan’s heroic qualities imitate those of the traditional “white” hero of colonial adventure tales but he is consistently surrounded by the legacy of Anacanoa and his Indian ancestry which subversively destabilises this literary trope. Although Anacanoa embraces the masculine traits that recognise her as a

heroic leader, she also retains the female constructions of compassion and empathy, which is highlighted through her relationship with Columbus, especially when she looks after him, when he falls ill in Chapter 5. Recognising these traits as empowering and positive, de Lisser subsequently unites the patriarchal traits of colonial dominance and the matriarchal traits of compassion into the heroic personality of Juan. This, in turn, serves to make Juan a stronger man, leader and hero than traditional heroic models might otherwise dictate.

Elleke Boehmer's postcolonial positioning is particularly insightful in terms of locating de Lisser's characters within this national epic narrative. Although de Lisser was not a radical feminist, feminism offers a useful starting point which allows one to debate the ways in which de Lisser continues to challenge the preconceived notions of colonial discourse in order to foreground women as builders of a nation. Boehmer, in agreement with other contemporaries, recognises that "the gender specifics of nationalism are clearly illustrated in the iconographies held dear by nations" (*Stories of Women* 6), which continues to support the discussions set out above. However, Boehmer moves the debate forward by suggesting that women writers — in an attempt to locate their own voice and space — need to disrupt the patriarchal nationalist literature. In other words, in order to disrupt the generalised discourses of nationhood, women need to inject their own voice into these national literatures. She argues that:

Where women tell of their own experience, they map their own geography, scry their own history and so, necessarily, contest official representations of a nationalist reality. They implicitly challenge the nation's definition of itself through territorial claims, through the reclamation of the past and the canonisation of heroes. (*Stories of Women* 10)

Although Boehmer argues for these techniques in the literature of post-independence written by women, they are equally significant in highlighting how de Lisser deconstructs nationalist discourse some thirty years earlier. Although a male author, de Lisser attempts to give a voice to women in order that they can tell "their own experience" and "map their own geography." By "scry[ing]" the history of the Arawak Indians in his primary novel of the trilogy "Anacanoa", he is "implicitly" challenging the "nation's definition of itself." Furthermore, by retelling the origins of Spanish colonialism from the female colonised perspective, de Lisser is able to (re)present the past and remaps Jamaica's history both in terms of introducing a female voice *and* placing at the centre of the novel a female protagonist. Through his "reclamation of the past" and through the "canonisation of heroes," in this case, Anacanoa, he is challenging the preconceived notions of nationhood in order to instil a degree of cultural uplift to the local Jamaican population who were reading these colonial literatures.

Anacanoa is described through an omniscient narrator, highlighting the traditional sexual and symbolical imagery of woman and nationhood through the description of her body: “her rounded breasts were exposed, and her supple flanks and body showed none of that soft flabbiness so common among Indian women” (24). This traditional European stereotypical image of her is contrasted against a more iconic image which describes her as “a solitary figure...standing on the edge of the little promontory that formed one side of the Cove...[where] he passed almost directly beneath this figure” (47). This vivid description elicits images of not only the Statue of Liberty that stands at the gateway into New York, but also the bust of a woman on the prow of a ship. On the surface, both of these images of Anacanoa serve to support stereotypical notions associating gender with nation. However, de Lisser deconstructs these over-simplified representations by highlighting her intelligence and female heroic qualities, during the scene of the eclipse.

Martin Green suggests that the “adventurer defeats the challenges he meets by means of the tools and techniques of the modern world system” (23). One such traditional representation of heroism as deployed through scientific knowledge, is Columbus’s use of Regiomontanus’s astronomical calculations. H. Rider Haggard in *King Solomon’s Mines* and Mark Twain in *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court* both use the literary trope of an eclipse to illustrate the superiority of the white hero, which was originally presented in Irving’s biographical account. Supported by other historical accounts as set out by las Casas and Columbus’s son Ferdinand Colon who reference the same incident, Irving mentions that Columbus used his astrological almanac to

predict an eclipse in order to secure food for his men. Using it as a ploy to assert his superiority, Columbus sent a message to the Indians informing them that if they did not provide him and his men with provisions, he would call upon his God who would cause the moon to “lose its light.” Some Indians believed Columbus straight away while others were more skeptical. On the night in question, when the moon darkened, Irving writes that they threw themselves at Columbus’s feet and there was much wailing and lamenting. Columbus for his part retired to his quarters for a period of time and then returned when the moon was due to reappear.

The significance of this scene in terms of asserting colonial superiority finds another medium as represented by a picture featured in *Astronomie Populaire* in 1879.¹⁶ The illustration foregrounds Columbus in the centre of the frame. He is stood erect, wearing fine robes and jewels resplendent for a man of his stature. His face carries a look of superiority as he faces the Indians, while his finger points away from his body towards the moon. Although he is surrounded by Indians who are half robed and are in varying positions of “lament,” delicately etched beneath the tree are some Spanish soldiers. The Indians in the background of the picture that are not so clearly defined are collected together as if they almost represent a bonfire. Although they are raising their arms up in the air, it is difficult to determine if this is in celebration or commiseration. What is intriguing about this illustration is that it is an indicative reflection of the colonial superiority described in the early printed accounts of this encounter, and while there is no evidence to suggest

¹⁶ See Appendix II of this thesis.

that de Lisser was even aware of this painting, on the left hand side of the image towards the bottom corner, there resides a young woman. This beautiful young woman, with long flowing hair is neither bowed down at his feet begging, nor raising her arms to the moon. With her head tilted to the side, she is looking at Columbus with a level gaze of skepticism and distrust. Her semi-stance is not an attack position, as that would attract the attention of the soldiers, who are to the right of the painting, but neither is it a submissive position. Could this be de Lisser's Anacanoa "rising to her feet" as described in the following passage? I accept that this concept is purely conjecture, but if she is not the Anacanoa of de Lisser's tale, she is certainly representative of the Arawak Indians who may have rebelled against Columbus by withholding food and other necessary provisions.

Therefore, in comparison to the picture and in contrast to the literary description of the eclipse outlined above, when de Lisser employs the literary device of the eclipse, to assert colonial and specifically white male superiority, the outcome from Anacanoa's position is not one of submission:

If the moon died, would it not die for the white men as well...if set upon now, if attacked and slain, surely his power over the moon would end and light would return...Her questioning restored her courage. She had taken a grip upon herself again...She rose to her feet, the one erect figure in that vast crowd that night...If

you had killed him in the darkness the light would have
returned...but you only begged. (76-78)

Anacanoa's questioning and logical conclusion restores her courage as her mind has formulated an intelligent and "scientifically advanced" opinion. Her solitude in terms of her "one erect figure" and as the only one in "that vast crowd" who was aware that nature is more powerful than the white man, places her as Columbus's equal, for Columbus is aware that it is an eclipse that is taking place and nothing to do with his own power. Columbus's begrudging recognition that "the erstwhile ingenuous savage had been rapidly transformed into a woman with a subtle, calculating mind" (67) places Anacanoa on a par with the intelligent and "calculating mind" of many a male hero. She is exhibiting the same intelligence as the "white hero" and is able to see through Columbus's trickster devices. Her heroic qualities are further compounded when it is recognised that she makes "a good general," and heroically saves Bartholomew's life by giving up her own (in a selfless act of sacrifice and honour) "he staggered in her direction, turned against her the dagger he had intended for Bartholomew" (89).

Ultimately, Anacanoa is the vessel through which a revisionist national identity is explored. Initially unaware of the concept of nationhood — "...they lived under their own chiefs, they never had regarded themselves as one nation with all the people of the island," and "had no sort of conception of such unity" (15) — it is Anacanoa who recognises that the different tribes within the island are a collective community:

She stared at her people swimming and struggling in the water. She had never thought of them as her people before; they were from another part of the island, strangers, foreigners, to her. But now she had a sense of oneness with them; a feeling that had been growing within her all these weeks came fully to life at last. She and they were one, and these brutal pale-faced men were of another breed altogether. (62)

Although remaining within the colonial parameters of dominance determined by “othering,” it is the “brutal pale-faced men” whom Anacanoa recognises as the “others,” not “her people.” Her recognition that these “strangers, foreigners” are part of her and that they “were one” outlines the concepts of the Caribbean as a collective community, not just individual islands. Furthermore, this “sense of oneness” and desire for unification feeds into the notion put forward earlier about her hybrid ancestry and finds further expression through her desire to fight back against the mutineers. When asked who will lead the army, she retorts, “I, the man-eating woman, will lead them” (66). By transposing onto Anacanoa the heroism and leadership qualities usually associated with white males, and by referencing her potential past links to the Haitian Anacaona, de Lisser is symbolically creating a Jamaican nation. However, by coming together as one through their collective struggles and indigenous ancestry, de Lisser is also highlighting the fragmentation of a national identity and how it is fused or blended with other identities in order for

a unified identity to be created. This transition from Arawak Indian to Jamaican identity follows the historical assumptions that the freed or runaway slaves of Spanish colonialism married and blended with the few remaining Arawak Indians that lived within the hills of Jamaica, therefore establishing a creolisation of Jamaican identity. This historical ancestral trajectory is explored further in the further two novels that complete this trilogy, “Conquest” and “The White Maroon.”

From a political perspective, where “Anacanoa” is a novel that dramatises resistance to Spanish occupation, “Conquest” and “The White Maroon” have reconciled and embraced their enforced Spanish heritage and are, instead, openly antagonistic towards British colonial rule. The time period in which these novels were written is important because it was at this time, politically, that nationalism was coming to the forefront in Jamaica and Jamaicans were beginning to question their identities and political loyalties. Through these two subsequent novels, “Conquest” and “The White Maroon,” de Lisser continues to renegotiate the national epic genre through his investigation of the “nation” of Maroons who personify the idea of a nation within a nation. It is through this microscopic examination of Juan as the leader of the Maroon nation and their indigenous beginnings that wider debates relating to Jamaican identity and unity are explored and reconciled.

From the demise of the indigenous population as set out in “Anacanoa,” both “Conquest” and “The White Maroon” move the narrative forward to focus upon other defining moments in Jamaican history, namely the invasion of the

English in 1655 and the unsuccessful counter-attack spearheaded by General De Sasi in 1658. “Conquest” moves the tale forward by some 150 years and focuses upon the 1655 English invasion. The impact that this decisive historical event had in shaping a Jamaican national identity is illustrated through the main protagonist Juan, who is the last surviving descendant of Anacanoa and Diego Mendez. Juan, along with his trusted friend and mentor Patrick (an Irish deserter) fights alongside the Spanish military under the command of General De Sasi in an attempt to thwart the English invasion. A love triangle develops between Juan, Maria (a Spanish woman of some social standing) and Bridget O’Hara (an indentured “slave” from Ireland). Juan and Bridget’s love is immediate and they marry moments before the English invasion. Juan is betrayed by Maria who leads the English to recover the last remaining Arawak gold hidden by him on the island. As a result Juan is captured and exiled to Cuba while both Bridget and Patrick remain in Jamaica as indentured “slaves” under the commander Robert Wentworth.

“The White Maroon” concludes the national epic in the year 1657, some two years after the English invasion, when both Bridget and Patrick are working on the same plantation together, and Maria has increased her social mobility through her liaison with a white Englishman. Robert Wentworth reveals romantic intentions towards Bridget which remain unreciprocated. However, determined to make trouble for Bridget, Maria encourages Wentworth to pursue these romantic longings. As a means of keeping Wentworth from her bed, Bridget reluctantly engages upon the traditional conventions of courtship with Wentworth, which slowly develops into genuine

feelings. Meanwhile Juan has returned from Cuba, not only to rescue both Bridget and Patrick, but also to incite a rebellion through his leadership of the Maroons. While executing Bridget and Patrick's rescue, Juan's men mistakenly capture Maria, and they are all taken to a Maroon camp in the mountains. In a struggle for supremacy over all the Maroon tribes, Juan battles both the English and the Maroons supporting them, capturing Wentworth in the fray. Although Bridget realises that she is in love with Wentworth, she remains faithful to Juan. Maria, aware of Bridget's feelings for Wentworth and safe in the knowledge that Juan and Bridget never consummated their marriage, making their marriage invalid, aggressively and successfully pursues Juan. In a final last stand with the English, Juan is injured and it is assumed he will die from his wound. The national epic concludes with Bridget marrying Wentworth and returning to Ireland. Maria is reunited with her Englishman who marries her as a result of her pregnancy (although the child is Juan's). Meanwhile, Patrick returns to the hills and locates Juan's Maroons where he discovers Juan well and leading the Maroons.

de Lisser initially adapted the national epic genre through a (re)creation of a female founding myth which he continues to utilise through the spiritual essence of Anacanoa that he threads through these further two texts. A trilogy is often uneven in quality and de Lisser's is no exception. However, the other two novels which follow "Anacanoa" support my reading as both continue the imagery of woman as nation builders and as a symbol for Jamaica as nation through Anacanoa's continued "presence" and Maria's unborn child which will continue Juan's ancestral lineage. "Conquest" (1937-1938) and "The White

Maroon" (1938-1939) continue this female-centred revision of the national epic narrative because although the texts foreground Juan, a descendant of Anacanoa, it is Anacanoa's spirit that is perpetually surrounding him as he recognises that he is "married to Jamaica" ("The White Maroon" 96). Although Juan's ancestors "before the Spaniards' had been masters of Jamaica" ("Conquest" 33), he is of mixed heritage. Descended from Anacanoa and Diego Mendez on his mother's side, it is assumed that his father was a Spaniard of some social standing as Juan "counted in this country as a gentleman of proud descent" ("The White Maroon" 75), and had once owned "six slaves" whom he had set free "so that they might feel that the country they fought for was theirs" ("Conquest" 51). Although he is aware that his Indian blood is vastly outweighed by his Spanish heritage — "I have very little of their blood" ("Conquest" 59) — it is through this maternal connection to the Arawaks that he forms his own identity and begins to differentiate "between native Jamaicans and all who had not been born in the island" ("The White Maroon" 104-105). When he claims "I am a Jamaican, a Spaniard; these Negroes were our slaves. Now they fight in our cause" ("The White Maroon" 101), (i.e., the Spanish cause against the English), he is recognising that his Jamaican identity as well as the "identity" of the "slaves" who are beginning to form the origins of the emerging Maroon community, are built upon the hybridisation of a racial and cultural identity that is made up of a mixture of Indian, Spanish and African heritage.

This is further confirmed when de Lisser narrates the Arawaks' historical past through Juan's framing of his ancestral heritage, towards the

middle of “Conquest.” He explains to Bridget that “there are only half a dozen of them now,” out of “all the thousands who once inhabited this country” (“Conquest” 59). However, his recognition of his dual heritage is evident when he informs Bridget that, “all of them lived with *us* [my italics] Spanish once,” but then explains that when one day they simply disappeared, they “found means to let me know where they were, for me they consider their head” (“Conquest” 59). This dual nationality and the set pieces that describe the Indians’ kitchen wares, “baked earthenware pots,” and “instruments of polished flint such as the Arawaks had used two hundred years before” (“Conquest” 60), serve as historical reminders of what has been lost, while the historical memory and spiritual essence of Anacanoa pervades this novel through Juan’s repeated recollection of her and her history, reminding the reader of his indigenous ancestry. Bridget is the vehicle that is used as a constant reminder to the reader of his heritage, in that he recalls to her that the “Anacanoa of long ago was, after all, my mother” (Conquest 59). He traces the gold that the Arawaks give him back to “my ancestress, Anacanoa” (60), and indeed Wentworth’s description of Juan echoes that of Anacanoa:

Wentworth saw a tall, bronzed Spaniard with sad, grim eyes in which there burned a smouldering fire: the eyes of a fighter, a dreamer, a fanatic. Above them the brow was that of a high-minded man; pride sat upon it, and the whole face gave evidence of an unconquerable spirit. (“The White Maroon” 75)

For where Juan is a “tall, bronzed Spaniard,” Anacanoa stood “erect” and while pride sits upon his face under the eyes that burn with fire, Anacanoa had “always thought of herself as a chief’s daughter... and that increased the pride and self-regard with which she had been born” (24). Finally, where Juan’s face displays an “unconquerable spirit,” Anacanoa is similarly the embodiment of an “unconquerable spirit,” and it is that spirit that continues to surround Juan and influence his actions.

de Lisser’s over-riding concern with myth making, and his entanglement with the ambivalence of mimicry sees Juan replicating an English national epic tale through his mimicking of Robin Hood (he shoots a bow and arrow, has a best friend and mentor Patrick, lives in the woods and rescues “damsels in distress”). However, this “almost the same, but not quite” (Bhabha, “Of Mimicry” 126) ethos is overthrown when this national myth is returned not to its English “roots,” but to his own indigenous Indian heritage. Although he may carry a bow and arrow, it is because it is the “Indian way” and his leadership qualities are a testament to his ancestors who had “been masters of Jamaica.” This need to replicate or even revise established popular myths finds a further voice through de Lisser’s continuing imitation of other popular literature of the period, as a way, possibly, to relate to a wider audience, or even to have the same level of success which another of his novels had enjoyed, namely *The White Witch of Rosehall*. In general, de Lisser’s fusing of popular fiction with canonical literary genres enables him to interconnect the lowbrow and highbrow binaries of social culture. By appropriating both sides of this binary, de Lisser creates a modern middlebrow

literature with a cultural purpose — to serve the rapidly rising middle class and present them with a Jamaican narrative that tells “their story.” In this regard, the blending of this national epic trilogy with a popular novel of the time is no different. Where both *Revenge* and *Psyche* can be read as hybridisations of the national mythical tales of *Ivanhoe* and “Cupid and Psyche” in Apuleius’s *The Golden Ass* respectively, there are a number of reasons to pair “Conquest” and “The White Maroon” with the national epic narrative and insurmountable Pulitzer Prize winning novel of 1937, *Gone with the Wind*.

Regardless of its literary merits, *Gone with the Wind* is certainly an epic narrative that traces the demise of the “nation of the south” through its main protagonist, Scarlett O’Hara, highlighting the destruction and ultimate extinction of a white southern way of life that has “gone with the wind,” in the same way that the indigenous Arawak Indians of de Lisser’s trilogy are “gone with the wind.” Spread over twelve years, the novel traces the coming to consciousness of Scarlett O’Hara, as an independent woman and debates issues of slavery, national identity and survival. These issues are also examined in varying degrees by de Lisser. Although not a trilogy *per se*, *Gone with the Wind* can be broken down into three “novels” that cover a (if not the) defining moment in American history — the American Civil War — and the pre- and post- war eras known as the Ante-Bellum and Reconstruction periods respectively. Both *Gone with the Wind* and the final two novels in the trilogy “Conquest” and “The White Maroon” feature an O’Hara who is from landed ancestry. Scarlett is the daughter of a wealthy Irish immigrant and therefore occupies a position within the white southern upper class while Bridget (in her

native Ireland) was “an Irish lady by birth, but her people had fought against Oliver Cromwell and she herself had taken part in that desperate adventure” (“The White Maroon” 6). They both retain a dysfunctional relationship with another female character (Scarlett/Melanie and Bridget/Maria) and both novels contain unrequited love triangles between the main characters. In the case of *Gone with the Wind*, the love triangles overlap but involve Melanie, Ashley, Scarlett and Rhett, whereas in the case of “Conquest” and “The White Maroon,” the love trysts involve Bridget, Robert, Maria and Juan. However, while Scarlett has been designated as an anti-hero, it would appear that de Lisser “reversed” the roles and therefore the “anti-hero” or main female protagonist is not the strong and willful O’Hara as portrayed in *Gone with the Wind*, but the feisty duplicitous Spanish woman, Maria.

However, in the same way that de Lisser revised the intertextuality of *Ivanhoe/Revenge* and *Psyche* / “Psyche and Cupid” in order to complicate representations of female heroes, de Lisser uses the volatile and dysfunctional female relationship between the female characters in order to address national identity and the representation of women as builders of a nation. It is through the examination of this female relationship and the renegotiation of the stereotypical portrayal of slaves, that de Lisser is able to make his assertions. Love them or loathe them, Scarlett O’Hara and Melanie Wilkes form an enduring bond that transcends the shared experience of sisterhood. Although the relationship is originally based upon family duties and their love for the same man (Ashley Wilkes), over the course of the novel it becomes clear that this friendship is central to *Gone with the Wind* and in many ways keeps the

action, tension and momentum moving forward. Scarlett is often defined by her binary opposite Melanie and vice versa. In the same vein, both Maria and Bridget O'Hara are forced together through their circumstances and love for the same man — Juan Mendez. However, where lines are drawn under Melanie and Scarlett's characters, Bridget and Maria's identities are more ambiguous. Melanie is the archetypal traditional woman welded to her domestic sphere of home, husband and motherhood whereas Scarlett is beginning the process of breaking from these domestic shackles and emerging as an intelligent, successful independent woman who will do what it takes to survive and not be dependent upon a man. Although Bridget carries the namesake of *Gone with the Wind*'s heroine "O'Hara," is of the same Irish descent as Scarlett and is fiercely passionate about her "adopted" land, she functions within the novel more as the embodiment of Melanie as she conforms to the stereotypical female notions of domesticity. She remains faithful to her husband Juan, despite her growing attraction towards Wentworth and fulfils the "damsel in distress" role through her consistent need to be rescued by a number of different men throughout both novels. Maria on the other hand embodies Scarlett's emerging independent spirit. She disguises herself as a Spanish soldier to regain entry into Jamaica, is the dominant partner in her marriage, aggressively pursues another woman's husband and willingly marries another man to protect her unborn child. She is literally the embodiment of a "women as a builder of a nation," through the child that she is carrying which is Juan's. Believing himself to be the last of his ancestry, Juan is prepared to become assimilated into the Maroon community. However, through Maria's child, not only will Spain continue to live, but so will the Arawak Indians, who will blend

with another identity and culture. Furthermore, Maria has married an Englishman and as he believes the child to be his, it will be raised within the “nation” of the coloniser, thereby metaphorically suggesting that the colonised ultimately becomes the coloniser. This also raises questions as to one’s racial and cultural heritage and questions whether any one nation can be truly of one “blood.”

Connecting this epic narrative with the quintessential novel, *Gone with the Wind*, allows de Lisser to examine how these novels converge and then diverge on the question of race in creating a national identity. Whereas *Gone with the Wind* highlights the ways in which America’s fear of racial integration encouraged segregation and led to the one drop rule, whereby if a person has “one drop” of African blood they are classed within the eyes of the law as black, de Lisser’s trilogy is more racially inclusive and encompassing as witnessed through Juan’s identity. Unaware of his unborn child, as far as he is concerned he is as “dead as is my country to its people” (“The White Maroon” 114). He has tied up all loose ends declaring that “my family dies with me” (“The White Maroon” 114). Proud of his Indian heritage and aware that he is the “last of the Spanish Governors of Jamaica,” he is willing to reformulate his identity and become a Maroon in order to keep Spain alive, claiming “we have become Maroons, you understand. While we live, Spain still lives in Jamaica” (“The White Maroon” 24). This appropriation of Maroon heritage also plays a distinctive role in establishing an ancestral Jamaican identity.

Historical accounts suggest that when the English conquered Jamaica in 1655, the Spanish freed some 1500 slaves, many of which fled to the mountains and formed communities with the last few remaining Indians on the island. As a result of mixed marriages, a more creolised identity emerged. These communities eventually separated into three different communities and allied themselves with the few remaining Spanish guerrillas and it was a relationship of equals, whereby they supported each other with provisions and rebellious attacks on the English. As a result of an alliance between one of the Maroon leaders Juan de Bolas and the British, the Spanish guerrillas were eventually defeated and by 1660 the last of the Spanish had left. With Spanish colonialism eradicating the Indians from Jamaica, and British colonialism extinguishing the Spaniards from the Island, de Lissers appropriates the Maroon's racial identity and uses Juan as a vehicle for Jamaican identity. Juan is the lynchpin that enables the emerging middle class a level of cultural legitimacy. Juan's metamorphosis into a "white" Maroon is symbolic as the moment of the birth of a hybridised Jamaican identity. Although these "slaves" and "Spanish patriots" may hail from different geographical locations, they have come together under one banner to fight and die for their "country." When Juan Mendez laments that he is as dead to his family as his country is to his people, he is acknowledging that although the Arawak Indians may have provided the origins of a Jamaican identity, it is the fusion of other identities and cultures that move this identity forward. It highlights the fact that through the fragmentation of many different cultures and identities, it is possible to combine the essence of a nation that seeks autonomy and independence (even

if still residing within an Empire) and thereby creates an alternative consciousness of Jamaican (historical) identity.

And so, to recap, this chapter began with a discussion of how de Lisser used the representation of women to reflect and establish a distinctive Jamaican identity. From the evidence presented above, it is clear that through his creation of a national epic narrative as set out in this trilogy of texts, that de Lisser defines a Jamaican nation that is of and from a matriarchal lineage, and foregrounds the importance of women not just within the domestic sphere of home and hearth, but also in the public arena. His works testify to and illustrate women's impact on the advancement of a society and identity which cannot be harnessed simply to a subversive role, as they have much more to offer. Although careful not to marginalise men, by providing a voice for the Arawak Indians through his representations of women he is able to challenge the preconceived notions of colonial discourse. Furthermore, by transferring the spiritual "essence" of Anacanoa onto her descent Juan, who in turn assimilates himself into the Maroon community, de Lisser is highlighting Jamaica's national hybridity, identity and roots. Finally, in choosing to appropriate the Maroons racial identity over their violent history, de Lisser is directing the reader to a more nuanced historical account which would have found favour with the more conservative colonialist of the mid-1930s, as well as the rising nationalist movement for self-government, which was gathering steam under the coloured leader Norman Manley. A final point to be made when examining de Lisser's appropriation of Maroon history is the absence of the most famous Maroon in Jamaican history, namely, Nanny of the Maroons. If, as I have

suggested, de Lisser was advocating strong women as representative of Jamaica and as builders of a nation, why has he not included one of the most formidable female rebellion leaders within Jamaican history? To this end, I submit two possible explanations. Firstly, there are only four historical accounts that mention Nanny and it is possible that these historical accounts had not be discovered or indeed were available at the time de Lisser was writing, and secondly, had de Lisser been aware of the historical accounts of Nanny of the Maroons, she was not born until 1686, (some 19 years after the time period that these novels are located in) therefore, she could not have been written into the text without challenging the historical verisimilitude that de Lisser was attempting to create.

CHAPTER II

Through a Political Lens: Female Independence and the Commodification of Jamaica.

de Lisser continued to nurture the creation of a national local Jamaican literature through his portrayal of his main protagonists, Jane and Susan in two of his early West Indian narratives. Written during the period of de Lisser's life when his political ideologies favoured Fabian liberalism, his first two novels were unqualified successes and critical appreciation recognised the fact that these novels were mostly concerned with women. No other Jamaican author before de Lisser had placed a working-class black woman at the centre of their texts or explored the female psyche, and de Lisser was praised for his innovativeness.

Although partially serialised in 1912 in *The Daily Gleaner*, under the auspicious title "Jane's Career: A simple, Realistic Story," *Jane's Career* was first published as a novel in 1913. Although some of the material recovered may be unreliable, given the paucity of resources available, it seems worthwhile to draw it to the attention of the reader. The marketing publicity surrounding the novel's publication which was published in *The Daily Gleaner* heralded it as "a book which is true to nature and illustrates the great interest which exists in the drama of human life as it is played out all around us" and "a book which every Jamaican should be proud of and which all in Jamaica should buy and read" (*Jane's Career* 11). Olivier wrote to de Lisser claiming that "Jane is really first rate...and I am exceedingly glad you have had the

inspiration to do it.” Similarly, Jamaican reviewer Lewis Ashenheim comments that “the general get-up of the book is excellent.” English reviews of *Jane’s Career* focused not only on the novel, but also the literary talents of de Lisser. *The London Morning Post* commented that “What Mr. Grant Allen did for West Indian life then, and what Michael Scott had done for it earlier, Mr de Lisser seems qualified to do to-day,” and suggests that “We shall look with interest for more work from one with so clear a vision and so direct a power of expression” (*The Story of Jane’s Career* 1).

Similarly, *Susan Proudleigh* which was also serialised in *The Daily Gleaner* under the title “Susan or Mr. Proudleigh’s Daughter,” also received positive reviews. Initially marketed and sponsored by the Jamaica Tobacco Co, it was later published as a complete novel in England (September 1915) and Jamaica (November 1915). The marketing publicity surrounding *Susan Proudleigh* shared column inches in *The Daily Gleaner* with other news stories. The serialisation of the novel and the upcoming publication of the novel were heavily advertised throughout 1915. English reviews were published to illustrate how well *Susan Proudleigh* had been received by the English audience. *The Huddersfield Weekly Examiner* hailed the book as “an unqualified success and marks a distinct advance upon its predecessor.” The novel was also encouraged in Jamaica to be purchased as “An Xmas Gift.” At the time of their publication both books were successful in Jamaica and Britain. However, their popularity continued to gather momentum in Jamaica and continued well into the 1930s, through various stage adaptations which were performed throughout the island, especially in Montego Bay and Kingston.

Furthermore, local schools and youth groups continue to re-visit them in today's contemporary Jamaica.

Although both *Jane's Career* and *Susan Proudleigh* had remained popular within the contemporary Jamaican vernacular, scholarly attention was not afforded to them much before the 1970s and although the few existing appraisals of *Jane's Career* and *Susan Proudleigh* have acknowledged de Lisser's talent as well as their pioneering themes, they have also commented upon their limitations.¹⁷ While *Jane's Career* has enjoyed successful republication, *Susan Proudleigh* has never been republished. That said, when *Jane's Career* was republished in 1971, Ramchand in his introduction to the novel, referred to both texts and concluded that "*Susan Proudleigh* is the first West Indian novel of emigration; *Jane's Career* is the first in which the central character, the one whose feelings and thoughts are explored in depth, is a Negro" (ix). Equally, while de Lisser's style was thought to be old-fashioned, his dialectical performances, Morris argues, placed de Lisser ahead of his time, claiming for him "a skill such as we do not again encounter in Jamaican literature until the 1930's in Louise Bennett's work" ("The First Competent" 18). Another critical commentator, John Figueroa in his critique of *Jane's Career* in 1973 claimed that "this novel is rather old fashioned in structure...but it broke new ground in the West Indies: it is concerned mostly with women, very much with a black maid, and almost entirely with the

¹⁷ For further details, please refer to Kenneth Ramchand, Introduction, *Jane's Career* by Herbert G. de Lisser (1913; London: Rex Collings, 1971). Print; John Figueroa, "Jane's Career by Herbert G. De Lisser," *World Literature Written in English*. 12 (1973): 97-105. Print; Mervyn Morris, "The First Competent Caribbean Novelist in English," *Language and Literature in the Commonwealth Caribbean*. Carib, 1 (1979): 18-26. Print; Rhonda Cobham, "The Literary Side of H.G. de Lisser (1878-1944)," *Jamaica Journal*. 17 (1985): 2-9. Print; Rhonda Cobham, "Cuba and Panama in the Writings of Herbert George de Lisser," *El Caribe Y America Latina*. (1987): 173-180. Print.

working classes of Kingston and the peasants of the rural mountains,” and applauded de Lisser for being “well ahead of his time!” (98) However, where there is praise, there must also be criticism, and Ramchand in his same introduction to the 1971 re-publication of the novel accuses de Lisser of leading Jane to an “imitative dead-end,” suggesting that de Lisser becomes unsympathetic to his heroine. He writes:

By this time it is clear that the author’s irony has turned against Jane...de Lisser’s loss of sympathy with his black heroine at this stage can be related to his real-life attitudes...[and] The imitative dead-end to which de Lisser ironically drives Jane is the same dead-end now being explored. (xvi)

The scholarly positioning of de Lisser as an imperialist conservative may allow for critics to recognise de Lisser’s limitations but it negates any other interpretation of his work thereby stunting their observations of the interesting paradoxes that de Lisser incorporates into these stereotypical conventions and narratives. The “imitative dead-end” that Ramchand is referring to is at the end of the novel which sees Jane living in relative domesticity married to Vincent and already the mother of one child.

de Lisser convincingly displays an understanding of the local population and the society that he lives in. Therefore through his employment of satire, I would suggest that it is the situation he is setting out which lends itself to

potential ironies, and not de Lisser's literary intentions. In the same way that Susan maintains her respectability and achieves financial independence at the end of *Susan Proudleigh*, Jane at the end of *Jane's Career* has achieved the respectability of social expectations. If there is an ironic undertone present, it is not directed at the heroine Jane, but rather at her lover Vincent and his misguided heroic deed of maintaining his job as a way of "saving" her. Furthermore, when de Lisser closes the novel with the lines: "then she and her sister put out their hands, and Jane's cup of joy was full" (207), he is not illustrating a loss of sympathy with his heroine, as implied by Ramchand, but rather a critical commentary on Jamaican society. With Emma and her sister recognising Jane's social position, de Lisser is challenging the colonial class-colour hierarchy. Equally, although the novel ends with the marriage of Jane, and therefore implies tutelage, rather than total independence, the marriage is on her terms and follows her social aspirations and consequently is an interesting paradox that actually empowers Jane rather than confines her, allowing de Lisser to continue his exploration of female identity and independence in later novels.

Written by anti-colonial nationalists in the early 1970s, it is clear that these scholarly appraisals are limited and their interpretations of these novels biased. However, recent scholars such as Leah Rosenberg and Belinda Edmondson have attempted to reposition de Lisser within a wider framework of early Caribbean national literature. By (re)investigating de Lisser's literature through the application of contemporary nationalistic debates, an alternative interpretation of these texts can be postulated. Unnoticed for over seventy

years, the sub-texts to these novels tell a different story and it is only by peeling back the initial layer of “imitative dead-end[s]” that it is possible to expose another level of de Lisser’s aesthetic practice, which is to comment upon the political crises that were affecting Jamaica during the early part of the twentieth century. Therefore, this chapter will examine these novels through de Lisser’s continued treatment of women as a symbol of Jamaica as a nation, within the socio-political context of female independence and national identity. Mapping de Lisser’s investigation of female independence through a political lens encourages one to examine *Jane’s Career* (1913), *Susan Proudleigh* (1915) and “Myrtle and Money” (a sequel to *Jane’s Career*) (1942) as a trilogy. Commencing with *Jane’s Career*, de Lisser seeks to highlight the extent to which Jamaica was exploited during the early years of the twentieth century and how Jamaica struggled both financially and morally under colonial rule. Moving towards the international political arena in *Susan Proudleigh*, de Lisser examines the triadic relationship between England, Jamaica and America in order to consider the consequences for Jamaica. Finally, “Myrtle and Money” sets out the dichotomy between a “new” liberal self-governing, semi-independent Jamaica and the conservative dependence of “old” colonial Jamaica.

In contrast to these subtly subversive political novels, de Lisser wrote a number of overtly “political” novels. His political novel *Triumphant Squalitone* seeks to set out the “tin-pot” politics that de Lisser describes in his non-fictional work *Twentieth Century Jamaica*, and his political satire “The Jamaican Nobility” highlights the “mampala” man referenced in *Jane’s*

Career.¹⁸ As a result, it is necessary to conclude this chapter with a brief overview of these novels in order to place them in juxtaposition to this trilogy, thereby validating my contention that this female-centred trilogy dealt more effectively with the political issues concerning Jamaica, and therefore carries more political weight, than his recognised “political” novels.

An early Bildungsroman, *Jane's Career* traces the growth of a young peasant schoolgirl, Jane Burrell, from her psychological naivety in the country through to her sociological maturity in the city of Kingston. Set in the geographical and temporal period in which it was written, Jane's instinctiveness towards the social order of things and her own moral consciousness provide opportunities for her to display her emerging independence. Employed and exploited as a domestic “school-girl,” Jane leaves Mrs Mason's house to live in a Kingston slum and work at a bottle factory for six shillings a week. However, this independence comes at a price, and Jane struggles to resist the unwelcome advances of the factory supervisor Mr Curden — an older married man who is keen for Jane to take him as a “friend.” Upon recognition of these social expectations and wishing to maintain her respectability, Jane aggressively chases the socially mobile Vincent Broglie rather than accept Mr Curden. The novel concludes with Jane married to Vincent, living in Campbell Town, a suburb of Kingston that “simply loves to think of itself as poor but respectable” (192).

¹⁸ A mampala man is a colloquial term to mean “worthless, effeminate: a term of contempt” (47).

Not unlike *Pygmalion*, *Susan Proudleigh* (1915) is a rags to riches tale, but set in a more tropical location. The narrative moves from Jamaica to Panama and reflects the international political climate of the early twentieth century. de Lisser continues to develop the sociological and psychological investigations introduced in *Jane's Career*, and Susan is already a woman who displays a “determined character,” — she has more independence than Jane and is fiercely class-conscious occupying the lower/middle class position to which Jane had ascended at the end of *Jane's Career*. Susan is not prepared to compromise her social status, and her encounter with Samuel Josiah Jones (Sam) at a popular picnic seals her fate. She moves from the abject poverty of yard life in Jamaica to relative prosperity in Panama. Once in Panama, Sam's hasty marriage proposal is quickly retracted. The ever-resourceful Susan accepts an unexpected proposal of marriage by a mutual friend, Mackenzie, and moves to Culebra. The re-appearance of her family in Colon complicates her relative domesticity and Susan's psychological complexities are further investigated through the love triangle that is created between her, Sam and Mackenzie. The *deus ex machina* of Mackenzie's death establishes Susan as an independent woman of substantial financial means. Embracing this new social position, she returns to Jamaica.

Returning the heroine to home ground, “Myrtle and Money” (1942) investigates the evolution of female independence in 1940s Jamaica. A sequel to *Jane's Career*, “Myrtle and Money” embodies the ideological personification of the emerging independent female. The personality traits of Jane, Susan and the many other literary foremothers are a palimpsest to Myrtle.

The youngest daughter of Jane and Vincent Broglie, Myrtle is a young society lady. She is educated, resourceful and socially aware. Upwardly ambitious, Myrtle forms a platonic (on her side at least) friendship with Mr Scrofield, a local businessman. Upon discovering that one of her friends (Lottie) is pregnant by Mr Scrofield, Myrtle intervenes in order to resolve the situation. With no intention of marrying either Lottie or Myrtle, Mr Scrofield continues to be flattered by Myrtle's alleged interest. The arrival of Jane's wealthy brother William Burrell not only injects an overtly political voice into the text but also complicates the already complex romantic entanglements. Naming Myrtle as his heir, Burrell wants Myrtle to marry his aide Joe Chrisman. Scrofield, recognising that Myrtle will become very wealthy suddenly offers Myrtle a proposal of marriage, and Lottie an illegal abortion in Panama. Myrtle, for her part, is in love with Mr Scrofield's business assistant Geoff Dawson. Correctly perceiving that Chrisman is in love with someone else, and Scrofield is only after her money, she manipulates various situations in order to achieve the right outcome for everyone, including Lottie. The novel concludes with Myrtle marrying Geoff Dawson with Mr Scrofield and his wife (Lottie) in attendance, thereby securing her elevated social position.

Amy Kaplan's commentary on the interconnectedness of imperialism and contemporary postcolonial studies that seek to destabilise traditional stereotypes lends support to my argument that de Lisser uses metaphors in his literature as a means to foreground women as national symbols. Female independence and national identity are fused together within these novels through de Lisser's subtle challenging of these traditional spheres, as he

deliberately engages with the idea of women as builders of a nation and interrogates the black working-class woman stereotype. Traditionally, domestic novels encouraged women to stay at home while the men “domesticated” the wild frontiers of uncharted territories. Women were seen as the homemakers while the men were the conquerors of the Dark Continent or the New World. However, in these novels, this convention is reversed. It is the women who expand the frontier and “domesticate” the wild, while the men remain domesticated and are even feminised. Jane leaves her safe home behind in favour of Kingston; Susan goes beyond national boundaries by migrating to Panama, while Myrtle “conquers” the intra-racial social snobbery of 1940s Kingston. The men in *Jane’s Career* are either “mampala” men, or are “of the Don Juan type” (6). In *Susan Proudleigh*, although both Tom and Sam go to Panama, Tom is unsuccessful in finding work, and Sam decides to return to Jamaica because he cannot “survive” in Panama. Finally, Myrtle’s father, Vincent Broglie relies upon his wife to bolster his ego and secure his social status in society. As de Lisser reminds the reader, Vincent Broglie’s “upward struggle...had been greatly assisted by his wife” (3), who “had always tactfully urged him to give of his best, had lavished praise upon him which had pleased his vanity and encouraged him to rise” (3).

In critiquing the domestic novel, Kaplan suggests that reading encourages individual subjectivity and that at the core of the female self we find a national narrative about “the fathering of a nation” (*Anarchy* 44). She further comments that the “enactment of national independence” (*Anarchy* 44) can be achieved “through the female virtues of self-sacrifice and submission rather than

revolution” (*Anarchy* 45). For de Lisser, the women in his novels interlock these public and private spheres and personify the father and mother of the nation. These women do not submit. Through their education, independence and individual subjectivity de Lisser creates a newly configured “national narrative.” Their national independence is enacted through their willingness to take charge of their own lives. Jane’s recognition that she was embarking on the unknown is not lost on the reader. As de Lisser reminds us “she had reached, as it were, the boundary line between her old life and the life that was to begin that day” (23). This level of conscious acceptance of her emerging independence allows Jane to embrace the opportunities that help her to improve her situation, but not at the cost of any moral disgrace. Jane recognises that “for one’s respectability one often pays a price. But still she revolted against the idea of throwing herself away” (141). de Lisser is at pains to highlight the realistic struggles that working-class women faced vis-à-vis their “respectability” and “survival,” but is not willing for Jane to succumb to this ideal. Equally, Susan maintains her respectability and resourcefulness by setting up and running a successful shop. This allows her a level of independence which in turn allows her freedom to direct her own fate when she agrees to go to Panama with Sam after only a brief encounter. For Myrtle, independence means power. Myrtle is an ideological personification of the independent female, after some three decades of feminine struggle and although she loves her “sense of power,” she is also aware of its limitations and is “too wise to attempt to rule too often” (3).

Women as nationhood is not a new concept in early Victorian or imperial writing. According to Antoinette Burden: “women as saviour of the nation, the race, and the empire was a common theme in female emancipation arguments before and especially after 1900” (3). Early Victorian feminist literature supported imperialism, promoted the idea of nationhood and used Britannia as a moral signifier in order to secure their place within the Empire. However, with British women being deemed the “other” in Western society, they felt that their colonial counterparts, and significantly the “other” to their own creation of self-hood, needed representation by and through them, especially because “women acted as moral agents in national life” (41). Therefore, as a means of promoting women, white Victorian women within the British Empire created a female “other” that highlighted a passive and enslaved womanhood. This “other” was created in literature and throughout the empire as a means of justifying the need for “saviours” i.e., white Victorian women to effect emancipation. According to Rosenberg: “Victorian constructions of Jamaica” were perceived as “black and backwards as a result of its immorally independent women” (45). These assumptions about racial and cultural superiority placed de Lisser in a quagmire. de Lisser’s contemporary Thomas MacDermot had selected “the image of woman as empire builder as a model for Jamaican nationalism” (Rosenberg 46). Therefore, where MacDermot sought to “adapt the English figure of the woman as empire builder, presenting Jamaicans with images of exemplary white Jamaican women” (Rosenberg 45), de Lisser saw women as builders of a nation, not just an empire. He understood that the black and coloured women of Jamaica would uplift the Jamaican nation culturally and therefore sought to challenge these “white” images and

projected their respectability and morality onto these intelligent and successful black and coloured working-class women. Therefore, when Jane laments “it must be nice to be a white lady” (108), it is with a view to securing a respectable position in society, as opposed to being physically white. Equally, although Susan does not proclaim out loud her desire to be white, her social aspirations for whiteness are evidenced in her parody of an “at home,” and her mimicking of “how absconding wives acted in the moving-picture dramas” (88), when she leaves Sam for Mackenzie.

Jamaican nationalism throughout this trilogy focuses on the destabilisation of traditional constructions of female identity through an investigation of black female psychological complexity and individuality. Jane’s comparative village independence is fully explored when she arrives in the city. She complicates the traditional stereotype through her psychological choices which are revealed by de Lisser: “One by one the ties that bound her to the past were being loosened, unknown to her conscious self. What she did feel was that now she was free to do as she pleased” (77). Although she is aware of what is expected of her she chooses to acknowledge herself as “an individual with feelings, desire, and rights of her own” (77). When Jane leaves Mrs Mason’s home, the *unusual* (my emphasis) discovery is made that “Jane had actually taken nothing but her own stock of clothes. Nor had she left any debts behind, as inquiry proved” (95), confirming her resistance to immoral stereotypes and her own individuality. Similarly Susan’s internal psychological complexities are investigated through her “true love” for Sam, as against her

desire to be a respectable member of society through her marriage to Mackenzie.

Finally, it is no surprise that towards the end of “Myrtle and Money,” that Myrtle displays the strength of her formidable foremothers. When Lottie and Mr Scrofield’s daughters intentionally appear at Myrtle’s house and refuse to enter, the public insult is obvious. However, rather than be limited by the hypocritical standards dictated by her social “superiors,” she defines her independence by exposing her friend’s secret. This juxtaposition of Myrtle’s impeccable manners — “‘I want to congratulate you,’ said Myrtle quietly, and with splendid self-control. ‘I am glad to do so personally, and I thank you for giving me the opportunity,’” — alongside the social disgrace inflicted by her words, “...that one of our friends should be threatened with having a bastard child” (112), sets Myrtle apart from her contemporaries as well as her mother. Jane and Emma have protected each others’ secrets in that Jane has protected Emma from the social stigma of having a child out of wedlock (the child died), while Emma over the years has supported Jane’s story that she lived with Emma in Mrs Mason’s house as social equals, and not as her servant. Where Jane and Emma have been complicit through their mutual friendship to protect each other’s secret, Myrtle has no issue in exposing her friend’s secret to protect her social integrity. Her willingness to challenge social etiquette is an indictment of her independence, for Myrtle is independent in a way that Jane never was. Jamaica is on the verge of establishing an element of its own autonomy, and therefore Myrtle is not bound by the colonial “codes” of social conduct that limited Jane. The reader has the privilege of accessing the

psychological processes of these women's minds and this knowledge of the internal complexities of the female psyche not only gives the characters credibility but also allows the reader to understand that these women *only* "perform" within the conventional stereotypes on their own terms and with the purpose of self-advancement or personal gain as their main concerns.

These women are part of the new generation of Jamaicans who have "learnt to read and write." With "everyone's reputation...a matter of public property" (*Jane's Career* 7), respectability and morals are paramount to the freedom and independence of these women. Jane's moral standing already sets her apart from the other girls in the village. She does not get involved with the local village boys and is "very well behaved" (7). Susan "dressed better than most of the girls in the lane," lived in a "front house,... [and] carried herself with an air of social superiority" (2), while Myrtle is a young lady of Kingston who goes to church regularly, with an "intelligent forehead... [and] nostrils showing sensitiveness and pride" (1). Although these representations raise issues of propriety and sexuality, it is worth commenting that the reinforcement of these conservative sexual politics is transgressive in terms of how de Lisser instils these qualities into his black working-class heroines, providing positive role models outside of the Victorian stereotypical assumptions of black women as "immorally independent" which was normally provided in the colonial discourse that would have been available to the local reading public.

These female-centred texts foreground their heroines and position them in different geographical locations in order to examine how they adapt within

these domestic and international spheres. Framed by the socio-political climate surrounding them, these female protagonists may be seen as symbolising Jamaica. This metamorphosis of female independence and national pride is further envisaged through the structural settings of *Jane's Career* and *Susan Proudleigh* and their illustrative representations. Set out over twenty chapters, *Jane's Career* is separated into two halves. The country frames the city and cocoons Jane in order to encapsulate this emerging independence. The first ten chapters document a rite of passage and debate the naivety of the young Jane who leaves her village, as a “shy and somewhat stupid girl, from the country” (88). They highlight her loneliness and sense of isolation — “She felt awed, frightened, depressed-lonely, too, for she was a stranger in a strange land” (28) — while simultaneously allowing her to discover her own individuality and conscious thought. The concluding ten chapters investigate Jane's now developed independence. Living in a yard and working at a factory, Jane is her “own mistress” (102) with a satisfied sense of “newly-won freedom and independence” (105). Lonely, independent and with a burning desire to “keep herself up,” she displays her resourcefulness, integrity and astuteness throughout the concluding chapters. Her tenacity is rewarded at the end of the novel by her marriage to Vincent Broglie and the social position that this secures for her in society. Although problematic in terms of marriage vis-à-vis tutelage, unlike Susan's marriage to Mackenzie which can be argued as a form of tutelage, for Jane, this marriage as I have already suggested earlier in this chapter, is a symbol of female independence. Her relationship with Broglie is based on love and mutual respect, not for any economic/sexual gain and therefore by *choosing* to marry Vincent she is not only exercising her free will,

but also providing a more secure environment and elevated social position in which to raise her children.

The structure of *Susan Proudleigh* is very effective in setting out the literary framing narrative that de Lisser employs within this trilogy. Framing devices are commonly used in narratives to give context or to move the story along. A popular convention is to introduce a main story which then sets up a fictive narrative, for example Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*. Other conventions employ the insertion of a number of small narratives into a larger narrative, as is the case in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, and repetition at the beginning and the end of the narrative can "frame" a story providing context. Equally, recurrent elements of a location and multiple frames of narrative also serve to manipulate the reader's focus. By placing a location at the beginning of the narrative and returning the character to that location at the end of the narrative, but after having undergone some changes, the reader is able to "see" the character or location in a new light.

de Lisser adopts a stylistic framing narrative within this trilogy to create isolation and dislocation. The country frames the city in *Jane's Career* and highlights her isolation, Panama is framed by Jamaica in *Susan Proudleigh*, which highlights her dislocation, and "Myrtle and Money" is framed by *Jane's Career*, both in terms of the publication of the novels and through their mother-daughter relationship, as Jane literally frames Myrtle. In establishing a wider periphery, de Lisser employs the framing narrative to place his heroines at home (*Jane's Career*), abroad (*Susan Proudleigh*) and home again ("Myrtle

and Money”), in order to examine Jamaica within a new light, while they in turn are framed by the socio-political climate surrounding them. By guiding the reader’s attention de Lisser is able to address some of the major political issues facing Jamaica in the first half of the twentieth century.

The visual images of these “national women” are further depicted in the artwork that accompanies these novels. While there is no way of knowing the level of input that de Lisser had in these illustrations, he was responsible for selecting his own artist. In his preface to *Twentieth Century Jamaica*, he expresses his “gratitude” (6) to Mr C. Thornley Stewart, a local Jamaican artist who has successfully managed to “transfer the Jamaica light and colour to canvas” (6). He further honours Thornley Stewart’s artistic talent by recognising that his “...study of its [Jamaica] people, and a love of its wonderful scenery have enabled him to produce pictures that are true to life and nature” (6). Therefore, while his input is unknown, the fact that he chose Thornley Stewart on more than one occasion to illustrate his work and gave his work rave reviews suggests that he thoroughly approved of the artwork that was produced to accompany his texts.

Therefore, as *Jane’s Career* was illustrated by the same artist who did the dust cover for *Twentieth Century Jamaica*, it is necessary to view all three illustrations together to support my position.¹⁹ Where Thornley Stewart has placed a black working-class peasant and a woman of status in a white dress and parasol within the same frame in *Twentieth Century Jamaica*, as a way of

¹⁹ See Appendix II of this thesis.

suggesting the emergence of a new Jamaica from the old Jamaica, his illustrations of Jane are significantly dislocated from each other and placed on the front cover and at the beginning of Chapter 10 respectively.²⁰ Equally, the representation of Jane on the front cover, is somewhat removed from the mature matriarchal peasant woman seen selling her wares in the bottom right hand corner of the *Twentieth Century Jamaica* illustration. Although both in keeping with the traditional European stereotypical impressions of the time period, it is clear that the peasant woman is not able to separate herself from the other woman, nor aspire to her status. They are not looking at each other and although both sets of eyes look into the distance, and therefore future, neither look directly at the reader. Jane on the other hand, is the focal point of the illustration. With no other objects or persons framing the “picture” there is nothing to compare her to, and she is looking directly into the “camera” with a look of optimism in her eyes and a hint of a smile on her lips. She is young and sensual and although the picture hints at similarities in her attire to the peasant woman, in that her head is bound with a “bright-coloured madrass headkerchief” (21) and she is also wearing a necklace, she is not wearing the clothes of a working peasant, but a virginal white clean dress. This representation of her leaving the “village...of the righteous” (21) visually represents the new generation of Jamaican peasants who are independent and educated who have social aspirations.

The transition of Jane from girlhood to womanhood and from peasant girl to a socially mobile woman of independence is highlighted in the

²⁰ The illustrations referred to are present in the 1913 edition of *Jane's Career* as witnessed by the author, which is held in the British Library. Later reprints of *Jane's Career* contained different artwork on the front cover, or plain written script.

illustration that is presented crucially at Chapter 10 in the novel, which depicts an independent Jane “going to the shops” (6). In comparison to the white woman depicted on the cover of *Twentieth Century Jamaica*, Jane is also wearing a virginal white dress. However, where the white woman’s dress in the former illustration is long to cover her legs, Jane has added smart button up boots to her attire, which remains in line with the social expectations of “respectable” ladies to not show their legs, but allows for the changing fashion of reduced hemlines. Although parasol-less, she wears a fashionable hat and — in the vein of “almost the same, but not quite” (Bhabha, “Of Mimicry” 126) — looks remarkably similar, yet still different enough to be independent, to the white woman previously depicted. Unlike the sensual image of her with her arms high over her head and gazing directly towards the viewer, this picture shows a demure and somewhat static stance, with her left arm nestling neatly in the folds of her skirt. Although she is carrying a basket of produce, she is purchasing the goods, not selling them, exhibiting her freedom of choice as a lady living and working in the vibrant city of Kingston. The street scene behind her highlights the significance of the forces of modernity and depicts not only the bustle of the electric city but also the impact that she is having on the men (both black and white) who watch her. Finally, in contrast to this trio of pictures which narrate the trajectory of emerging independence, is the final illustration in the novel which depicts her home in the country. Daddy Buckram is sitting with Jane’s mother and father in the village that she had left and this picture serves as a visual representation to remind the reader and Jane of her roots. Although she may have ascended the ladder of social mobility, her roots still bind her to the land — her land — Jamaica. Although her parents are

country peasants, they are independent in so far as they own the land they work on and unlike the original peasant woman depicted in the *Twentieth Century Jamaica* illustration who was sitting below the white woman with a basket of goods, it is Jane's mother who is standing tall over the sitting men, wearing a white virginal and therefore respectable dress. These visual representations of the evolution of women highlight the notion that this is not a straightforward trajectory.

In contrast *Susan Proudleigh* has only one picture, which is on the front of the novel. With no background interference, the viewer's eyes are immediately drawn to the strong image of a smartly dressed, respectable female. The portrayal of Susan as an already emerging independent woman is clear. Illustrated by M. Bredall she is wearing the dress that is described when she goes to the picnic in Chapter IV of the novel. The significance of this day resulted in her meeting Sam and leaving to go to Panama. Her blue dress is vibrant, colourful and well fitting. With her hat in her hand, and therefore leaving her head uncovered, there is an implication that she is already more carefree and independent than Jane was at the end of *Jane's Career*. She is looking away from the viewer which cultivates ambiguity but gives an air of independence and confidence. She is a self-assured young lady who knows what she wants. Her stance is more fluid and evokes movement. With her eyes averted from the viewer and looking behind her there is an inference that she is looking back on what she is about to leave, whilst moving forward to the unknown future.

All of the images of Jane and Susan place them standing apart from the crowd, emphasising their isolation and individualism. This in turn interconnects with the observation that these protagonists also serve as literary representations for Jamaica itself. Geographically “isolated” from the rest of the Caribbean, the “Queen of the Antilles” (de Lisser, *Twentieth* 10) at the beginning of the twentieth century was the only island of the Greater Antilles not under American influence. For these heroines independence is isolating, and it is unclear whether de Lisser intends this isolation to be a product of independence or the cause of it. The opening chapters of *Jane’s Career* debate this dichotomy from the beginning, and it is never resolved throughout the trilogy, although he does set out both debates across the narratives. Although Jane feels like a “stranger in a strange land” (28), her isolation is more a product of her independence and circumstance, not the cause of it. By leaving her village and striking out independently, she is isolating herself from a life of comfort, family and friends, and entering into a world of the unknown. However, she quickly makes new friends, both in the yard where she lives and the factory where she works. Setting herself apart from the other workers and people in her yard is a conscious decision in her quest for social mobility and therefore her self-imposed isolation is a product of her desire to be independent from the accepted social norms. Susan’s isolation on the other hand, can be attributed to be a cause of her independence. Isolated within one country and dislocated from another, Susan is removed from all of her family and friends due to her migration to Panama. After her marriage to Mackenzie, she is further removed from the bustling town of Colon, to her relative exile in Culebra. This not only separates her from any potential female community, but

further removes her from Sam, the only person she knew in Panama. Finally, her marriage was for social advancement and not for love so she is further isolated from any emotional comfort. As a result, in her quest to be independent and elevate her social status, she has directly caused her own isolation.

de Lisser recognised that it was women who were the builders of the nation and therefore any improvements to Jamaica would come from their continued social and economic evolution, especially in terms of education and better career prospects. This is not a new idea. According to Edmondson the two positions on the image of the black woman during the nineteenth century, were either the nationalist ideal of black women as “icons of respectability, virtuous women...educated and acculturated to take their place as symbols of national progress,” or the historical stereotype of the “anti-woman — pathological and lascivious” (*Caribbean Middlebrow* 110). By creating positive role models, de Lisser continued to cultivate this nationalist ideal by encouraging women to gain a sense of pride and self-respect. These women of “a more independent disposition” recognise that they have a right to more. They are “rebels” who have “no humility in them; in their own way they had aspirations; they wanted to be free” (102). These women have aspirations to be respectable members of society. Jane’s overwhelming desire to “keep herself up” is based on a level of pride and independence that the other women not only do not understand, but also begin to resent. de Lisser is at pains to expose these women who are not part of the new generation of emerging female independence and all “perform” to the established order, by embodying the

historical stereotype set out above alongside the Victorian assumptions as posited by Rosenberg of “black, backwards and immorally independent.” Sarah haggles for extra consumables at the market that she then keeps for herself. Amanda exploits Jane, making her do all the work in the house, but then negotiates with Mrs Mason for higher wages and days off, while Sathya utilises the codes of this unbending social order and accuses Jane of stealing money as a ruse to get her evicted from her room.

These reinforcements of the traditional conventions of colonial attitudes within the context of Empire lend themselves to the observation that the immorality of these women is in direct correlation to the social and moral hierarchy of the working class, as well as the economic circumstances that are exploiting Jamaican workers. By highlighting the historical stereotype of black women against the backdrop of the harsh living conditions under which they are surviving, de Lisser is able to complicate the stereotype and introduce the nationalist ideal of culturally uplifting, self-respecting, educated and honest woman. As the youngest “employee” in the household, Jane is exploited, beaten, paid poorly and “expected to do everything.” However, she has the self-respect to leave Mrs Mason’s household taking nothing but what was hers, the honesty to gain the respect and loyalty of the community when she is evicted by Sarthya and the education to understand the composers’ strike, the implication of that strike and how it would affect Vincent Broglie. By de Lisser contesting the historical stereotypes in favour of a woman who will progress the nationalist ideal, he is creating a complex character, which allows the reader to experience genuine sympathy for his heroines. Jane and Susan,

although capable of social performances, are defined by their refusal to “perform.” When accused of thieving by Sarthya, rather than perform within the limitations of the stereotype, as Sarah does in the argument that she has with Mrs Mason, Jane “rises to the occasion” and finds her own accommodation, using her good name and moral consciousness to obtain loans from friends. Equally, at Mackenzie’s funeral, unlike Deborah Proudleigh who usurps the proceedings, and then manages the funeral as if it were a play (“she adapted her voice to suit her new dignity and now spoke in impressive stage whispers” (287)), Susan is “the one real mourner there” (295).

de Lisser’s continuing social insights in relation to the exploitation of the working class, are further critiqued through Jane and her anchoring of the hierarchical economic positions available to the working masses; domestic servant, factory worker and compositor. Although Jane is never a compositor, Vincent is, and her social awareness influences Vincent and affects his decision in relation to the strikers’ pay dispute, which underlines the action in the second part of this novel. Although Mrs Mason and Sarah are able to perform within their respective social roles to maintain social appearances and gain financial recompense, this exploitative relationship is not that far removed from the working relationships pre-emancipation and is more indicative of a slave and mistress relationship, as opposed to servant and employee. This exploitation is similarly interrogated at the bottle factory. Although the women have a unified voice, which they may use to “resist” the management, they still lack the organisational ability and the will to fight for improved economic conditions. These interrogations suggest that de Lisser was advocating the need

for social and economic reform and it is therefore somewhat perplexing that de Lisser displays contradictory intentions, towards the compositor's strike. Although recognising the compositors were a "hard-working body of men and women" (170) whose hours were long for little pay, he does not support their strike. The strike mimics the strike that Marcus Garvey instigated in 1907 (Archer 85) and it is clear that de Lisser intends the reader to recognise that the "gentleman of an ambitious and speculative turn of mind...determined to organize a strike" (170), is indeed Marcus Garvey.

de Lisser's support of the exploitation of the working masses by the lower/middle class, and seeming reluctance to support a printer's strike is frustrating, but perhaps a potential explanation is offered in terms of a wider socio-political platform. With outside influences complicating Jamaica's political future in terms of America's growing influence in the Caribbean, the mass exodus of Jamaicans to other parts of the world, and the rise in Europe of democratic (Marxist) protests supporting collective strikes for the working masses, de Lisser could be nervous for the political and global implications for Jamaica should she openly and overtly desire to be independent from colonial annexation. In favouring a slower and more passive resistance — "their condition was not enviable; yet it had been steadily improving during the past two years, and bade fair to continue to improve" (170) — he is showing himself not to be resistant to change per se, but he is reluctant to "bite the hand that feeds him" and openly advocate independence within a more global and political arena.

This position is further foregrounded in the foreshadowing of Jane's attitude towards taking a friend and is symptomatic of her understanding of independence. Jane's wish to be independent echoes Jamaica's growing desire to be independent from colonial rule. Once again, if de Lisser is suggesting that Jane's independence and therefore the independent desire of Jamaica would leave her totally isolated from the global community and markets, this may account for de Lisser's desire to highlight Jane's independence, within the established hegemony, so as to encourage readers to "bide their time" for independence. The importance of recognising the need for independence but acknowledging, in his opinion, that Jamaica is not ready to stand on its own two feet is reiterated throughout this text.

Alongside Jamaica's internal exploitation of its workers by its own people, de Lisser's recognition of and concession to the current difficulties facing Jamaica also highlights the wider historical-political implications that reveal the extensive exploitation of Jamaica from the international community. At the turn of the century, the British Empire was suffering from a crisis of confidence. The glory years of the Victorian era were beginning to ebb and the dissident rumblings of unrest throughout Europe, the United States and the Americas were beginning to be heard in Great Britain. With war on the horizon, Jamaica was still heavily managed under colonial rule by British Governors.

By de Lisser isolating and dislocating Jane from her natural surroundings when she leaves the village, he is able to guide the readers' focus onto the

commodification of Jamaica and the exploitation of the working class. While in the country, Jane exists within her own natural environment. Her parents are married, they own the land that they work and not only eat what they produce, but also sell it at the local market. In a primarily agricultural country, the failure of the Government to provide public funds to help small farmers improve irrigation and drainage resources resulted in an exodus of the population as they migrated from the country to the city or even further afield, to Panama and Cuba. The village Jane is leaving is indicative of this economic climate, which was depopulating and changing the peasant community. de Lisser confirms this in his description of it as a “decaying village,” where many of the men had “either gone to help dig the Panama Canal, or had migrated to such flourishing parishes as Portland and St Mary, where millions of bananas were grown” (6). Finally, by (re)moving Jane to the city, de Lisser is able to comment politically on the issues of this exploitation. A comparison between two street scenes both written by de Lisser will anchor my argument concerning de Lisser’s intentions and provide evidence that this overtly political subtext is intentional and aimed at the reader.

The first excerpt is taken from de Lisser’s non-fictional novel *In Jamaica and Cuba*, while the second directly from *Jane’s Career*:

All around were groups of persons haggling...I fell in love with the ease and perfect candour with which both buyers and sellers made the most astounding assertions. They knew that nobody believed them, and they did not

expect to be believed, they told these pleasant tales “all for fun.” What a wealth of things there was for sale! Golden oranges, bananas, fat custard apples, thin canes, sober-looking melons purple grapes, yams potatoes, pease – oh! Everything. (134-135)

...shops, filled to overflowing with showy goods intended to capture the fancy of servant girls and women from the country; the groceries and salt provision shops containing all manner of what to the working classes of Kingston are the most delicious of delicacies; the crowds of vendors and hagglers, each one calling out his and her ware and inviting the passer-by to stop and purchase; the electric-cars, all lighted up now and moving swiftly on their lines...the hubbub, the incessant movement of hundreds of people, the sound of religious singing which pierced its way through all the other noises; and then the market itself...already the fascination of city life had seized her. (39)

Although both narratives present a local market scene, de Lisser’s first depiction is more fluid and in tune with the local community, whereas his second rendition is clumsy and impersonal. In the first excerpt, he openly declares his “love” for the candour with which these people interact with each other. Both “buyers and sellers” are mentioned in the same sentence,

illustrating their connectedness to each other and the transactions that are taking place. They swap stories between each other, telling each other lies which they know will not be believed, but which builds a relationship between them and the community they are each serving. The “oranges, bananas, fat custard apples” and so on are from the natural resources of the surrounding land implying that the vendors are from the surrounding countryside and have travelled to the market to sell their goods. In other words they are rural market people and the local town people are buying produce from the local rural community who are making money from their own land which in turn is (re)producing this cycle. Everything in this description is harmonious to the natural land and local community.

de Lisser’s second description, on the other hand, is distant and coldly observational. There is no unity or warmth in his writing. The goods in the shops are “showy,” and not locally produced. Both “servant girl” and “country women” are the targets for this produce. The term “capture” further suggests undertones of victimisation, submission and slavery. The shops contained “delicacies,” not sustenance, encouraging the workers to part with their precious money on items they can ill afford, or possibly even purchase through credit. A case in point is when later in the novel, Jane purchases dresses from a shopkeeper on a weekly basis. The prices are over inflated to reflect the weekly payment plan that is offered. The “hubbub,” “incessant movement of hundreds and people” and “the sound of religious singing” serve to highlight the disjointed environment and lack of harmony between the “vendors/hagglers” and the “working classes of Kingston.” Everyone is jostling to be heard.

Finally, a popular ruse to make a political statement is the emphasis that de Lisser places on modernity and the *urban* “electric-cars,” which signifies the influence of “foreign” investment within the progressive industrialisation of Jamaica.

de Lisser understood that Jamaica was predominantly an agricultural country, and needed to rely on its people and resources to survive. However, rather than foreground the agricultural and communal commodities that are evidenced in his earlier description, he cleverly outlines the commodification of Jamaica, and exposes, in one stroke, the impact that both the depopulation of the local work force and the influx that “foreign” investment were having on the local community. By situating Jane within this political framework, he is exposing, at first hand, the realities of Jamaica’s vulnerability to internal and external exploitation. Jane is not successful in Kingston. She is barely keeping herself above starvation and is exploited both emotionally and financially.

If Jane’s representation of female independence is juxtaposed against the political issues of the exploitation of Jamaica, Susan’s political position has wider implications. The political focus shifts from the colonial prejudices of England and turns its attention tentatively towards the United States. Although issues of emigration and exploitation of the workers remain evident within the text, it is the triadic relationship between England, America and Jamaica that is examined in detail. The political issues of immigration, emigration and exploitation were still unresolved towards the end of the First World War, so England’s control over Jamaica was in a precarious position. Jamaica began to

become increasingly restless and thoughts of a political affiliation with either the United States or Canada began to be debated within the newspapers. As a patriot of Jamaica, de Lisser's first loyalty was always to Jamaica and he remained sensitive towards the needs of what would most benefit Jamaica. To this end, de Lisser believed that Jamaica would be better off within the British Empire than affiliated to another nation, although he gave the impression that this was not always the case in order to help Jamaica (Carnegie 134). He was aware that Jamaica was loyal to England, but felt that England had to make its loyalties known. He writes:

for loyalty to England and pride in the British Empire
are no mere words in the British West Indies. But there
is unfortunately, nothing certain about Great Britain's
attitude towards the West Indies, and they are
becoming tired of stagnation. (*Twentieth* 21)

As a result of this "stagnation," de Lisser in his non-fictional work *Twentieth Century Jamaica* dedicates his opening chapter to this debate. Entitled "Introductory – Jamaica's future: With England, Canada or the United States," de Lisser sets out arguments for Jamaicans affiliating their country with either the United States or Canada. Translating this political landscape into a fictional format and in order to avoid the obvious political ramifications of his position, de Lisser uses the backdrop of the racially segregated Panama Canal to dispel any romantic notions of an affiliation with the United States and parodies this political triangular relationship through the personification of

his main characters. Susan is representative of the increasingly nationalist Jamaica, while Sam and Mackenzie represent America and England respectively. Sam (whose name also aligns with the “Uncle Sam” of the USA) is “wild, unstable, but...not intentionally unkind” (153), while Mackenzie is a “model of reliability... [who] is allowed to speak almost standard English” (Cobham, “Cuba” 179). Sam recognises that “Susan’s will was stronger than his” (99), which metaphorically translates into Jamaica sizing up America. Equally, in choosing to marry Mackenzie, it could be argued that Susan/Jamaica is remaining with England. However, in the same context that Susan is aware that she has entered a dull marriage, so too is the reader aware that allegiance to the mother country may not be the appropriate choice for the future. Therefore Mackenzie’s death could also symbolically represent the death of Jamaica’s commitment to England. Susan, at the end of the novel, is a fully independent woman of substantial financial independent means. By bringing Sam with her to Jamaica, she is setting out that any future annexation, if appropriate, would be on her terms.

de Lisser contends that if annexation to America took place, the U.S could not enforce any segregation laws in Jamaica. With the majority of the population being black, the native white population would not covet a race war. By highlighting the enforcement of American segregation laws in American controlled countries where the majority were black, de Lisser is playing devil’s advocate and suggesting that these laws *could* indeed be enforced within Jamaica. The colour divide in Colon is immediately recognised. de Lisser’s descriptive passages outline the “frail-looking wooden buildings two or three

storeys high” (139), against the bungalows and coconut trees of Christobal, a part of Colon which “the Americans had taken over as part of their territory and converted into an American settlement” (140), and American segregation is in full force as “the colour line was somewhat strictly drawn in Christobal” (168). By reiterating the reality of the conditions in Panama, de Lisser quickly and succinctly dispels any notion of an idealised existence that would be available to Jamaicans should they turn their allegiances to the United States.

Finally, the dislocation from Jamaica and the framing of Panama by Jamaica allows de Lisser more freedom politically to criticise issues of emigration without compromising his own social position. Recognised as the first novel on Jamaican emigration *Susan Proudleigh* focuses on the harsh working conditions and the sociological realities of Panama. Jamaicans working within the Canal Zone were subjected to draconian labour practices. They were ordered to work by a whistle, could not live in the Zone unless married and were beaten if they “cheek them too much” (142). The dangers of working in the Culebra Cut are illustrated through Mackenzie’s death. Although white men died alongside Mackenzie, the observation by Sam that the “West Indian labourers [were] carelessly carrying boxes of dynamite on their heads and shoulders” (274) implies that West Indians labourers are easily replaceable in Panama.

Where *Jane’s Career* and *Susan Proudleigh* debate the political concerns relating to exploitation and emigration, “Myrtle and Money” investigates the political ramifications of a self-governing Jamaica. Published in *Planters’*

Punch in 1941-42, on the eve of Jamaica's successful bid for semi-self government, "Myrtle and Money" is framed by *Jane's Career*, which was republished the previous year and *Psyche* which was published the following year. This "framing" of "Myrtle and Money" is very effective. *Jane's Career* had been out of print, but according to de Lisser, in constant demand since it was first published (*Planters' Punch* 4:3 3). de Lisser was encouraged to re-print *Jane's Career* in book format, but decided to re-publish it in *Planters' Punch* instead, effectively making it available to a wider reading population for a small amount of money.

The effectiveness of re-publishing *Jane's Career* the year before allowed the readers to care about these characters, thereby giving them a vested interest in the storyline. In addition, by juxtaposing the "old" Jamaica of *Jane's Career* alongside this tentative "new" Jamaica in "Myrtle and Money," de Lisser is able to debate the political concerns and consequences of this more independent Jamaica. Finally, by placing *Psyche* after "Myrtle and Money," in which he narrates a tale of slavery and the Sam Sharpe rebellion, he is reminding the reader of how far Jamaica has come, but also how far Jamaica still needs to go to become a full republic. This juxtaposition of historical and contemporary injustices could also serve as an attempt to galvanise social change.

Placing the heroine once more on home ground, "Myrtle and Money" is a manifestation of all the influences, both internal and external, that Jamaica had benefitted from over the last 40 years. The political bias of the novel

focuses on this new more politically liberal and materialistic Jamaica. The 1938 riots had brought a political consciousness to the Jamaican people that had not been evidenced before and politics were being heavily debated. Black Nationalism was becoming increasingly popular due mainly to the influence of Marcus Garvey and the US stock market crash of 1929 and resulting depression saw many migrated Jamaicans returning home. These factors alongside an increase in colour prejudice and debates concerning annexation to the United States re-ignited the incendiary political landscape of the early 1940s. Concerned that England may “sell” Jamaica to America to pay off war debts and refusing to be seen as a bargaining chip to be “handed over” to the highest bidder, Jamaica began to push for self-government and recognition as an independent republic. “Myrtle and Money” sets out this socio-political conflict and the political horizons that were becoming available to Jamaica.

The descriptions relating to American clothes, cars, kitchen appliances, films and the “hair-straightening process invented by a Madame Walker of the United States” (4) highlights the notion that Jamaican society was heavily influenced by American goods and culture. Stepping out from under the shadow of colonialism, Myrtle is able to make informed and independent decisions about her future and that of Jamaica. In a society where it is possible for feminine freedom to exist, de Lisser critiques the political liberalism and prophecies of a “class war” (Carnegie 157) of the 1940s through the social consciousness and independence of Myrtle and her friends. Financially more secure than the white middle class, the comparative independence of Myrtle is founded upon the sacrifices and advancements of the women who had come

before her, such as Jane in the past. As a result, this younger generation have no problem in taking expensive presents from admirers and offering nothing in return. This “freer” life style is further reflected in their emerging liberal moral attitudes. Myrtle and her friends are not shocked when they hear that Lottie is pregnant. Instead they all sit around calmly discussing the options available to Lottie, including abortion: “You can go to Cuba or Panama, you know, to see a doctor quietly” (35).

On the other hand, for all of their liberalism, social appearances are still an influencing factor in Jamaica. Lottie is considering the possibility of an abortion to avoid “any open disgrace” (35). Although Myrtle and her friends are more liberal minded, the intra-racial social snobbery is not totally eradicated. Myrtle’s internal emotions highlight this conflict when she first meets her uncle, who is “countrified-looking...a man who spoke broadly, had no regard for grammar, and was so dark” (28). She is not only fearful that Mr Scrofield will think “much less of her as a lady” (28), but also that if he was to remain in Kingston he might “drag her down” (28). With Mr Burrell’s social appearance and racial colouring framing the description of his language, de Lisser is recognising the superficial social markers of the 1940s. This political un-ease, coupled with old-fashioned traditions and ideals, is illustrated through the domestication of Jane and through Myrtle’s uncle and Jane’s brother William Burrell, whose conservative voice reflects the growing resentment from the more wealthy members of society, at participating in welfare and social reform: “I had to work ‘ard before I could make money. An’ now the Government want to take away what I earn with me sweat an’ give it to a heap

of worthless loafers who can't make a bread for themselves" (28). Equally, Myrtle has nothing but disdain for Jane because of what she represents, i.e., the colonial dependent Jamaica of the past. Jane, for her part, has become fully domesticated and is unable to progress forward because of the political ideals that have held her back. These ideals may have been progressive at the turn of the century but they do not have a place in the politics and landscapes of the 1940s. de Lisser, while championing self-government, tended to support conservative views locally and was therefore aware of his own political morality, but realises that, like Jane, it is too late for him to change.

In contrast, de Lisser's "overtly" political novels, *Triumphant Squalitone* and "The Jamaican Nobility," offer humorous satirical narratives, written to expose the "tin-pot" politics of Jamaica and the idealistic but ineffective nature of Garveyism for the black working-class Jamaican and the exploitative opportunities that it affords to the "mampala" man. As political novels they are effective as mouthpieces of social commentary in relation to the futility of local politics and any attempts, whether domestic or international, made to change the colonial system of government. In 1913, de Lisser set out in uncompromising detail what he viewed to be the difference between "real" politics and politics of the "tin-pot" variety, contesting that the Legislature were the "real politics" in that it was government by the Crown and made up of fourteen elected members of society and fifteen members appointed by the Crown, whose responsibilities were to advise the Crown through the Colonial Governor. The "tin-pot variety of politics" according to de Lisser "concerns those gentlemen who are mild agitators, election organisers, and would-be

redressers of imaginary grievances” (*Twentieth* 150). These men were seen as radical and therefore against the established Government.

Clearly in support of the colonial system, de Lisser also commented that politics was not at the forefront of many a Jamaican mind. However, three years later, he wrote his first “political” novel which examined the “tin-pot” politics of Jamaica. *Triumphant Squalitone* was published locally as a result of de Lisser “selling” the local rights of publication to an influential Jamaican business Fred L. Myers & Son. Written as a “humorous story” *Triumphant Squalitone* charts a period of two weeks in 1916, when England was considering making Jamaica a Republic. Buoyed by the idea of independence, two names are put forward for the Presidency: Mr Chalkner who has money, but no class, and Mr Bloodstone, who has both. In de Lisser’s only novel to be written as a first person narrative, the narrator (co-incidentally a newspaper man) narrates the events as they unfold. The novel focuses on the trials and tribulations of the Squalitone family during the “tin-pot” political election campaign and the role of newspapers in manipulating local opinion.

Central to the novel are the Squalitone family with whom the narrator (Mr Crooks) resides as a “paying guest.” Political agitator, John Squalitone, “a man without any visible means of livelihood” (5), his wife and their three daughters are in support of the Bloodstone candidacy, due to the fact that the Squalitones and the Chalkners used to run in the same circles, until John’s perpetual lack of any stable financial security saw his

family reduced to taking in “paying guests.” Through a comical series of events, John Squalitone secures a position within the Bloodstone campaign as election organiser and, with a number of “canvassers” beneath him whose loyalty is to the person who is providing the rum, travels across the country, making defamatory remarks about Chalkner and extolling the virtues of Mr Bloodstone who will “save” Jamaica. Subsidiary elements of the main story involve the social aspirations of Mrs Squalitone and her daughter Bertha. Bertha and Chalkner’s daughter (Ella) both admire Harry Gresham, another “paying guest” of the Squalitones, who is in love with Bertha, but is courted by Mr Chalkner for a job position.

The narrative, but not the novel, concludes with Mr Chalkner bowing out gracefully from the election campaign and Mr Bloodstone becoming President-elect. de Lisser uses the meeting of the legislative council to frame this main narrative. However, where he employed this recurring framing device in *Susan Proudleigh* in order to see the same location but in a different light, when he applies it to *Triumphant Squalitone*, it is obvious that there has been no change. As de Lisser is at pains to point out: “no matter who is elected, the Government remains unchanged” (*Twentieth* 153), which is echoed in *Triumphant Squalitone*. With England’s decision not to make Jamaica a Republic and the Colonial Assembly never being dissolved, the novel ends how it began. Even though Mr Bloodstone is elected by the people as the president-elect, “the old order which had never changed for an instant was to be restored in its entirety” (128). Therefore, Jamaica remains under Colonial rule and the

two presidential candidates have been honoured with knighthoods as recompense for their troubles.

On the surface this novel highlights the cyclical nature of oppressive regimes and communicates a sense of nihilism with no possibility of reform. However what it veils beneath this account is a sense of foreboding in that “it would be a mistake to imagine that they [the Jamaican people] are inclined to accept as unchangeable the present system of government” (*Twentieth* 149). Therefore, although other people may disagree, it would appear that de Lisser was aware of the increasingly nationalistic attitudes that were being encouraged through the more radical and nationally progressive newspapers on the island, namely *The Jamaica Times* and *The Jamaica Advocate*. However, he still contended that Jamaica at the beginning of the twentieth century would not gain its own independence, mainly because the island was too important to Great Britain from both a financial and geographical perspective. Ironically, when Jamaica was on the eve of self-government, de Lisser took the decision to re-publish *Triumphant Squalitone* in his last edition of *Planters’ Punch*. Printed posthumously, the explanatory transcript, it would appear, is an indication that de Lisser did advocate a Republic but not before Jamaica, in his opinion, was ready for it!

In the same way that de Lisser highlights the disjointedness of domestic politics through the local population, de Lisser’s critical remarks concerning Garveyism in “The Jamaican Nobility” serve to highlight the

influence of international politics and their effect on Jamaica. The inimical relationship between de Lisser and Garvey is not in any doubt as Robert Hill has indicated and which can be thoroughly investigated through his substantial documenting of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) papers, as well as the numerous acerbic editorials aimed at Garvey published within *The Daily Gleaner* throughout de Lisser's editorship.

Garveyism as a movement was named after its creator Marcus Garvey, and advocated a Back to Africa movement. It sought to uplift the black race through self-reliance and nationhood through the UNIA) which he established in 1914. Born in St Ann's, Jamaica, Marcus Garvey left the island in 1910 and travelled extensively, speaking and writing in various newspapers to bring social awareness and a sense of unity to the dispersed racial global community. Accused and convicted of mail fraud in 1925 he served two years of a five year sentence and was deported back to Jamaica in 1927. The UNIA never fully recovered from the scandal and numbers declined during the 1930s. Garvey left Jamaica in 1935, and died in London in 1940.²¹ Although probably one of the most influential black leaders of the twentieth century, he was not without his critics. His major opposition came from another formidable figure W.E.B. Du Bois who heralded him as one of the greatest enemies of the black man, in that he

²¹ Although not an exhaustive list, for an in depth discussion on Marcus Garvey and his politics please see: Amy Jacques Garvey, *Garvey and Garveyism* (London: Collier-MacMillan, 1963, 1968). Print. Colin Grant, *Negro with a Hat, The Rise and Fall of Marcus Garvey and his Dream of Mother Africa* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2008). Print. Robert A. Hill, editor, Barbara Bair, associate editor. *Marcus Garvey, life and lessons : a centennial companion to the Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association papers* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987). Print. The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers Project, Web. 01 June 2012. www.marcusgarvey.com

was concerned that Garvey's "Back to Africa" movement would undermine his work and that of his organisation the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP) in their attempts to establish black rights.

While Garveyism was a popular mass movement, attracting some four million members at its height, and has been credited today with influencing some of the major black leaders to come after Garvey, namely Martin Luther King, as well as Malcolm X, and influenced the Rastafarian movement in Jamaica, de Lisser highlights its impact on the local Jamaican population of the early 1920s through his satirical novel "The Jamaican Nobility." Written and published in the 1925-26 edition of *Planters' Punch*, while Garvey was incarcerated but before he had organised his People's Political Party in Jamaica, the novel focuses upon Mr Nicholas Brimstone and Mr Mortimer Slimslam, supporters of Marcus Garvey who have been sending money to America and who have been bestowed with the honours of High Conspicuous Potentate and Knight of the Nile, respectively, within the African Republic headed by President Marcus Garvey. Nicholas works on the railways and Mortimer is a waiter at a tourist hotel. However, as a direct result of their elevated status, both men lose their jobs, Nicholas for being accused of inciting men to strike, a direct result of Garveyism, and Mortimer because he answered to the name Sir Mortimer, which was intended for a guest named Sir Mortimer staying at the hotel, and as a result, the food he was carrying ended up on the face of the "authentic" Sir Mortimer. As a reflection of their social mobility, the

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women behind the men demand marriage and recognition of their titles. Mrs Brimstone demands to be called “her ladyship,” while Matilda demands not only marriage with Mortimer, but also to be recognised as “Lady” to his “Sir.” The community to which they belong, which includes Susan, Sam and Mr Proudleigh is outraged that “a man who hath been singled out for high distinction by the head of the African Republic should now be reduced to penury and want merely because he answers to his indubitable title?” (23). As a result, guided by the enigmatic Mr Nicodemus Douglass, a man of words and few desires to work, who “instinctively understood the psychology of his class” (25), the community form a society called the “Up & Be Doing Confederation of the Oppressed,” whose mandate is the:

uplifting of the working classes of Jamaica, the putting of them in touch with Jamaicans resident in Cuba and in Central America, the affiliation of the Confederation with Mr. Garvey’s greater society in America, and “the freeing of Jamaica from all shackles.” (25)

As the self-elected Perpetual President and Minister Plenipotentiary, Douglass is in charge of the Confederations funds.²² A “fundamental fighting fund” of £80 is initially raised, £20 given personally by the Brimstones, and the monthly subscription is set at a shilling for men and sixpence for women. Mr Proudleigh senses the hint of a scandal

²² A Plenipotentiary is a person who has full powers to represent Governments. The title was over time replaced by Ambassador.

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brewing between Mr Douglass and Mrs Slimslam (Matilda) and follows them home. Although nothing untoward unfolds, Mr Proudleigh remains suspicious. Equally, with sweeping aims, but little progress, Mrs Brimstone, with an investment of £20, also becomes suspicious of Mr Douglass's intentions. Gaining support within the community Mrs Brimstone decides to confront Mr Douglass and demand that members other than him are able to access the funds. Douglass dissolves his own presidency and declares a vote to take place within two weeks. Not satisfied, Mr Proudleigh and Mr Brimstone are selected to go to the Attorney General to report Mr Douglass and the Society. However, Douglass beats them to it and turns the tables on them, concluding with the Attorney General threatening Douglass and Proudleigh with imprisonment. Aware that they have been duped, the Attorney General dissolves the matter and Mr Brimstone and Mr Proudleigh return to the society. When Douglass and Matilda fail to appear at the meeting, and no bank books have been handed over, a small number of the committee set off to the bank, only to be told that Mr Nicodemus Douglass never deposited any funds in the name of the confederation, but did open a bank account in his own name! The novel concludes with the recognition that the community is some £80 out of pocket, and Matilda and Douglass have left Jamaica to enjoy the "fruits" of their labour.

The parody that de Lisser creates through these pretentious sounding titles ridicules Garvey's Pan-African ideals. The recognition that Garvey is not really "president" of anything leads Slimslam to proclaim "I

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‘ave no wish to go to Africa” (21). For even though both Slimslam and Brimstone have been honoured with these titles, they have no desire to leave Jamaica. de Lisser did not like Garvey, and it is possible that he felt that Garvey’s sense of nationalism was detrimental to Jamaican people. de Lisser believed that Garvey’s “Back to Africa” concept would take Jamaicans away from creating their own Jamaican national identity, by instead advocating that they return to Africa, a country with which they were unfamiliar. Equally, while this may not be the “tin-pot” politics of an election campaign, this novel quickly takes as its subject matter the political machinations of how a society works, in that those who have paid their subscriptions have more to lose than the ones who have not, which tends to highlight the lack of loyalty and the flimsiness with which a society can be both formed and disbanded. A confidence man, Douglass had formed several societies across Panama, Cuba and Jamaica, as he appealed to the Jamaicans on those continents to support his cause. When the interest recedes, so does he, with the subscriptions. The relative ease with which Douglass was able to get people to part with their money is possibly a warning to the local Jamaican population who were paying subscriptions to Garvey’s UNIA to “support this propaganda” (22). Douglass, for his part, not unlike Garvey, was aware of his “desire to uplift the people” and “had studied the progress of the Garvey movement in America” (26). The inference that Douglass is no better than Garvey is not lost on the reader, and de Lisser is possibly suggesting caution on the part of the Jamaican population as he encourages audiences to be aware of

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strong leaders who have great oratory skills but little else to support their arguments.

Although aware that the political agenda was low in the priorities of many Jamaicans, de Lisser still elected to write both overtly and subversively political texts aimed at a popular audience. While his overtly political novels appeared to support de Lisser's political standing as a Conservative and therefore a "Government man," in showing support for the Colonial rule in *Triumphant Squalitone* and ridiculing Garvey's radical politics in "The Jamaican Nobility," they do not debate Jamaica's political influence within the wider international arena. Arguably, it is the trilogy of *Jane's Career*, *Susan Proudleigh* and "Myrtle and Money," as outlined above, which serve as de Lisser's "political" novels and reveal the political implications that were facing Jamaica within the international arena. de Lisser wanted to bring these issues to the reader's attention, in order for Jamaicans to gain a sense of unity and responsibility for their country while at the same time creating positive role models for Jamaican women within the national ideal.

CHAPTER III

The (Re)presentations and (Re)negotiations of Heroism in *Revenge* and *Psyche*.

As the editor of *The Daily Gleaner*, de Lisser was in an excellent position to have first-hand knowledge of what literature was being sent to the colonies. With this in mind, de Lisser would have been well aware of all the various popular literary forms and would have used his knowledge accordingly to produce literature that was pleasing to a mass audience. This emergence of a literary mass market which resulted largely from a shift in the marketing, reception and printing of literature, allowed for a popular culture to emerge. The rise of the novel, coincided with the rise of the middle class and although John Fiske seems reluctant to identify popular culture exclusively with the working class (or indeed any class), he does recognise that “romance played an important part in British culture as a form of narrative theory of social change” (5). de Lisser also recognised the commercial investment in romantic fiction and historical sensationalism and therefore ensured that all of his historical novels contained an element of romance. However, as a result of the “pulpiness” and popularity of his historical narratives, many critics have read his novels reductively.

In terms of the significance of the historical novel, Lukács believed that its importance was not in its “re-telling of great historical events” (42), but on the “poetic awakening of the people who figured in those events” (42). Lukács considered that what mattered most was that the reader should “re-experience

the social and human motives which led men to think, feel and act just as they did in historical reality” (42). The framework of an historical novel had the ability to bring the past to life, and this was attractive to de Lisser who embraced the opportunity to engage within the parameters of this genre. By writing historical novels that contested established hegemonic literary traditions, de Lisser was creating a cultural identity that later West Indian (not just Jamaican) nationalist writers would seek to (re)construct in their literary works of the 1940s and onwards. Concentrating on two of the defining moments in Jamaican history, the Baptist War of 1831 and the Morant Bay Rebellion of 1865, this chapter will explore the representation of heroism and the search for a national identity in two of de Lisser’s novels, *Revenge* and *Psyche*.²³ By examining the way the novels’ (re)negotiation of the representations of heroism is explored within individual characters, I will suggest that the marginalisation of the conventional male heroes and the foregrounding of Rachel and Psyche as female heroes not only destabilises the traditional representation of heroism but also further complicates traditional notions of nationhood, thus enabling the reader to accept Rachel and Psyche as the “true” heroes of the novels. Parallels will be drawn with Sir Walter Scott’s *Ivanhoe* and the mythical tale of “Psyche and Cupid” as set out in Apuleius’s *The Golden Ass* in order to clarify and interrogate de Lisser’s representations of the relationship between female heroism, identity and belonging.

²³ *Psyche* was published posthumously and was an amalgamation of de Lisser’s last two novels, “Psyche” and “The Return” which were published in consecutive years in *Planters’ Punch*. However for the purposes of this thesis, all references made in relation to this novel are from the printed novel *Psyche*.

de Lisser's re-telling of these rebellions is significant. He uses the genre of the historical novel as a forum in which to highlight not only the injustices of Jamaica's historical past but also its incendiary political future. The influence of the original events upon Jamaican history is juxtaposed with the political situations in 1919 and 1942. This juxtaposition leads to interesting debates as to why de Lisser produced the novels at the time he did. I would contend that *Revenge* highlights the need for revolution, to "purge the wickedness out of the land" (2), in support of the emerging nationalism brought about by the after effects of World War I and Garveyism. However when de Lisser produced *Psyche* in 1942 he was a harsher critic of nationalism and in light of the recent violent riots that had affected most of the island, it would appear that he was more supportive of a passive kind of nationalism, as highlighted in Sharpe's passive rebellion. In both novels the underlying implication (that in order for Jamaica to become independent, unification across racial boundaries must be achieved) remains the same and therefore both novels focus upon the (re)discovery of the "roots" of Jamaican culture and heritage.

Defining a historical novel is complex, with various commentators suggesting that the historical novel has metamorphosed out of many different earlier literary genres, such as the adventure tale, imperial narrative, and the gothic romance. Green contends that adventure tales were "collectively, the story England told itself as it went to sleep at night;...charg[ing] England's will with the energy to go out into the world and explore, conquer, and rule" (39). For their part, imperial narratives fused the autobiographical, historical and

confessional motifs into one and were written in response to Britain's desire to maintain the status quo and protect what they had conquered. Lukács argues that the adaptations of classical history or myths in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century literature were "precursors" to the historical novel, but suggests that the rise of the historical novel resulted from the changing social and ideological foundations in the beginning of the nineteenth century that coincided with the defeat of Napoleon. For Lukács, the real (or classic) historical novel was "one which brings the past close to us and allows us to experience its real and true being" (39), and he recognised in the novels of Sir Walter Scott such an artistic aim. Scott's novels continued the realism of the eighteenth century social novels but introduced for the first time "the dramatic character of action and...the new and important role of dialogue in the novel" (44). This classic narrative construction of the historical novel as defined by Lukács and accepted through Scott's narratives as a more middlebrow literary form interested de Lisser and he set about adapting the genre in order to present his own historical novels to the local reading population.

For de Lisser, historical novels were dramas of consciousness and de Lisser's reformulation of the historical novel genre did not remain static. de Lisser's historical narratives fell within two different categories, those of the romantic adventure tale of pirates, treasure, romance and heroes and those that sought to reclaim important historical events in Jamaican history. Therefore, it is necessary to briefly map the trajectory of de Lisser's historical novels in order to allow for a literary relationship to be established between *Revenge* and *Psyche*, which in turn will establish de Lisser's literary intentions in

foregrounding women as builders of a nation. During his lifetime de Lisser wrote eight “historical” novels which fundamentally position women with a heroic framework. Slipping indiscriminately through the sub-textual genres of adventure tales and classic narrative constructions, he sought to poetically awaken the indigenous Arawak Indians through his Arawak trilogy as discussed in Chapter I and included the myths and folk legends of Jamaican oral tradition in *The White Witch of Rosehall* and *Morgan’s Daughter*. Therefore, if the classic middlebrow literary form of the historical novel was aesthetically pleasing to de Lisser, then the critical reception afforded them alongside the socio-historical context of when he wrote *Revenge* and *Psyche* offer a useful starting point for exploring de Lisser’s intentionality in writing historical novels.

Of the limited amount of critical scholarship in relation to de Lisser’s historical novels, Ramchand accuses de Lisser of having “no theory of the historical novel,” and that only “a working formula can be extracted” from de Lisser’s historical framework. According to Ramchand this “formula” must “contain action...personify history, and...introduce a romantic element” (*Introduction* 4). Ramchand suggests that as a result of de Lisser using this formula, he alienates himself from the changing surroundings of Jamaican society. More recently Victor Chang has suggested that de Lisser’s characters have a “lack of depth” (12), which is possibly as a result of de Lisser’s newspaper background, in that the wider social and political implications play a more major role than the actual characterisation of his main protagonists. Although both positions are of interest, there is significant merit in Chang’s

observation in terms of what de Lisser was trying to achieve within a wider context. While de Lisser may indeed have had a “formula” for his historical novels, the romantic element was necessary in promoting social aspirations as mentioned earlier and therefore did not detract from the historical matter *per se*. I would suggest that while *some* of de Lisser’s characters may “lack depth” he uses the juxtaposition of these often complex romances against the historical backdrop to raise awareness of the social issues of contemporary Jamaica. de Lisser saw the historical novel as a sphere where he not only entertained, but also sought to educate his audience. In his historical novel *Revenge*, in the noticeably ironic chapter “The Voice of the People” the newspaper hack Mace remonstrates, “we are engaged in a righteous case, and with tongue and pen we must lift up our voices against the strong” (34). If de Lisser believed that the pen was mightier than the sword, which this statement appears to support, then for de Lisser, one of the ways to bring about change for Jamaica was through words and not through violence.

If the reclamation of West Indian history is generally accepted to be bound up with the nationalist movement, then this concept of passive change i.e., change through words and peaceful protest as opposed to violence, reveals de Lisser’s lingering national tendencies, in terms of his recognition of a distinct Jamaican identity. Lukács comments that: “large sections of people have always stood between the camps with fluctuating sympathies now for this side, now for the other” (37) and Cobham affirms de Lisser’s “middle ground” within her doctoral thesis whereby she records de Lisser’s dualism in some detail. Through (re)presenting these historical events from different

perspectives and alternative voices, a reclaiming of forgotten or untold histories can be explored. These contradictory tendencies that are recognisable but also intentional enabled de Lisser to maintain the middle path that he so desperately sought through society. Finally, if the idea of a nation's identity is defined by its past, then by de Lisser rewriting Jamaica's history and providing a voice for Jamaica's national heroes, he was able to bring them into a literary and historical consciousness. In my attempt to recover de Lisser's work and reinterpret his novels, I would suggest that for de Lisser, historical novels were an opportunity to reclaim Jamaica's rich historical past, as a means of promoting a distinct Jamaican identity, and reflecting through that identity the creation of a local national literature.

Returning to the classical framework that appealed so much to de Lisser, Ana Ferris recognises that Scott's reputation as the father of the historical novel that focused on national tales and where national culture could be discovered goes some way to explain why de Lisser chose to replicate his framework. de Lisser could never occupy the social position of Scott or even his own contemporaries (Rudyard Kipling, Joseph Conrad and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle) because he was coloured and therefore marginalised. However, with his interlacing of Scottish and Irish imagery in an explicit mimicking of *Ivanhoe*, and his use of Jamaican myths and history he was able to engage with the revisioning processes that focused on the role of the reader.²⁴ Although Karina Williamson has uncovered various literary representations of the

²⁴ There are numerous Irish characters in many of his novels and the issues surrounding Irish emigration and indentured service in Jamaica are raised in "Conquest" and "The White Maroon." In addition, he refers to the Maroons in *Revenge* as tribes of negroes, black *Highlanders*, (my emphasis) who had for nearly two hundred years lived in wild freedom.

Morant Bay rebellion, to my knowledge, de Lisser was the first West Indian author to provide a novel of the Morant Bay Rebellion in *Revenge*.²⁵ Published in 1919, de Lisser palimpsests *Revenge* over the quintessential historical novel *Ivanhoe*, a literary device which allows for a thorough analysis of the interconnected debates surrounding the agency of the author, reader and fictional characters. He parallels a variety of thematic and characteristic concepts of the structural framework of *Ivanhoe* and its literary representations of heroism, utilising the predictable plot of two women and two men: Rebecca and Rowena in *Ivanhoe* and Rachel and Joyce in *Revenge*; Ivanhoe and De Bracy in *Ivanhoe* and Carlton and Solway in *Revenge*. Both contain kidnap scenes and masculine rivalries and they address the concept of “others” or “outsiders”: Robin of Loxley, Rebecca and Isaac/Bogle and Stoney Gut, Rachel and George William Gordon. There are even characters that possess identical names: King Richard and King John in *Ivanhoe* as against Richard “Dick” Carlton and John Solway in *Revenge*. Through this interconnectedness of author, reader and fictional characters de Lisser is creating a sense of familiarity for the reader, which in turn supports the readers’ assumptions that *Revenge* is a re-working of *Ivanhoe*.

In propinquity, while historical and critical accounts of the Baptist War exist, literary adaptations are less well documented. Although there may be others which I have not discovered, I have found an early reference to the

²⁵ Karina Williamson comments upon two folk songs that reference the 1865 rebellion. While they were published in 1907 by William Jekyll, they are accepted as part of an oral tradition and focus “primarily on the suffering inflicted on the people of St Thomas by the punitive campaign ordered by Governor Eyre” (p.390). For a full reference please see, Karina Williamson, “Re-inventing Jamaican History: Roger Mais and George William Gordon.” *Beyond the Blood, the Beach & the Banana: New Perspectives in Caribbean Studies*, ed. Sandra Courtman, (Kingston: Ian Randle, 2004) 387-406. Print. Later adaptations include Roger Mais’s 1969 play *George William Gordon*.

rebellion in Claude McKay's early poem "George William Gordon to the Oppressed Natives." Written in 1911-12 and published in *The Daily Gleaner*, it features the stanza "Wil'erforce has set your free/ Sharpe an' Buxton worked for you/ Trample on de tyranny/Still continued by a few!" Similarly de Lisser's own 1929 novel *The White Witch of Rose Hall* features the rebellion as the backdrop to the main events. However, although the slaves are responsible for Annie's death it is not the main focus of the plot.

Therefore, in order to examine *Revenge* in conjunction with *Psyche* it is necessary to foreground the documented historical events alongside the presentation of the historical narrative, within its precise context of time. Written at the beginning and the end of his career, both *Revenge* and *Psyche* focus on the national Jamaican heroes of Paul Bogle, George William Gordon and Sam Sharpe.²⁶ The historical verisimilitude of both the Morant Bay Rebellion and the Sam Sharpe Rebellion which serve as the backdrop for each novel further encourages the interconnectedness of these two novels, while their crucial political positioning in both nineteenth-century historical Jamaica and the socio-political atmosphere of twentieth-century Jamaica allows for the (re)presentation of the historical narrative.

Written in 1919 the historical context within the novel seeks to re-tell the historical events surrounding the Morant Bay Rebellion of 1865. During this period Jamaica was ruled by a Governor appointed by the Crown along

²⁶ *Revenge* was written in 1919 at the beginning of de Lisser's career, while *Psyche* and "The Return" were the last two novels that he wrote and printed in *Planters' Punch*, prior to his death in 1944. All three national heroes are established within the National Heroes Park, have schools and government buildings named after them and feature on Jamaica's currency.

with an advisory assembly elected by the wealthier landowners. The emancipation of the slaves on the island had almost crippled the planters in view of the fact that the Maroons and black workers preferred working on the subsistence of their land, than working on the plantations. Coupled with severe droughts during 1863, 64 and 65, resentment grew against the Governor and the Crown who turned deaf ears to pleas for universal suffrage. Thousands were aroused by the orations of George William Gordon, a member of the assembly. These public orations alongside the preaching of Paul Bogle, spread resentment among the impoverished which lead to the Morant Bay rebellion in October 1865. During the conflict the rioters killed 18 people and wounded 31 including the chief magistrate of the parish and members of the vestry. The Crown Governor Eyre's response was swift. He mobilised the army, gained the support of the Maroons and proclaimed martial law, hanging the "leader" of the rebellion, George William Gordon. However, while the uprising had been quashed within a week and resulted in the deaths of approximately a dozen white men, the martial law that had been imposed upon the parish of St Thomas continued long after. Over 400 black men and women were either shot or executed. Hundreds more were openly flogged and more than 1,000 properties were destroyed. These original events of the Morant Bay Rebellion were responsible for fundamentally changing the way that Jamaica was politically governed and this event resulted in the island's two hundred year old constitution being surrendered in exchange for Crown Colony rule.

As a consequence, the year 1865 has been heralded as a turning point in Jamaican political history, marking the end of the "dark age" that had begun

with the emancipation (after apprenticeship) in 1838.²⁷ As a result of the wider powers the Governors had under Crown Colony rule, many reforms and improvements could be made which had far reaching implications. This advancement came at a great loss to the peasant population. Although initially praised for his swiftness, indignation against Governor Eyre's excessive action arose in England. By 1919, while Jamaica was still under the governance of a liberal Governor, Sir Sydney Olivier, there began to emerge a new kind of battle for a common cause — the condition of the people. Many soldiers returning from World War I were disillusioned and the economic climate was forcing many Jamaicans to seek work outside of Jamaica, namely Panama. With Britain's debts mounting after the success of winning the war, there were rumours of Jamaica being 'sold' to America, a fear which continued to fuel this sense of unease.

de Lisser's profoundly political historical novel *Revenge* (1919) examines representations of heroism through a revisioning of history which investigates the conflict between cultural duality and the need to belong. Covering the weeks before and immediately after the Morant Bay Rebellion of 1865, *Revenge* juxtaposes a provocative and highly emotive political situation with the destabilisation and disintegration of an intra-racial family, in this case, Rachel and her father Paul Bogle. A woman of colour, Rachel is the daughter of the black leader of the peasantry, Paul Bogle, Deacon of a local Baptist church and follower of the mulatto activist George William Gordon. When her father raises a call to arms for the local peasantry to confront the political

²⁷ Slavery was abolished in 1834, but as a result of the sugar industry in the colonies it was decided that the slaves should serve an "apprenticeship" period of four years. Both sides were in disagreement about this system and it eventually collapsed.

assembly in Morant Bay, Rachel (against her father's wishes) warns Dick Carlton, a member of the white plantocracy, and a sympathiser with the black struggle. Beset with enemies on either side of the divide, Carlton is unable to prevent the uprising, or save Rachel from death. Bogle, aware of who betrayed Rachel, avenges her death, before being hanged by Governor Eyre for his involvement in the Morant Bay Rebellion.

Written in 1942 when politics were again playing a pivotal role in the island's history, *Psyche* recounts the Sam Sharpe Rebellion of 1831. The original events have been credited with accelerating the abolition of slavery in Jamaica. A popularly held but mistaken belief in Jamaica was that emancipation was due to be granted in the New Year of 1832 and Sam "Daddy" Sharpe organised a peaceful strike across many Jamaican estates advocating passive resistance. He argued that all the slaves had to do was refuse to go back to the fields after their Christmas holidays. Large numbers of Jamaican slaves participated in this "strike," and while the "strike" began peacefully it soon escalated. A hardcore "regiment" of around 150 slaves who had approximately 50 guns fought hard. Although loss of life was minimal, the damage caused through fire and destruction was great. The rebellion was quickly quashed but again retribution was brutal. Hundreds of slaves were brutally flogged and Sharpe himself was hanged for his part in the revolt, leaving as his departing words: "I would rather die in yonder gallows, than live for a minute more in slavery."²⁸

²⁸ www.jamaica-gleaner.com/pages/history/story0012.html. Web. Date accessed: 21 Sept. 2007.

Between 1831 until the successful ushering in of a new constitution in 1944, Jamaica's historical and political struggles remained bloody and oppressive. These included the Morant Bay Rebellion in 1865, through to the serious economic crisis that affected the nation in the early part of the twentieth century which resulted from the countless droughts and hurricanes, which saw the destruction of crops. In addition, the high unemployment led to the mass exodus of migration to Panama at the start of the new decade, which, coupled with the Great War and the economic impact of the Great Depression towards the end of the 1920s galvanised an increased desire for nationalism as spurred on by black power leaders such as Marcus Garvey. These factors — along with the bloody riots that erupted across Jamaica in the late 1930s which allowed for the formation of labour unions and political parties founded by local black and brown Jamaicans — were ultimately successful in ushering in a new constitution in 1944. This new constitution replaced the previous constitution that had been created after the rebellion of 1865 and finally led to Jamaica's self-government and independence in 1962.

de Lisser's historical novels *Psyche* and its sequel "The Return" (re)negotiate the traditional heroic framework of cultural identity and nationalism, through the re-gendering of the main heroic character as female. Spanning a temporal scope of some thirty years, *Psyche* reassesses the historical dichotomy and reconciliation of both a mother and a daughter bearing the same name, against the background of slavery and rebellion. Captured as a slave in the 1790s, African Psyche Huntingdon is a slave and mistress to her master Charles Huntingdon, a Lord with anti-slavery

sentiments. A daughter is born whom Charles takes to England to enjoy a life not available to her in Jamaica. Returning to Jamaica twenty years later, in the concluding novel “The Return” the child Psyche has become a powerful and educated member of the aristocracy. The widow of a French Baron and the daughter of a Lord, Psyche’s social position is well established. As a result, her ancestry has never been revealed to her, and therefore in a country in which social class is founded upon the colour of one’s skin, not wealth, she is unable to understand her exclusion from Jamaican white society. Her sympathies with the slave population and her discovery of her ancestral heritage encourage her to incite and support the rebellion with Sam Sharpe. The rebellion fails and one of the casualties is her love interest, Fred O’Brian. The novel closes with Psyche taking her own life with an African potion that belonged to her mother in order that her son may inherit the estates free from any social or racial discrimination.

In order to negotiate this socio-cultural duality in both novels, through time and place, there exists within de Lisser’s historical novels a dyadic pairing of characters, one of whom is resistant to change while the other is in pursuit of progress. In *Revenge* Bogle wants to create a new community within Jamaica and advocates a war slogan of “colour for colour.” Rachel, in contrast believes “this is not Maroon country, it is Queen Victoria country, an’ it is the white people that have the law, not you” (9). She trusts in this white colonial law and therefore does not support her father and his desire to create a new community. In the same way that John Campbell naively believes his Christianity will save him from the militia in *New Day*, Rachel’s demise is as a result of her trust in

the white colonial law of Queen Victoria. While she may be content to remain within this system of colonial rule, she is unaware that her position within this structure has progressed forward and that the system she is defending is not capable of adjusting itself to recognise her new position as a free educated woman of colour. In other words, the white colonial attitudes of 1865 would not be able to accept that Rachel was anything other than inferior. These white colonial attitudes of 1919, while acknowledging that she may be free and have a level of education, would not be able to distinguish her from the peasant girls around her.

Furthermore, by employing Rachel as a naïve narrator, de Lisser is able to not only provide evidence of this progression and social mobility, but also satirically attack the colonial attitude of the twentieth century in Jamaica.²⁹ By adopting a tone of jealousy — “it is she that put him against me, but she can wait an’ see! To-day is for her, but to-morrow may be for me!” (62) — de Lisser is allowing for two different viewpoints to invade the text, which in turn might enable different audiences to reach their own conclusions. For example, the colonising class, i.e. the English audience residing in Jamaica may be able to accept that Rachel is making these remarks based upon her feelings of rejection and jealousy, while the colonised audience, i.e. the local Jamaican population may possibly be able to recognise these remarks as a growing awareness of racial segregation and exploitation. The same technique is used

²⁹ Only four of de Lisser’s 10 published novels were printed in England within de Lisser’s lifetime. *Jane’s Career* and *Susan Proudleigh* were positively reviewed within various English newspapers as set out in Chapter II of this thesis and *The White Witch of Rosehall* has never been out of print. However given the paucity of resources it has not been possible to verify whether his other novel *Under the Sun* was as popular in England. That said, given that it only ever ran to one print, it would appear that this novel was not as popular as his others. Therefore, when I am referring to the “colonising class,” I am referring to his Jamaican audience.

when de Lisser highlights the indiscriminate brutality of martial law when Rachel is captured at Stoney Gut. In *Psyche*, the racial dichotomy has traversed and it is the coloured Psyche who believes in emancipation and works with Sam Sharpe to help bring about the rebellion of 1831 and Psyche Huntingdon (the freed slave) who does not want slavery to end. Subsequently, in the same way that Rachel's death was as a result of the inability of the plantocracy to move forward, so too is Psyche Huntingdon's grief, at the loss of her daughter. Although a freed slave and a wealthy woman in her own right, the system that she is happy to exist in cannot adjust to her position and that of her daughter. Her daughter who is aware that you ultimately cannot stop progress kills herself in order that her son, when he inherits the estates in Jamaica, will be worshipped and accepted for what he is and not just for the colour of his skin. Ironically, it is the two 'brown' women (both have mixed race ancestry) who have attempted to ingratiate themselves into white society that both lose their lives. Therefore, what both these examples serve within these novels is to highlight the dis-unity of the Jamaican population. Although both Bogle and Psyche (the daughter) desire a united community and recognise the need for change, by de Lisser echoing the dis-unity of the community as evidenced between the newspapermen of the period (coloured middle class) and the black population, he is suggesting that if Jamaicans want their independence, they must first unite together as a nation and take pride in their own culture and history.

Finally and crucially, *Revenge* and *Psyche* both investigate the shifting relationships between female heroism, identity and belonging. The mixed race

female characters in both books occupy central positions as the main heroic figures within the texts, in order to raise gendered questions in relation to heroism, nationalism and the formation of cultural identity. de Lisser foregrounds these debates by creating female heroes within these historical novels that challenge the traditional gender hierarchies which sought to exclude women from the patriarchal order. As a male narrator crossing the “gender” divide, albeit from a third person perspective, he is able to gain an advantage. By cultivating temporal space and gender, de Lisser is able not only to turn these traditional representations of heroism inside out, but also to get beyond the potential socio-political censure of colonialism.

As these texts demonstrate, de Lisser continued to work within the limitations of the conventional historical novel in order to interrogate traditional representations of nationhood and heroism, as constructed around gender. The ideology of nationhood is largely dependent upon the construction of gender, nation and sexuality. Social construction theory is predicated upon the notion that gender is a social construction and that masculinity and femininity are social constructions that are encouraged within our society ranging from family dynamics to religious influences and social assumptions. Nira Yuval-Davis expands upon these social construction theories and contends that constructions of nation and nationalism as well as gender are constructed by and of each other. From a literary perspective, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, although women were seen as the symbols of nation within a geographical landscape, notions of Englishness and heroism were tied to ideas of masculinity and nationhood. Although there was

a co-existence between nationhood and womanhood solely in demographic terms, women were excluded from the patriarchal order. In support of this gender hierarchy, popular literature focused on empirical tales of discovery and conquest. Heroic qualities were associated with gendered notions of masculinity and nationhood, and representations of heroism were bound up with all that was good and noble in the originating culture, in this case, England. Women within these novels were not held within a favourable light. They were depicted as either the subservient damsels in distress or portrayed as evil witches. This inter-relation of gender and nation, provides a (re)interpretation of nation which allows de Lisser to foreground women as builders of a nation as he destabilises the traditional established paradigms that relate to nation and nationalism, specifically through the representation of the English hero.

The typical heroes of these novels were young courageous adventurers, who were daring, fearless, white and male. They were the embodiment of Englishness, displaying the qualities of an English hero that had been established during the age of imperial expansion. Predicated upon the dominant white patriarchal system of “othering,” the English hero was objective, practical, sensible, sincere and true hearted. However, according to Lukács this is an equivocal heroism in that these young men may have the “capacity for self-sacrifice” but it “never grows into a sweeping human passion” (32). Clearly, these ambivalent heroic qualities were associated with gendered notions of the inter-relationship between masculinity and nationhood. Dick Carlton embodies these traditional representations of heroism within de

Lisser's historical novel *Revenge*. Dick is "twenty-seven years of age, tall, well-set-up, with a frank, humorous, sunburnt face and kindly eyes" (1). Even though "Jamaica-born" he associates himself with his English ancestry. His workers on the estate are now employees as opposed to slaves. Dick is a fair-minded employer and has the practical intelligence to treat his workers with sympathy and respect: "I am thinking that it might be wise for those of us who are planters to show some sympathy now and then" (*Revenge* 12). This results in his workers remaining loyal to Dick even when strikes are threatened. Dick is honourable and trustworthy and maintains moral fortitude and decency. When John Solway (his neighbour) dismisses one of his workers and states that "thirty years ago he might have been flogged within an inch of his life" (11), Dick retorts that "thirty years ago is not to-day" and swiftly finds employment for the worker on his own estate. As a result Dick is shown respect and loyalty by his employees. While he may have sympathies with the peasant class, he does not openly support their cause. However, his heroic tendencies emerge when Rachel informs him of the ensuing rebellion and, in an attempt to halt the rebellion, he travels to Kingston to meet with George William Gordon. He then fearlessly journeys back into the troubles to save his fiancée and mother who are alone back at Aspley (the plantation in Morant Bay). When the rebellion is over, he leaves Jamaica and travels to England.

Being an amalgamation of two separate novels, there exists within each "book" of *Psyche* an archetypal male hero. In the first book, Charles Huntingdon fulfils the role of the fair-minded employer in that he treats all of his slaves fairly, is a good "master" and believes that slavery should come to an

end. However, in true self-sacrificial style, upon his brother's death, he has to return to England to fulfil his family duties as the next heir to the Lordship of the Huntingdon estate and leaves his lover Psyche in Jamaica, never to return. In addition, although he takes his daughter Psyche with him in order to educate her and give her opportunities unavailable to her in Jamaica, he can never reveal that he is her father, and therefore passes himself off as her uncle. Similarly in book two of *Psyche*, Fred O'Brian exhibits the same archetypal qualities. With the knowledge that Sam Sharpe is going to encourage the workers not to go back to work after the Christmas festivities, it is Psyche who decides to free all her slaves, and O'Brian has the practical intelligence to do the same. The self-sacrificing nature of O'Brian and indeed of another English gentlemen, Sir Christopher Morton, results in their self imposed mission to ride throughout the parish speaking to the white plantocracy in an attempt to prevent some of the trouble from occurring, a decision which results in their deaths as "the rebels didn't know who they were, and shot them dead" (*Psyche* 213). Similar archetypal heroes can be found through the characters of John Huntly Seymour in *Morgan's Daughter*, as well as Patrick O'Brian in "Conquest" and Mr Wentworth in "The White Maroon."

In juxtaposition to this heroism, de Lisser contests the traditional characteristics of heroines and allows the women in these novels to be more radically and transgressively heroic. Kaplan suggests that traditionally heroines of historical fiction served two purposes. The first was to be the damsel in distress in need of rescue and the other was for the "performance of masculinity" to be "examine[d] through her eyes" (*Anarchy* 93). It is through

Joyce's "eyes" that the masculine performances of Dick and John are brought to the reader's attention and the colonial stereotypes are maintained as evidenced through her visual "sighting" of Paul Bogle "he turned his face upwards, and Joyce could see the whites of his eyeballs staring at the blackness above" (40). The kidnapping of Joyce by John Solway in *Revenge* parallels the kidnap plot in *Ivanhoe*, and confirms Joyce as a "damsel in distress" who needs to be rescued. While the reasons behind the kidnappings may be different, de Lisser's imitation of this narrative event adheres to the interconnectedness of author, reader and fictional characters across these works. The implication of both events within their respective novels is to exemplify both Rowena and Joyce as the proverbial damsel in distress who "were prisoners and ignorant of their destination, ignorant of their fate, and fearing the worst" (86). However, of more significance in *Revenge*, this device is used to enable Joyce to reclaim Solway as an (albeit misguided) English "hero" by her recognition that his kidnapping of her, was his way of "saving" her (90). Once again, in the context of repositioning women even within these traditional tropes it is Joyce who describes the female hero of the novel, Rachel Bogle. She describes Rachel as "a strong young woman physically, and healthy; her voice...had taken on a ring of determination that showed she was strong in character...she wore shoes...and her clothes were neat and clean" (7).

Where this repositioning of the traditional female is interesting, of more significance is the coming to consciousness of de Lisser's "heroines" in that Rachel and Psyche are "awakened" to the white social hierarchy surrounding them. Erich Neumann contends that in the myth "Psyche and Cupid" the

awakening of Psyche is symbolic of the coming to consciousness of the female psyche, that is to say when a woman for the first time emerges from the darkness of the unconscious into the light of a conscious being. de Lisser's interest in the female psyche first took form in his earlier novels *Jane's Career* and *Susan Proudleigh*; therefore, it is no surprise that he returns to this concept in his penultimate novels.

To summarise this myth briefly, Psyche is a beautiful mortal woman who is worshipped by many men. As a result Aphrodite becomes enraged and coerces her son Eros to make her fall in love with a monster. Eros falls in love with her himself and they enjoy a happy union in paradise, on the understanding that he remains invisible to her. Psyche's sisters persuade her that she is married to a monster and encourage her to look upon her husband and kill him. On the night of his planned death, Psyche lights a lamp and armed with a knife she looks upon her husband and realises that he is a God, not a monster. Scratched by one of his arrows, Psyche is awakened and falls in love with love. While showering him with kisses, she drops some oil on his shoulder wounding him. This causes him to awake and in the same moment that she "consciously" falls in love with him, she loses him. She begins to hunt for him and begs Aphrodite to help her. Aphrodite sets her four impossible tasks which the natural world help her to overcome including entering the underworld to bring back some beauty for Aphrodite. Psyche opens the box to take some of the beauty for her and falls into a deep sleep. Eros wipes the sleep from her eyes and begs Zeus to help them. Zeus agrees by making Psyche immortal and they marry producing a child called Joy.

In the mythological tale, Psyche's "seeing," i.e., coming to consciousness, occurs when she moves from the darkness of the unknowing, into the light of knowledge, that is to say consciousness. In *Psyche*, Psyche's "coming to consciousness" is a racial awakening of consciousness and is examined through the recognition and "seeing" of her relationship with Fred O'Brian in Chapter 16, "Dregs of Bitterness." After he protests his love, she replies, "Do you want to marry me, Fred?" (130) His response to this question is to be "dumbfounded" and become evasive. However, it is de Lisser's description of her actions that follow this encounter that is the most revealing:

Her eyes were fixed on him as though they would
pierce to the very core of his thought...the smouldering
fire again burned in her eyes...she realised now that she
was not a white woman. (130)

Her displacement from being objectified by Fred to her empowerment to be able to fix him with eyes that "pierce to the very core of his thought" allows for her to begin her journey into the light as made possible by her recognition that "she was not a white woman." Although her "sight" is still blurred by the implications of this revelation, her journey into an awakening of racial consciousness has begun. When the issue of marriage is raised again two pages later her racial awakening is complete: "I was ignorant of it even two weeks ago, but enlightenment has come in the meantime, come in a flood" (132). For Rachel, she "awakens" to the historical reality of her situation by

realising “they were a proud overbearing lot, these white people, treating the natives as they would the dirt beneath their feet” (61). Although this “coming to consciousness” brings about feelings of resentment, she still retains her heroic characteristics and warns Dick of the impending rebellion, in an attempt to thwart it.

While de Lisser presents and then (re)presents these traditional heroes and heroines within an established literary framework, he further problematises these tropes with the inclusion of black Jamaican heroes. Although feminist research has (re)covered women within the framework of nationalism, there is little analysis of how men are equally constructed. If Caribbean nationalism developed as a reaction to British imperialism which sought to feminise and disempower men, then this sense of self-determination is explored through the positive representations that de Lisser employs of Paul Bogle and George William Gordon. They display the same heroic qualities as their white masculine counterparts, and share equal positioning within *Revenge*. de Lisser’s positive portrayal of these national heroes as opposed to their traditional representations as agitators and “rabble rousers,” is in reaction to the powerlessness experienced by black and coloured Caribbean men within British Imperialism. Through an interrogation of normative codes vis-à-vis race and masculinity, Bogle is described as “a true leader,” and a “man amongst men.” Gordon for his part is recognised as “an orator” who “was worshiped by the common people” and “cursed by the upper classes” as a result of his leading the country down the “slippery path of revolution” (21). In *Psyche*, Sam Sharpe is portrayed as “an honest man” who “would die bravely” (142).

The historical consensus, which de Lisser is keen to emphasise, is that Paul Bogle was not a “savage,” but a well-educated and deeply religious man who believed in the freedom of his people.

While historical accounts differ over whether there was a relationship between Bogle and Gordon, de Lisser links them together. de Lisser acknowledges that Gordon was the initial supporter of the black masses — “I have had the whole burden of the fight up to now, you know” (21) — but that Bogle supported and later joined Gordon in his desire to seek a better future for the workers. Although Gordon attacked from a political position, Bogle wanted to secure a more direct and immediate action. While their tactics may have been very different, they were united in the struggle together. Evidence that the “wise knew that the people were discontented” is clearly set out in the opening chapter of Book Two, entitled “A Meeting of Heroes.” de Lisser sets out for the reader the socio-political situation of not only the 1860s, but also the 1920s:

The poverty was intense, the ex-slave owner stubbornly withheld the land from the people, in the petty courts the peasant had little hope of justice, and thought and felt that only through a crisis could reform be effected.
(43)

This recognition of the ongoing inequalities in living and working conditions suggest the reasons for the continued unrest in Jamaica. The continued desire for national independence is easier to understand in a country

where the “poverty was intense.” Equally, the descriptions in *Revenge* of the heat of the worker’s village and the dusty roads, as set alongside the coolness of the plantation houses, metaphorically signify the political dichotomy of the oppressed and the oppressor. Furthermore, the realistic attention to detail in the portrayal of the peasant village in Chapter III, “Rachel and Raines,” where the “poverty stood confessed,” highlights not only the children who are dying, but also the appalling social and “working” conditions of the black labourers (there is very little work available). These literary descriptions serve to foreground and inject a level of historical realism, as well as to encourage an interest in the class and racial struggles. Finally, the re-creation of the peasant community as depicted in the chapter “Stoney Gut” in *Revenge* encourages the reader to understand the social and human motives of Paul Bogle. By focusing on the role of the reader, de Lisser confirms his awareness of the contradictions that exist within Jamaican society. Through the humanisation of these characters that shifts away from the negative historical portrayals that are normally prescribed as he ensures that the reader is able to empathise with and understand the local populations’ need to have greater control over their lives.

Furthermore, by locating *Revenge* and *Psyche* in the history of nineteenth century Jamaica, and returning the reader to a time of slavery, de Lisser is able to raise issues of cultural duality without compromising his literary colonial bonds, thereby offering an opportunity for Jamaicans to formulate an identity that is “rooted” within and “originates” from *their*

island.³⁰ Therefore, having written “Anacanoa” five years earlier (1937), which encouraged Jamaicans to connect with their indigenous ancestors, *their* roots and together form a feeling of nationalism, it is not surprising that *Psyche* is supporting and indeed encouraging a rebellion. *Psyche*’s main aim is to encourage passive resistance in the wake of the violent clashes in order to awaken a feeling of nationalism through the discovery, or reminder, of Jamaican roots and culture. Slavery, miscegenation and the manumission of illegitimate children have resulted in the racial divide that exists in Jamaica, and *Psyche* serves to remind the entire race of these struggles and this history. Mervyn Alleyne argues that “culture is a continuum of variation” (7), and in this respect *Psyche* functions as a literary reminder that all Jamaicans have developed from similar cultures and are therefore “one” people. This blending of diasporic cultures points to de Lisser’s determination to encourage the reader to interpret the heroes of his historical novels as the main female protagonist, i.e., the female hero.

Recurring representations of female heroes in de Lisser’s historical novels seek to deconstruct the established literary hegemonies set out in the popular literature of the period. From the Byronic female heroes of Elizabeth in *Morgan’s Daughter*, through to the tragic female heroes of Rachel in *Revenge*, *Psyche* in *Psyche* and Anacanoa in “Anacanoa” and finally the traditional female heroes and anti-female heroes of Bridget and Maria in “Conquest” and “The White Maroon,” as well as Annie Palmer and Millicent in *The White Witch of Rosehall*, without exception, all his main female protagonists exhibit

³⁰ My use of the words “colonial bonds” is to highlight the “bonds” by which de Lisser was bound in a literary sense, highlighting the restrictive literary space in which he was forced to pen his own “colonised literature.”

the heroic characteristics as defined earlier. So what do I mean by female heroes? Surely these central female protagonists can be referred to as heroines? Why is there a need to separate and define them as female *heroes* and therefore complicate and (re)negotiate a masculine noun? The answer is simple. These women are not heroines in the traditional sense set out during this period of examination. They are not “damsels in distress.” Nor are they the “eyes” through which masculinity is performed as suggested by Kaplan earlier in this chapter. de Lisser’s main female protagonists exhibit the heroic qualities normally associated with the traditional masculine hero. By (re)negotiating the masculine noun, I am creating visually and linguistically what de Lisser is attempting in literary and metaphorical terms. These female heroes, if male, would not only be the “true” heroes of the novel, but they would also embody all the gendered connotations that the traditional representations of heroes and heroism imply, i.e., masculinity and nationhood. Therefore, by creating female heroes that display these “masculine” qualities, they are not a female equivalent, but a female *equal*. As female heroes, they not only interconnect the relationship between womanhood and nationhood, but they also challenge gendered hierarchies of nation by highlighting that they are not necessarily the “inferior” gender. This in turn implies that the colonised country is not necessarily any more “inferior” to the dominant country that is controlling it, and de Lisser is keen to establish his desire for an independent national identity. His dedication in *Revenge* refers to “*our* Island’s Story” (my emphasis). Similarly the original introduction relating to “Anacanoa” in *Planters’ Punch* refers to “A Story of Aboriginal Jamaica,” thus once again

placing the emphasis on Jamaica, i.e., the colonial culture as an independent nation possessing an indigenous heritage.

Rachel and Psyche both embody ideologies of nationalism and identity outside of the traditional tropes and their names continue to highlight the interconnection between women and nation. E. Renan suggests that “a nation is a soul, a spiritual principle” (19), and although Psyche’s name in Greek mythology literally means “butterfly,” of more significance is the knowledge that she was deemed to be the deity of the human soul. Rachel’s name on the other hand is synonymous with nationhood and symbolises national identity. In biblical terms, Rachel and her sister Leah are referred to as the women who gave birth to a nation, in that between them they formed the 12 tribes of Israel whom Moses frees from Egypt and from whom Jesus is descended.³¹ Rachel was referred to in Easton’s Bible Dictionary as “the somewhat petulant, peevish, and self-willed though beautiful younger daughter” of Laban (Genesis 29:6, 28). In *Revenge*, Rachel is the daughter of Paul Bogle who himself can be seen as a metaphorical Moses leading his people to freedom, with references to tabernacles, “slender wands” and servitude (“We are the oppressed” (40)). Rachel is described as “comely enough,” and the characteristics displayed by her throughout the text highlight her as “petulant, peevish and self-willed.”

Both Psyche’s and Rachel’s ancestries are challenged and the complexities of cultural dualism are explored through their characters. Rachel is the non-sexual vessel within which both the dominant and suppressed

³¹ Jesus was descended from the Judah tribe. Judah was Leah’s fourth son with Jacob.

cultures culminate, interlocking the relationship between women, identity and nationhood. Through her interconnection with Rebecca, (the Jewess in *Ivanhoe*), Rachel is able to explore the position of the “other” and her need for a cultural identity and a sense of belonging. Her search for a cultural identity and desire to belong are juxtaposed against the ideology of nationalism through the textual representation of *Ivanhoe*. However, as *Ivanhoe*’s equal in *Revenge*, Rachel challenges this gendered discourse of nationalism. Both Rachel and *Ivanhoe* are “disinherited” and in the same way that *Ivanhoe* is torn between his Saxon blood and his Norman loyalties towards Richard, Rachel is torn between the blood of her people (“blood for blood” (28)) and her loyalties towards Richard “Dick” Carlton. Finally, although Rachel is no “ordinary peasant girl” (7) in that she is educated, “strong in character” (7) and fiercely independent — “I am my own woman” (55) — she only ever speaks in local dialect. This use of Jamaican dialect in direct opposition to Standard English clearly indicates that de Lisser may have been advocating a distinct Jamaican identity.

Rachel and Rebecca demonstrate no sense of belonging to the communities that they inhabit. Rachel has rejected her culture in favour of social mobility: “you go to school and you believe everybody who can’t read and write is foolish” (8). She is also of mixed-race heritage in that “she had inherited the strain of white blood” (28). As a result of not belonging, both Rachel and Rebecca are able to recognise the ways in which the dominant culture is economically dependent upon the people that they “despise and persecute.” For Rebecca, the oppression by the dominant culture of the

“Gentiles” upon the “dispersed children of Zion” is based upon differences in culture and religion and Rebecca accepts that the dependency of this fragile relationship is predicated upon the wealth of the “children of Zion,” to aid the “cruel and oppressive” Gentiles in their wars (Scott 97). However for Rachel, it is her recognition that this dependency goes beyond the obvious colour divide and therefore her subsequent rejection of this co-dependent relationship and her social awakening in terms of racial positioning — “because we are black we don’t count” — injects a tone of rebellious independence into the text.

By mimicking the same rallying cry of Rebecca, but through Rachel, de Lisser is able to revise the intended meaning, transporting it from a religious context into a socio-cultural context. Unlike the fragile relationship between the Gentiles and the Jews which is formed with mutual benefits on both sides — the Gentiles use the wealth of the Jews; the Jews live in England in peace — the relationship between the dominant culture and the black population is not mutually beneficial: “we are to work for them, an’ them is to get all the benefit.” When placed together these insights — as expressed by a female voice — highlight the dichotomous relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed and openly challenge the established arguments advocating colonial rule. Through the recognition that “we are like the herb which flourisheth most when it is most trampled” (Scott 97), comes the foresight that “to-day is for her, but to-morrow may be for me!” (62), suggesting that the population of the masses will continue to grow and flourish even while oppressed.

Although both *Revenge* and *Psyche* are historical novels and both Rachel and Psyche, as I have suggested, are the heroes of the novels, as women they retain their womanhood and therefore are assimilated with the tragic flaws of female heroines and it is their “tragic flaws” of displaced pride and self-confidence coupled with their passive adoption of the dominant culture that are their downfall within this context. Equally, it is their humiliation and consequent self-revelation of their own identities that give them their strength. Both Rachel and Psyche recognise that their native heritage and own identities exist in juxtaposition to the “white” people, and it is through these awakenings of self-knowledge that a revisioning of culture and history can occur.

Creating female heroes who are tragically flawed is a skilful ploy on de Lisser’s part for a number of reasons. Firstly, the trope of the tragic hero as a literary device elicits an emotional and sympathetic response from the reader. The death of the tragic female heroes leaves the reader dislocated from the expected happy ending. Although both novels end with a level of closure in that Joyce and Dick sail to England and Psyche dies of a broken heart, both endings are over-shadowed by the lingering memory of the female heroes’ recent demise and this in turn encourages readers to question their feelings about what has happened in relation to their expectations. Finally, the cathartic effect of tragedy ensures that once “the boil has been lanced” the balance is once more restored, which allows de Lisser to remain within the conventions of the historical novel.

Finally, just as in life, Rachel and Psyche's deaths seek to (re)negotiate the gendered assumptions of nationhood and recognise the significance of women as builders of a nation, thereby inviting a comparison with Wilson Harris's notion of a "death of principle" which he stresses as:

the obscure death of a tribal head, of an identity, an entity, the death of god (in self-conscious terms): the obscure mutilation and sacrifice of something precious out of which grows a new configurative feeling, diversity and unity. (*Tradition* 62)

In other words, Rachel and Psyche's deaths are both metaphorically and imaginatively a death of the past. But it is through their self-sacrificial and violent deaths that a sense of identity and belonging can be achieved. By contesting the established hegemonic literary traditions and challenging the gender hierarchies of nation and nationhood de Lisser was able to create a cultural identity that blended the diasporic cultures of the local population and instilled a sense of national identity and belonging. As a consequence, Rachel and Psyche's deaths symbolically and metaphorically foreground the significance of women in relation to the creation of a national identity, through not only the established assumptions of 'mother earth', but also through the (re)gendering of the English hero.

Therefore, to summarise, this chapter began with the question as to why de Lisser wrote historical novels. From the discussion of the evidence, it seems

clear that de Lisser wrote historical novels in an attempt to create a national Jamaican literature which reflected Jamaica's distinctive identity. The recognition that historical novels were seen as a more middlebrow form of literature enabled de Lisser to inject an amount of historical realism into Jamaica's recorded history, which appealed to the more middle class reader. For de Lisser, the emerging middle class — which included Jamaican whites as well as the increasingly literate brown and black population — were enthusiastic in promoting an independent Jamaican narrative. As Edmondson attests, they wanted “their own story” (*Middlebrow Culture* 27). Therefore, with the ability to bring to life these past heroes, alongside its appeal for a national independence, de Lisser saw the value in writing historical novels and used them as vehicles to create a national literature that was written by Jamaicans, for Jamaicans. By writing about and featuring Jamaican national heroes or famous folk legends, de Lisser was able to instil a sense of cultural pride and nationalism that straddled the complete social strata of the Jamaican population and encouraged *all* Jamaicans to take pride in “their story.”

CHAPTER IV

Race, Resistance and the Reclamation of Three-finger'd Jack

As evidenced in the previous chapter, de Lisser's writing style enabled him to successfully represent local Jamaican historical events, heroes or folk legends within the historical narrative and by combining these local heroes into his local literature, he was able to explore alternative histories within the same framework. I have already suggested that de Lisser's historical novels fell within two distinct categories: those of the romantic adventure and those that sought to reclaim important historical events in Jamaican history. Although de Lisser wrote a number of novels that featured some of Jamaica's historical national heroes, a selection of which have been examined in Chapters I and III of this thesis, the focal point for the following two chapters are de Lisser's historical novels of "romantic adventure." Reviving the two most widely recognised Jamaican folk legends of Three-finger'd Jack and Annie Palmer of Rosehall respectively, the following two chapters investigate the importance of historiography and the power of imaginative literature in two of his novels, *Morgan's Daughter* and *The White Witch of Rosehall*, through the lens of historical consciousness and the folk imagination.

The adaptability of folk traditions and oral literature ensure its survival and therefore working within the parameters of how women are represented within oral Caribbean literature, the following two chapters examine how de Lisser negotiates and portrays historical folk legends to create a national

Jamaican narrative. These female centric novels were published in consecutive years in *Planters' Punch*. Although *The White Witch of Rosehall* has become one of the most popular Caribbean novels of all time, by continuing to outsell contemporary Caribbean authors, *Morgan's Daughter*, although still in print, has suffered from widespread neglect.

Women in Caribbean oral literature according to Carol Boyle Davis are portrayed in a negative light. Davis concedes that oral literature has received little scholarly attention despite its importance as “the literature of the majority of the people” (168) and her paper “‘Woman Is A Nation...’ Women in Caribbean Oral Literature” goes some way to right this balance. Although her thesis covers proverbs, folktales and calypso, it is her insights into the folktales that are most relevant to this study. Davies draws the conclusion that as most oral literature was ancestrally masculine, the negative imagery of women in Caribbean oral literature was used as a device to maintain male superiority. The need to “put the woman in her place,” became necessary as a trope to contain women on the grounds that if a woman was able to improve her situation, she would destabilise a man’s position and therefore became “deadly” to men more generally. As a result, women within oral literature were witch-spouses, gullible, dumb victims or murderous barbarians. Alternatively, they were terrifying creatures, such as soucouyants or Old Higes, white women who sucked the blood out of unsuspecting victims. While this “white lady,” or vampire was “clearly symbolic of society’s response to slavery and racism” (175), it is the “legendary stories” that provide “the only avenue for the portrayal of heroic women” (170). These two contrasting positions of the

“heroic woman” and vampirish “white lady” offer a useful starting point for examining de Lisser’s representation of women in folk legends over the following two chapters.

This chapter will focus upon the portrayal of the heroic woman. Citing a story concerning one of Captain Henry Morgan’s daughters and a character known as “Nine-Finger Jack,” the narrative sets out the nameless daughter’s mixed-race heritage, her love affair with “Nine-Finger Jack” and her ultimate heroic death at his side. Replicating this story, de Lisser not only gives the daughter a name, Elizabeth, but also recreates her as a strong Jamaican hero who yearns for an independent Jamaica: “Why should not Jamaica also be free?” (*Morgan’s Daughter* 96) This central positioning of Elizabeth, whose blood runs thick with the pride of her descendant Henry Morgan, coupled with the “Maroon blood in her veins” (148), allows for a Jamaican identity to be constructed through the lens of racial identity and female empowerment. In addition, this chapter will also investigate de Lisser’s reclamation of the legendary folk hero cited within the folk story as “Nine-Finger Jack,” but recognised throughout Jamaica and globally as Three-finger’d Jack.³² Through the recovery and (re)telling of these folk legends, de Lisser is allowing for the folk imagination to find a voice within literary discourse. Therefore tracing the historiography of Three-finger’d Jack within English culture, alongside examinations into the commodification of this folk legend within various narrative formats is essential in order to understand the significance of de

³² Darryl Dance, *Folklore from Contemporary JAMAICANS*, (Knoxville: Tennessee UP, 1985) 96-97. Print. For ease of reference the folklore is attached as Appendix I of this thesis. It is accepted that the character “Nine-Finger Jack” referred to in this folk story and the legendary “Three-finger’d Jack” are the same person. Therefore, for the remainder of this chapter I shall continue with the more recognised character Three-finger’d Jack.

Lisser's attempt to recover Jack as a symbol of national culture by returning him to his Jamaican roots.

As already suggested, de Lisser was in a powerful position to recognise literary trends and adopt or even adapt them to his own advantage. He would have been aware that dominant trends within popular fiction were reviving conventions of the romance and the adventure tale which led to an exoticisation of the "other" and an endorsement of colonialism. Clearly the popularity of such fiction was beginning to fulfil an important cultural role in the emergence of a middle class, and although Edmondson recognises the significance of the romance novel in establishing a national literature, she is also aware of the problem that arose from this literature. According to Edmondson the middle classes saw themselves as "culturally rootless" (*Middlebrow Culture* 9). Predicated upon the concept that no pre-colonial culture remained, creolisation therefore began at the point of colonialism and the emerging middle class wanted their own Jamaican narrative. For de Lisser, racial pride was important when constructing a national identity and this concept of the "hybridity" of nationhood — which is reflected in Elizabeth's significant fusion of black and white blood — reinforces my position that he foregrounds women within his narratives to serve as a symbolic representation of Jamaica as a nation. By highlighting the hybridity of nationhood through Elizabeth's mixed blood, he is able to destabilise the colonial literary and racial stereotypes and (re)interpret racial identity through the consolidation of a brown cultural consciousness that is proud of a "mixed" heritage.

Significantly de Lisser saw the “rootedness” of Jamaica’s distinctive identity through her rich oral literary past of folk legends and myths. Therefore, in an attempt to provide “roots” to his “culturally rootless” middle class readership, he appropriated a number of folk legends and myths in order to develop an independent Jamaican narrative. As Patrick Taylor argues:

cultural traditions provide meaningful patterns through which members of a community can understand themselves and their world. Stories, legends, myths, history itself, all are narrative patterns by means of which people locate themselves in society. (xi)

de Lisser recognised that these “stories, legends” and “myths” were instrumental in constructing a national identity. Furthermore, his sense of responsibility towards his community as I have already suggested in the introduction to this thesis, compelled de Lisser to communicate with the community around him and help them to understand “themselves and their world.” Therefore de Lisser drew upon the cultural traditions of the “folk” in an effort to produce a Jamaican narrative that not only (re)addressed Jamaica’s heavily biased colonial history, but also sought to reflect Jamaica’s distinctive identity.

Working within the parameters of the sentimental narrative genre, *Morgan’s Daughter* is set in the pre-emancipation society of 1780. The narrative returns to the audiences’ historical consciousness the legendary folk

heroes Three-finger'd Jack and Henry Morgan, while restoring for the first time from oral history, Henry's heroic daughter.³³ The issues surrounding colonialism and slavery hover beneath the surface of this novel whose main focus is upon the relationship between Elizabeth Morgan, a descendant from Henry Morgan, and John Huntly Seymour, an English attorney fleeing from English justice who impersonates the notorious runaway slave and highwayman known as Three-finger'd Jack. In spite of her famous ancestry, which includes British origins, Elizabeth, a beautiful woman of substantial wealth, is excluded from Jamaican society due to her racial heritage. She falls in love with John and, with the promise of marriage, begins to put into action her plans for a slave revolt which are thwarted when an earthquake rips the country apart. A love triangle develops in the latter part of the novel and when John's true intentions are exposed, Elizabeth informs the authorities of his duplicity. Unable to prevent the course of events that she has put into action, the novel concludes with both Elizabeth and John choosing to die a heroic death together.

Published the year after John Steinbeck's 1929 historical fiction *Cup of Gold*, a fictional account of the life of Henry Morgan from his childhood in Wales through to his death in 1688, it is possible that de Lisser published *Morgan's Daughter* the following year to "cash in" on a popular subject matter and to relocate the legend of Henry Morgan (and his descendants) into a Jamaican literary framework. The advertisement for *Planters' Punch* in December 1930 in *The Daily Gleaner* commented upon *Morgan's Daughter* as

³³ Originally from Wales, Henry Morgan first found fame and notoriety as a vicious pirate. He was Lieutenant Governor of Jamaica from 1675-1681. Morgan died in 1688 and was buried on Port Royal which sank into the sea following an earthquake in 1692.

“a full length novel in which a fascinating story of old Jamaica life is unfolded” (30 Dec. 1930: 7), thereby reclaiming Morgan’s Jamaican heritage. Although de Lisser published the novel in *Planters’ Punch* for the year 1930-31, it was not published in book format in England until 1953.

The first publication of *Morgan’s Daughter* in book form was in 1953 in London when it was clearly designed to target readers of “romantic” fiction. Reviewing it in *Public Opinion* published on the 15 August 1953 with the heading “Buccaneer Blood,” Clinton V. Black gives a favourable account of *Morgan’s Daughter*. Confirming the authentic and interesting historical backdrop of the 1780s, Black also suggests that its focus is Elizabeth’s dream of “an independent Jamaica led to nationhood by slave and Maroon revolt” (5). Commenting upon de Lisser’s writing style, he writes that it “is a rattling good tale...told with speed and pace” (5), but recognises that “although the setting is the late 18th century, ‘Morgan’s Daughter’ is more Victorian in flavour, otherwise it achieves what it sets out to be and do” (5).

Published for two different audiences at two very different periods in time, it is difficult to reconcile de Lisser’s intention in publishing *Morgan’s Daughter* in 1930s Jamaica as a reclamation of folk legends and a Jamaican narrative, against the British publishers, Ernest Benn’s obvious intention to publish a historical romance, located within the exotics of the Caribbean. Even though Black confirms de Lisser’s purpose was to produce a narrative that dreams of “an independent Jamaica led to nationhood by slave and Maroon revolt” (5), it is clear from his book review and the salacious front cover that

from the outset this novel was marketed as a “bodice ripper” romantic novel. de Lisser died in 1944 and therefore never saw this book or its cover in print. However, from the way that de Lisser sets out to unpack the ambiguities surrounding the construction and deconstruction of racial stereotypes within this narrative, it is highly debatable whether de Lisser would have wanted the commodification of his central characters and their racial identities singled out so specifically and so quickly at the beginning of the text.³⁴ Therefore, it is my opinion that de Lisser would never have advocated such a sensational front cover to adorn his narrative that reclaimed a national Jamaican folk legend. As a result, this front cover serves as another example of the ways in which de Lisser’s novels are misrepresented and positioned as undeserving of scholarly attention.

The cover features John “Jack” and Elizabeth in the foreground with a white “plantation” house and palm trees in the background all which immediately lends itself to the exotic. Elizabeth is portrayed as the stereotypical “West Indian mulatto” — a highly sexed and sensual coloured woman — strikingly beautiful with dark flowing hair and red lips who fulfils not only the idea of the exotic, but also of sensuality, as further compounded by her white dress. The low-cut bodice not only highlights this sensuality through the exposing of her upper breasts, but also the whiteness of the cloth emphasises her skin tone. She is depicted pointing a gun at Jack. The reader thus gets the sense of excitement and adventure as this is a woman who is not afraid to shoot a man, so there is also the element of mystery as the reader

³⁴ I have seen the original version in *Planters’ Punch*, and it is designed in black and white script with no illustrations. See Appendix II of this thesis.

wants to know why. The curiosity of the reader is piqued by this question along with the identity of the man featured. Immediately upon looking at John “Jack” the reader sees that he is dark skinned. However, at the same time as the reader’s mind is reaching the conclusion that if he is dark-skinned, he must therefore be black, the other signifiers confirming racial stereotypes are absent. He has straight hair and has been drawn in a semi-profile that serves to highlight his archetypically European features that includes both narrow lips and an aquiline nose. His stature and physique further contradict his skin colouring as does his clothing in that he is not dressed in the coarse clothing that would have been given to a slave. His jacket appears to be velvet with gold appliqué and a complete set of buttons. His waist jacket is without damage and his neckerchief is absent of any wear or fraying. The tantalising information on the back cover (of the 1953 London edition) and on the inside cover of the 1980 (Caribbean) edition further captivates the reader into believing that this is going to be a daring romantic swashbuckling adventure, with the promise of highway men, pirate ancestry and the exotic. The powerful action lies in the suspense throughout the novel regarding whether Captain Thornton will realise who John “Jack” is, as well as the proposed rebellion and the climatic final scene. London audiences would have been familiar with Jamaica and its history, so would understand the references to Henry Morgan and Three-finger’d Jack as well as the racial stereotypes put forward on both the front cover and in the paratext.

de Lisser was profoundly aware of the importance of the relationship between his novels and his readership. While the actions of the characters

move the novel forward and allow for continuing fluidity, and their psychological insights reflect the socio-political complexities of a contemporaneous Jamaica, it is the natural disasters that serve a dual purpose of resistance and recovery. Chapters 14 and 15 highlight the natural disasters of a hurricane and earthquake, respectively. The damage from the earthquake results in the death of a vicious slaveholder Hamilton as his house is crashed “to pieces as its foundations gave way on every side” (171). From a position of resistance, this earthquake metaphorically represents a yearning for a new Jamaica, through the washing away of old colonial rule. The knowledge that the “foundations” of his house “gave way on every side,” indicates that the foundations of colonial rule will eventually collapse. From a position of recovery, the hurricane in *Morgan’s Daughter* is the reclamation of an oral folk legend of Plato the Wizard. According to Matthew Gregory Lewis, Plato the Wizard was an Obeahman who, in 1780, pronounced a curse on Jamaica, predicting that his death would be avenged by a terrible storm (90). Furthermore, by placing the 1907 earthquake over the 1780 hurricane, de Lisser injects a level of historical reality to the text that colonial readers can recognise and with which they can empathise. de Lisser was keen to enlist the reader’s sympathy and loyalty, especially in relation to his main protagonist Elizabeth. For it is through Elizabeth that de Lisser attempts to recover a national culture and reaffirm the matriarchy of nationhood. By foregrounding Elizabeth as a strong female hero who symbolises Jamaican independence, de Lisser is able to destabilise claims of white colonial superiority.

Elizabeth is the collective voice for the disenfranchisement of the Jamaican people, and de Lisser's appropriation of her cultural heroic past highlights the initial beginnings of Jamaican national pride. It is important for de Lisser to specify that she is proud of her ancestry to the point that she literally wears the white and maroon blood of her ancestry: "a white satin flounced skirt reached to her ankles, and on her feet were white satin shoes. Over the skirt was a huge pannier bodice, maroon in colour" (77). This pride in her ancestry is further translated through her proud recognition of her patriarchal heritage — "Henry Morgan feared neither God nor man nor the devil, and I am his child" (34) — and her matriarchal lineage to the Maroons, who are "the free people of the Jamaica hills" (96). This pride in her racial heritage foregrounds the notion that although Elizabeth does not desire to be white in her own country, she does however desire to be treated as an equal. Although she feels Jamaica is an "accursed country," it is still her "native country," and her outburst at calling it "accursed" is projected more out of frustration for her social exclusion due to her mixed race heritage as opposed to her hatred for her country *per se*. She is aware that even though she has returned from England "far better educated than any of them, [the English women], beautiful...proud, ambitious, able; but all that would count for nothing, unless, perhaps, for a disability" (110). This "awakening" is the same coming to consciousness that both Rachel and Psyche experienced in the previous chapter and highlights the dictates of colonialism in that she is (dis)abled from her country. Her intelligence becomes a (dis)ability in that she is awakened to the socio-political conditions surrounding her, but remains debilitated by colonial bonds.

As a satirical writer, de Lisser worked within and imitated the same imperial paradigms of colonial discourse that also sought to restrict him. Using the framework of the sentimental narrative to popularise his fiction and market it to a wider audience, de Lisser embarks upon an investigation into how the performance of race and the racial body can be used to intersect and reconcile the spheres of femininity and nation, which not only empowers women but also allows their bodies to symbolise Jamaica as a nation. David Krasner suggests that:

performance arose as a significant means of communication. It was not a 'natural' phenomenon, but one born from social conditions that made performing imperative for survival. (11)

Therefore, if performance can be seen as a way of communicating, then I would suggest that de Lisser is using the "language" of performance to illustrate visually what cannot be said orally. Performance provides a creative and liberated forum within which to address taboo subjects, and therefore in the same way that Elizabeth is the collective voice of the disenfranchised through her cultural identity, de Lisser examines how Elizabeth's racial identity and subsequent performance of that identity allows for a form of resistance towards colonial rule to pervade the text. Using the imitation of colonial stereotypes, de Lisser constructs Elizabeth's racial identity through the inter- and intra-racial prejudices that encourage the use of these colonial

stereotypes and hierarchical racism. By converging these notions of identity through the literary framework of the sentimental novel, de Lisser is allowing for a relationship to be established between the text and the society that he is attempting to reach.

Since its inception in the late eighteenth century, the sentimental novel has been noted for its liberal and humanitarian influences and has its historical roots in European literature. The narrative form was mainly written for a white middle class audience and was not afraid to court public controversies, thereby seeking to champion the weak and outcast in society in order to extract sympathy from its readership, and articulate relevant issues pertaining to contemporary society. Therefore, within this wider context of the socio-political polemics facing twentieth-century Jamaica, Elizabeth is the symbolic representation of the colonised Jamaica. de Lisser extrapolates notions of identity beyond race by juxtaposing her “performance” against the “performance” of Captain Thornton, (who symbolises the coloniser England) and highlights how Elizabeth/Jamaica is able to use her own *Jamaican* identity to resist and survive not only the exploitation of colonial slavery but also to raise awareness and provoke political, social and moral change.

Stylisation of the racial body began as early as the fifteenth century when exploration to the New World brought Europeans into contact for the first time with indigenous peoples. Hulme suggests that even at this point in history, the indigenous population “adapted to peasant life under Spanish control” and as a result were re-created into versions that were acceptable to

the “conquerors” (“Survival and Invention” 297). Hulme continues to stress that ethnic identities were negotiated and constructed “through the interplay of self-knowledge and communal understandings” (“Survival and Invention” 297). In other words, the indigenous population learnt to adapt and construct their “ethnic identities” in order to survive. Judith Butler strengthens this notion that race and gender are socially constructed in her book *Gender Trouble* and further suggests that these constructions of identity are performances that enable individuals to fit into a hegemonic society. In terms of de Lisser’s “construction” of Elizabeth’s racial identity, her racial identity begins from a position of ambiguity as it is not disclosed from the outset of the novel. Other than the surreptitious implication that something is amiss — “the woman noticed with a flare of anger that he showed her no courtesy whatever, and well she knew the reason” (19) — the reason is not immediately vouchsafed and her heritage “I am Elizabeth Morgan” (22) alongside her strong personality are revealed before her racial identity. It is not until some twenty five pages into the novel that Elizabeth’s racial identity “that she was of mixed blood” (25), is forthcoming.

The early stereotype of mulatto women as “public whores to the Europeans and private ones to the negros” (Beckles 83) has been hard to dispel. Indeed Anthony Froude reiterates these derogatory stereotypes throughout his book *The English in the West Indies*. This popular book expressed the Victorian attitudes towards the local population and highlighted the imperialist and scientific thinking of the nineteenth century. While Froude’s observations and opinions are offensive and condescending, they equally echo the early

literary representation of the mulatto as set out by Ramchand of “the Coloured person — the unstable mulatto (usually male) and the highly sexed and sensuous Coloured woman” (*WINB* 23). However, de Lisser wrote counter to this stereotype in an attempt to offer an alternative portrayal and therefore de Lisser’s characterisation of Elizabeth restores her as a strong heroic female. By deconstructing this female stereotype of the “mulatto,” and reconstructing Elizabeth in a way that is far superior to the mulatto traits of the highly sexed and socially insecure mulatto, de Lisser is not only breaking the boundaries of the stereotypes that have contained mixed-race representations throughout eighteenth- and nineteenth-century literature, but he also establishes a modern “mulatto,” who has high moral standards and self-respect. Furthermore, this establishment of a respectable mulatto figure also allows her to “come to consciousness” like her foremothers before her, namely, Psyche and Rachel, and thereby recognise her importance as a woman as opposed to an object of desire. Finally, de Lisser’s introduction of a highly respectable mulatto character placed within the framework of a sentimental narrative is very effective in establishing a national identity and racial pride. David Denby contends that the “sentimental narrative...is to be understood as the expression of a class becoming conscious of its own development, its own past and future, its own role in history” (94), and therefore de Lisser’s juxtaposition of Elizabeth as representative of the morality and independence of spirit of the “coloured” class significantly allows de Lisser to instil a sense of collective unity to the “coloured” class. This desire for the “coloured” class to become “conscious of its own development” is further investigated through the way that de Lisser continues to challenge these stereotypes through his use of

literary juxtaposition and subsequent performances of Elizabeth and Joyce Breakspeare in their initial introductions to the reader.

Initially, Elizabeth is described as “a woman clothed all in white” (17).

However, later in the novel she is described in more detail as:

Her hair was black, long and glossy, reaching down to her waist; her lips neither full nor thin, but firm; her neck, graceful and slender; and when she spoke rows of even, glistening teeth were disclosed. She carried her head haughtily; her demeanour was neither coquettish nor ingratiating; it was self-possessed and perhaps a trifle assertive. (24)

Although Elizabeth is wearing a white dress, it is a nightdress and her hair is loose. She is described not by the author but through Captain Thornton’s impression of her and he equates her to a “splendid creature.” His description is reminiscent of the attributes he might look for in a fine stallion — “her neck, graceful and slender...her hair was black, long and glossy...rows of even, glistening teeth” — or indeed in a slave. Whereas her dress and “loose” hair implies her sensuality, the animalistic description returns Elizabeth to nature and atavistic traditions, where true love and virginity are not respected.

In contrast to Elizabeth, Joyce is described thus:

Clothed all in white, with hooped skirts trailing the ground, she looked comfortably cool in spite of the heat. Her fine chestnut hair was done high, in the fashion of the time, forming a sort of crown on her *marble* (my emphasis) forehead; she walked with a quiet dignity, having long been used to playing the hostess to her father's guests. Her blue eyes were friendly and smiling, and on her lips was a smile as she advanced towards the gentlemen who had all risen to meet her. (51)

Although again her dress is white, the authorial description of Joyce is more respectful and asexual. She is heavily attired in a “full-hooped skirt and her hair is high on her head.” She is described as having dignity, and all the men rise when she enters the room, thereby showing sufficient respect for a white lady. Unlike her father who originated from England, she was born in Jamaica, the same as Elizabeth. However, the two would never socially meet, and whilst Elizabeth may be better educated, have more wealth and be more beautiful, she will never receive the respect that is awarded to Joyce, due to inequalities of race.

The constant humiliation Elizabeth endures is perpetuated by this hierarchical racism and social segregation which also determines her marital prospects. Despite her wealth and education she can only marry a coloured man or become a mistress of a white man. The rejection of this role — “I will

become the mistress of no white man; if I am not good enough for him to marry, I wish to have nothing to do with him" (94) — enables de Lisser to highlight the problematic dimensions of the relationship between Elizabeth and Captain Morgan, or on a metaphorically wider scale, between the colonised and the coloniser. For his part, Captain Thornton is of the opinion that if she already has a white protector then he has no right to interfere; whereas, if she is married to a coloured man "she might be inclined to listen to some compliments, which might indeed lead to a very pleasant future relationship" (25). He is so arrogant in his opinions of, and racist assumptions about, "non-white people" that it does not occur to him that he is being offensive because, to him, Elizabeth is a chattel, a "splendid creature," something to be had, not to be respected. Thornton's lack of conscious thought "that she might resent his condescension could not possibly have occurred to him" (25), highlights the superficiality of English rule as well as signifying the power of Imperialism through dominance and sexual exploitation. These sexual performances are effectively dramatised in Chapters 9 through to 11 when Captain Thornton turns up at Morgan's Castle looking for Huntly. Aware that she must "perform" and use her sexuality to resist as well as manipulate she resigns herself to "performing" the role of "a girl who was being wounded by one from whom she had expected far different treatment" (100) in order effectively to dupe Thornton and rouse a rebellion to free Jamaica from the coloniser. Thornton, for his part is aware that he must also "perform" in order to secure his prize.

The dialogues within these chapters serve to expose not only the follies of inter-racial prejudice, but also work to destabilise the racist assumptions of white society vis-à-vis racial difference. In highlighting the changing moral standards of contemporary Jamaica, and using these social restrictions to Elizabeth's advantage, de Lisser is implying that she is not only the exotic strong female hero of folk legends threatening to usurp the patriarchal society, but she is the archetypal romantic Byronic hero. She is rebellious, passionate, isolated and wilful. She rejects external restrictions by not adhering to the social standards of the time (bearing in mind that she has not become anyone's mistress) and she seeks to resolve her isolation through her love of John. By de Lisser juxtaposing the literary genre of the sentimental narrative against the racial stereotypes embedded into Jamaican society he is able to create a hero who ultimately loses through death (according to the white audience), but wins (according to the non-white audience) through her courage and resilience and determination to die free rather than live as a prisoner both literally and metaphorically. Her courage at the end of the novel is referred to in terms of both her white blood — "she would die as Henry Morgan" — and the black savagery of her Maroon blood — "a wild look was on her face, a wild glare in her eye...her courage was at volcano heat and death was mocked at as nothing" (254) — thereby strengthening the folk legend of the strong female hero whilst injecting a sense of community through her mixed-race heritage. Captain Thornton's performance and racism is rather more conservative and stereotypical in its origin. Thornton is unable to see beyond the performances and disguises of Elizabeth because of his own racist assumptions. Thornton's identity is all about the pomp and circumstance of being part of the British

Empire. His language and dress are conservative as he epitomises the superficiality of English rule and imperial power. The late 1920s and early 1930s were a politically unstable period when white Jamaicans were becoming increasingly disillusioned with Crown Colony rule. Resentment towards Britain's indifference to Jamaica's growing difficulties in relation to domestic affairs and political opinions is highlighted through Thornton's performance which symbolises Britain's lack of interest in Jamaica other than as a place of commerce and exploitation. He allows his men to abuse Elizabeth's slaves — "one or two made rough love to the couple of rather good-looking maids of the house" (109) — and treats Elizabeth as a prize to be won, rather than a woman: "he had come to make a conquest" (77). Furthermore, when he is entrusted with the task of finding and capturing Three-finger'd Jack he fails and is therefore quite useless. It would appear that de Lisser is highlighting the fact that the British presence in Jamaica is unnecessary and simply serves as a reminder that Jamaica is a colony.

In reclaiming this folk legend as part of a Jamaican identity, the other primary character as opposed to Henry Morgan's daughter is the notorious folk hero, Three-finger'd Jack. The introduction of the legendary Three-finger'd Jack into the text of *Morgan's Daughter* allows an air of familiarity to pervade the narrative for, while the story of Henry Morgan's daughter may be obscure, the eponymous legendary figure of Three-finger'd Jack and his exploits are permanently etched into the collective consciousness and landscape of Jamaica and beyond. Rosenberg is critical of de Lisser's engagement with "peasant culture," believing that he actually de-familiarised it and blended it with

colonial stereotypes in order to encourage the middle classes to acknowledge their national identity without recognising its “primitive” origins (49). Although there is value in Rosenberg’s observation, and de Lisser does indeed blend “peasant culture” with colonial stereotypes as evidenced through the construction of Elizabeth’s identity, there is a deeper intention within his literature that lingers below the surface. This appropriation of “peasant culture” was de Lisser’s attempt to write a Jamaican narrative that bridged the racial and social divides within Jamaica and establish an inclusive national identity. If Rosenberg can challenge his intentions on the one hand but equally accept that de Lisser’s short story *The Story of the Maroons* (1899) was the “only story to depict subaltern Jamaican classes as serious, independent, and militant subjects” (49), on the other, then surely the complexities of de Lisser’s literary intentions highlight the multifaceted layering of his novels and therefore vouchsafe the need to engage in further analysis.

Early attempts to reclaim Jack as a Jamaican folk hero were not very successful. A set piece published in *The Daily Gleaner* in 1918 refers to the numerous editions of the legend of Three-finger’d Jack that had been published and outlines the various copies that were held at the West India Reference Library, including editions that had been published in Boston. A couple of decades later, J.A. Bain Alves retells the legend over three instalments in *The Daily Gleaner*. Published in April 1939 and bearing the title “Three-fingered Jack’ Jamaica’s Greatest Road — Robber,” Alves’s version differs from both previous versions in that Jack is brought to Jamaica as an adult and his fingers are chopped off. His in-depth historical information on Jack’s African ancestry

and recognition as a hero go some way to reclaim his Jamaican roots, but he is still recognised as a robber whose downfall was the treachery of a woman and the government.

Although a concise account of the legendary folk hero can be found on a monument dedicated to Jack Mansong and erected on the road between Kingston and Bull Bay, the historiography of the folk legend is rather more extensive.³⁵ He was popularised by Dr Benjamin Moseley in *A Treatise on Sugar* (1799) and by William Earle, Jr., in *Obi; or, the History of Three-finger'd Jack* (1800) which is symptomatic of the fact that Jack went on to become a legend in mainstream English culture.³⁶ In the same year that Earle published his novel, John Fawcett wrote the pantomime, *Obi*, with Sam Arnold responsible for the musical arrangement. By the late 1820s William Murray rewrote the pantomime as a melodrama expressly for the great African-American tragedian, Ira Aldridge, and it remained in his repertoire until at least 1857. *Obi* was performed at least yearly for over half a century, straddling the Atlantic as well as reaching Europe and Russia. Although *Obi* was still being performed some 60 years after it was first written, its only Jamaican performance was produced by J. Thompson. Supported by amateurs, this single

³⁵ This marker was erected by the National Heritage Trust and reads: "Jack Mansong or Three-finger Jack. North of this road, in the hills and valleys behind this marker, was the territory of the famous Jack Mansong or Three-finger Jack. It is not certain whether he was born in Jamaica or came from Africa, but it is known that in the years 1780-81 he fought, often singlehandedly, a war of terror against the English soldiers and planters who held the slave colony. Strong, brave, skilled with machete and musket, his bold exploits were equalled only by his chivalry. He loved his country and his people. He was said to have never harmed a woman or child. His life became a legend. Books and plays about him were written and performed in London theatres. He was ambushed and killed near here in 1781." *My punctuation*.

³⁶ The Dramatic Censor for August 1800, lists the performances of *Obi* which were performed at the Theatre Royal, Haymarket throughout the months of July and August. *The Dramatic Censor*, Number XXVIII. Print; *The Times* lists *Obi* at the Theatre Royal Sept. 3 1802. Print.

performance took place at the Theatre Royal, Kingston, on 16 September 1862 (Hill 101). Originally *Obi* was written in the form of an epistolary novel and tells the history of Jack's ancestry from Africa and how Captain Harrop duped his family. Upon their incarceration in Jamaica, Jack grows up seeking revenge for his father's death, kidnaps Captain Harrop and takes him to his cave where he ultimately dies from starvation. The sub-plot focuses on a love triangle between William (Captain Harrop's young cousin), Harriet, a wealthy planter's daughter and Captain Harrop. William and Harriet fall in love, but Captain Harrop wants her money and property and therefore deceives both of them into believing that the other one has been unfaithful. The novel ends with the demise of Captain Harrop and Jack, Harrop through starvation from his imprisonment in Jack's cave, and Jack murdered by two loyal plantation slaves who kill him for the reward of freedom. The young lovers are of course reunited.

The pantomime deviates from the original source text in that William is absent and the wealthy planter's daughter (who is now called Rosa), falls in love at first sight with Captain Harrop (who is now called Captain Orford). When Jack kidnaps Orford, Rosa disguises herself as a sailor and goes to Jack's cave to save him. Again, the play ends with Jack's demise, in the same way, but both the Captain and Rosa survive. The melodrama is much the same as the pantomime, except that for the first time Jack is given a voice and as a result, he becomes more criminalised in light of the fact that *Obi* was originally performed at a time when slavery had not been abolished throughout the Empire. This work could therefore be perceived as a radical response to slavery

in that the main character Jack was an escaped slave who relied on the community not to give him away and was also linked to slave revolts. In 2000, *Obi* was revived for two performances, the first being held in Boston and the second being held in Arizona and were well received.

One of the underlying attractions of both the play and the pantomime was the referencing of Obeah. An evocative word, Obeah conjured up melodramatic and tantalising images to the audience of the sensationalised, exoticised other. An advertisement for the play in the *Evening Mail* in July 1800 set out Moseley's account, but suggested that the science of Obeah originated in Egypt and was for the use of bewitching people (Mon 7 July 1800-Wed 9 July 1800: n. pag). Clearly the term Obeah is a colonially constructed term to encompass all forms of African organised religions. Various attempts were made to control it through legislation, although it was not made illegal in Jamaica until after Tacky's Rebellion of 1760. The accounts of this rebellion suggest that Obeah was a significant influence on this uprising. As a result, following the suppression of the rebellion, many Obeahmen were executed and new legislation denounced Obeah "as a dangerous religious practice with political implications" (Earle 18). A cause of anxiety in colonial writing, many an account of Obeah was featured in a number of colonial documents and letters from the West Indies. Diane Paton traces the English fascination and subsequent historiography of Obeah in colonial literature from Bryan Edward's work *History of the British Colonies in the West Indies*, first published in 1793, through many other "works of fiction in the early nineteenth century, in twentieth-century travel writing such as Bessie Pullen-Barry's

Jamaica as it is, 1903, and in scholarly works like Orlando Patterson's *Sociology of Slavery* ("Gender, Law, and Spiritual Power in the British-colonized Caribbean, 1760-1838" 14). Equally, Aravamudan Srinivas traces a trajectory of Obeah writing in his recently published work.

The theme of Obeah was fundamental in the performances and novels that featured Three-finger'd Jack due to its crowd pleasing properties, and the fascination that the general public had for Obeah and the mystical beliefs that had been built up around it. Jack was dramatised as an Obeahman because he wore an obi bag which consisted of:

the end of a goat's horn, filled with a compound of grave dirt, ashes, the blood of a black cat, and human fat; all mixed into a kind of paste. A black cat's foot, a dried toad, a pig's tail, a flip of parchment of kid's skin, with characters marked in blood on it, were also in his *Obian* bag. (14)

The presence of this obi bag was deemed sufficient enough for Moseley to label him a practitioner and, as evidenced through this description of Jack's obi bag, throughout this work, an exoticised use of black and enslaved cultures was foregrounded for theatrical entertainment as Obeah was sensationalised as a religious art. However, according to Paton, while Three-finger'd Jack may have used the art of Obeah as protection, he was never in fact a practitioner of Obeah ("The Afterlives of Three-finger'd Jack" 54). As a result, this co-option

by the British psyche and immersion into the English literary vernacular, allowed for Jack's potency as a Jamaican hero and legend to be diluted. Jamaicans did not necessarily gain a sense of pride in their heritage as it had been commodified by the dominant colonial society for their amusement. Paton confirms that this historiography of Jack and transformation of him into a legend in British culture affected the historical verisimilitude of the written accounts. She writes:

In becoming a British story told about Jamaica, rather than a Jamaican story, Three-finger'd Jack lost sight of the complex relationships and strategic difficulties among different segments of those struggling and negotiating with plantocratic power. (55)

This commodification and criminalisation of Jack by the dominant colonial society for their amusement did not sit well with de Lisser, and he employed his satirical pen to ensure he got the "last laugh." Almost as an homage to the "British story" of Three-finger'd Jack, his initial characterisation of "Jack" is a British man named John. Aside from the obvious common colloquialism that refers to the literary Christian name John as "Jack," John is also physically Jack. Equally, although de Lisser constructs "Jack" through racial stereotypes available to him, because he is "impersonating" a black man he is unable to "perform" as Three-finger'd Jack. He wears boots, when he should be bare-footed (7), he doesn't "speak as a 'slave' would speak" (10), and his apparel and body language are "entirely out of the ordinary and not in

keeping with his surroundings” (7). By presenting to the reader this notion that John is unable to impersonate Jack, either through his physicality, his speech or even his clothing, the end result culminates into a parody of effectively a white man attempting to impersonate a black man and getting it wrong.

Although Paton explains that Three-finger'd Jack was not an Obeahman, de Lisser needed a way to (re)claim him as a Jamaican legend. So in stark contrast to his representation of “Jack” to comply with the British mainstream culture, de Lisser's bravely attempts to reclaim Three-finger'd Jack via Elizabeth for his Jamaican audience, restoring him to his Afro-Caribbean roots and interconnecting him with the religion of Obeah and the Maroon community. It is important to note that neither play nor pantomime featured any encounter with the Maroons. By using Elizabeth as the vehicle through which Three-finger'd Jack is reclaimed and highlighting the importance of this relationship within the popular consciousness and culture of the Jamaican people, he is able to establish a relationship between resistance, unity and national identity.

de Lisser's interpretation successfully blends the story of Jack from both the original source material of Moseley and Earle and then selects certain embellishments from the pantomime as opposed to the melodrama. Refusing to collude with dominant problematic re-imaginings, he reclaims Jack by giving him a voice and uses the framework of a sentimental narrative as opposed to a theatrical performance to elevate Three-finger'd Jack to a black heroic figure in support of a Jamaican national identity. de Lisser is able to restore Jack through

his relocation of Elizabeth as a brave and heroic legend who is able to return Jack to his Jamaican roots. For it is through Elizabeth's family ties with the Maroons and her reformulation of the legend of Three-finger'd Jack that de Lisser's legacy is able to emerge. It is by Elizabeth's hand that Jack becomes an Obeahman and an ally of the Maroons, for it is she who is the one who not only has the "blood ties" to the community, but also encourages John to maintain the facade of Three-finger'd Jack in order to enlist the Maroon's support in inciting a slave rebellion. The Maroons are a collective community of freed and runaway enslaved men and women who have established a dual legacy dedicated to rebellion and revolt. Therefore it is no surprise that they indirectly rally behind another rebellious heroic folk legend, Henry Morgan, but in the guise of Elizabeth — "this was Henry Morgan come to life again, but as a woman" (133) — which produces emotional support for the early nationalistic ideal of a free Jamaica. This conscious attempt on de Lisser's behalf to maintain an awareness of Jamaican history and culture in his literary works is rendered yet more apparent when he evokes a popular stereotype in the guise of Captain Tacky as the leader of the Maroons in an effort to provide a definite reference to the slave revolt known as "Tacky's rebellion." Writing from the margins of colonialism, this "call to arms" for nationalism and Jamaican independence goes un-noticed in a period when implicit obligations had to be upheld.

Significantly, the cultural consciousness surrounding Three-finger'd Jack has since held him to be an Obeahman and an instigator of slave revolts, even though the original accounts of his exploits do not count these as his

traits. Obeahmen were perceived as spiritual and rebellious leaders, while the religious myth of Obeah was recognised as a force of rebellion due to the central role that religion played in the political quest for freedom. As a symbol that promoted an African identity and historical experience, Obeah not only functioned as political resistance to both economic and racial oppression, but also encouraged loyalty amongst slaves and therefore tended to play a crucial role in slave revolts. As a result, it was important for de Lisser to establish this link and create Jack as an Obeahman. Although the Maroons recognise John's dual racial identity — they know that he is a white man, pretending to be black — they believed “that all things were possible to men who had magic at his command” (139), and therefore their belief in folk-lore and the power of Obeah prevents them from questioning “the authenticity of his impersonation” (139). They are able to see beyond the whiteness of his skin and believe the legend created by John that “by my obeah I turned myself into a black warrior and I ranged the country as Three-finger'd Jack” (147) and as authenticated by Elizabeth who, as a Maroon, and therefore as a believer in the art of Obeah, has presented John to them as Jack, the Obeahman.

By highlighting Elizabeth's cultural “heroic” past and interlocking her legend with that of the eponymous revolutionary Three-finger'd Jack, de Lisser was attempting to create a Jamaican narrative that evoked the Caribbean imagination as a means to underscore the “rootedness” of a Jamaican identity and reflect a “national pride” in their own folk legends. Therefore, Barbara Webb's observation that “the mythic or folk imagination may play either a conservative or revolutionary role in historical consciousness” (28), provides a

fitting end to this discussion in relation to the importance of historiography and the power of imaginative literature. de Lisser himself was politically perceived as a conservative, despite the fact that much of his literature contains nationalistic tendencies, and it is this double-sided relationship which is revelatory regarding de Lisser's own complexities. de Lisser wanted Jamaicans to discover a historical consciousness outside of the dominant culture of imperialism and utilised this creative element of cultural roots by writing popular fiction that imaginatively interconnected colonial history with folk culture. Alleyne recognises that "it is...essential that a community or society or nation be aware of its cultural heritage, for it is not just a cliché to say that a people without a past is a people without a future" (3). Therefore, as understood within this context, folk legends and myths are the staple of all national identities. From King Arthur, Camelot and the Knights of the Round Table through to Buffalo Bill and the Wild West, most folklores and legends are based, albeit sometimes loosely, on real people and events, and therefore, by borrowing from Jamaica's rich library of famous legendary folk legends de Lisser was able to create his own fables and legends that allowed for a (re)possession and revisioning of Jamaican history that reflected a distinctive Jamaican identity.

CHAPTER V

The Power of Oral Tradition: Culture, Religion and the Birth of a Jamaican “National” Narrative in *The White Witch of Rosehall*.

The power of an oral tradition within folk culture lies within the telling and (re)telling of history and culture. Lucie Pradel emphasises that “the creativity shown in the oral tradition...helped enslaved peoples to preserve ancestral beliefs from being eradicated” (261). Therefore, if literature binds these oral traditions to the written word, this allowed de Lisser to fuse fact with fiction, in order to create and preserve “ancestral beliefs” from extinction. Pradel goes on to suggest that “oral forms give as much room to mythical heroes as to supernatural creatures” (262). Thus, by writing oral legends into existence within the framework of the gothic novel, de Lisser is able to create a literary space in which these myths and the supernatural can be legitimised in order to not only portray the horrors of plantation slavery in graphic terms, but also to create a Jamaican folk legend in Annie Palmer that transcends the folk imagination to become embedded within the national consciousness. Inspired by half truths and inaccuracies, the gothic tale *The White Witch of Rosehall*, offers up the popular and engaging fictional account of the notorious folk legend Annie Palmer and the Rosehall estate as reconstructed during the period of plantation slavery in Jamaica.

Generally included in critical overviews of de Lisser’s work, *The White Witch of Rosehall* has been largely overlooked in favour of his earlier novels *Jane’s Career* and *Susan Proudleigh*. However, a resurgence of scholarly

interest in this novel has been in evidence from the beginning of the 1990s, as flurries of articles were written by postcolonial academics. Although these critics have continued to see de Lisser's literary credentials as limited, and accepting of the colonial positioning that he had inherited, Lizabeth Paravisini-Gerbert's examination into the "legitimacy of female power" as well as Laura Lomas's extensive analysis into how the myth has developed and continues to be appropriated interconnects with my contention that *The White Witch of Rosehall* is a far more complex and multi-layered novel than first assumed and as a consequence, this chapter will investigate this novel upon two different levels. While these recent critics' commentaries are insightful and will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter, it is Rhonda Cobham's observations that have been most useful in encouraging an alternative interpretation. She writes:

In de Lisser's *The White Witch of Rosehall* (1929) the three major characters – Annie Palmer, her young lover Rutherford, and Rider, the alcoholic clergyman – are Europeans who have been defeated by various aspects of West Indian Society. (King, *West Indian* 12)

It has long since been recognised that the socio-cultural conflicts between the West Indies and the colonial homeland remain connected throughout their chaotic and complex history and this interconnected conflict of European and Jamaican culture finds a literary space within de Lisser's fictional world. However, according to Cobham there is an inference that not

only is there a difference between West Indian and European society within Jamaica, but further that the West Indian society is in fact stronger than the European society that it is dominated by, and it is this specific conflicting space of European and Caribbean culture that forms the basis of my analysis and the focal point for the first part of this chapter. By applying elements of the genre of gothic literature it is possible to unpack this conflict by investigating the ways that de Lisser uses culture and especially religion to examine the differences between the two cultures through the dichotomous relationship of the two women represented within the novel, Annie Palmer and her counterpart Millie.

The legend of Rosehall has since transformed itself into Jamaica's premier legend and one which has allowed for a sense of pride and unity to be established within the cross-racial and cross-cultural ancestral heritage. Therefore by tracing the historiography of the Rosehall legend in the second part of this chapter, it becomes possible to examine the ways in which the imaginative manifestation of myths and folk legends as they are continuously (re)interpreted and (re)visited throughout history aids our understanding of their facility in crossing cultural barriers, which in turn gives them their influence and power in creating and maintaining a cultural heritage.

Written in 1928, *The White Witch of Rosehall* (re)creates the horrors of plantation slavery by both resurrecting and *creating* the legend of Annie Palmer, the owner of Rosehall (whose three previous husbands died under suspicious circumstances). In this work, de Lisser relies upon the eyes of the

young and naïve Englishman Robert Rutherford in order to re-imagine this folkloric legend.³⁷ Focusing on the period surrounding the Sam Sharpe rebellion of 1831, Rutherford comes to Jamaica with the intention of learning the planter business. Once employed on the Rosehall estate, he is quickly exposed to the harsh realities of a slave plantation. Reluctant to fall into West Indian habits, Rutherford is embarrassed by the forward advances of his housekeeper Millicent and flattered by the unexpected attentions of Mrs Palmer. Upon Mrs Palmer discovering Millicent's almost successful seduction of Rutherford, an altercation between the two women ensues. A free woman and the granddaughter of Takoo, a powerful Obeahman, Millicent is unafraid of Mrs Palmer and openly defies her. No stranger to the art of Obeah herself, and humiliated by Millicent's independence and resistance, Mrs Palmer vows revenge. She places a spell on Millicent which Takoo is unable to remove, resulting in tragic consequences.

The significant socio-historical context coupled with the mystical fascination with Obeah and witchcraft as shown throughout *The White Witch of Rosehall* complicate any initial assumptions that this novel is simply a historical romance. de Lisser uses the genre of gothic literature to debate the wider socio-political issues within this novel that relate to colonialism, Jamaican identity and culture. Gary Kelly's commentary chronicling the evolution of gothic literature from "escapist fantasies for jaded middle class readers" through to tales of national identity and social conflict inform my opinion that de Lisser penned *The White Witch of Rosehall* within this genre as

³⁷ There are many different spellings for the name Annie. However, for the purpose of this thesis I will use the spelling as set out in de Lisser's novel.

a means of creating a national literature through the “imagined community” (to use Benedict Anderson’s turn of phrase), of the middle class. Gothic literature as a genre was melodramatic in form and represented excitement alongside the pleasing thrill of terror. Kelly recognises that the “political implications of gothic...were made much more explicit” (14) and therefore, by locating *The White Witch of Rosehall* within the genre of gothic literature, de Lisser was able to contest political colonialism and create a national literature which, although based on folk culture, sought to represent the emerging middle class and foreground social aspirations and cultural uplift. Gothic literature’s sublime elements provided de Lisser with a sinister atmosphere within which he was able to portray the brutal realities of slavery, as well as engage with the cultural traditions of myths and supernatural creatures, and the eeriness of the gothic mansions continued this sense of foreboding.

This (re)living of slavery as a literary appropriation not only served to create a national identity through its commemoration of slavery but also exposed Jamaica’s long history of colonialism, a practice that did not end with the abolition of the slave trade. With very few Caribbean slave narratives available, and other white accounts primarily imbued with the politics of colonialism, many Caribbean writers (re)created Caribbean slavery in their creative literature. In this regard de Lisser was no exception. Early West Indian literature depicting slavery did so from a pro-slavery position whereby the moralising works patronised the slave communities by suggesting that they were unable to achieve the status and dignity reserved for plantocracy. de Lisser sought to write against this tradition and re-address the balance.

Therefore the revisioning of Caribbean slavery within this novel serves as a means of formulating a cultural nationalism through the (re)membering of a collective history.

O. Nigel Bolland's paper "Creolisation and Creole Society: A Cultural Nationalist View of Caribbean Society History" honours Kamau Brathwaite's seminal study on the development of creole society. In this paper Bolland explores, through Brathwaite, the question of how a national culture could be developed after independence. Brathwaite's answer is that "an understanding of Jamaican history points to the process of creolisation as the source of authentic Jamaican culture, rooted in the descendants of the ex-slaves" (26). Although Brathwaite is referring to a post-independence audience, translating this nationalist discourse back to de Lisser's text some 30 years earlier highlights the significance of de Lisser's literary intentions. His injection of mixed-race Millie into the legend of Rosehall serves a number of purposes. Firstly, in order to (re)member the collective history of slavery and understand Jamaica's history, her inclusion in the text promotes this concept of "creolisation" by highlighting a cross-cultural, cross-racial Jamaican identity that bridges the racial hybridity of the Jamaican people, and provides the emerging middle-class reading population with a heroine that they can identify with and relate to. Secondly, her presence is significant in allowing the juxtaposition of European and Jamaican cultures to be played out between her and Annie. Furthermore, by reminding the reader of her African ancestry, i.e. her slave roots, de Lisser is recognising her cultural authenticity, thus providing cultural roots for the "culturally rootless" middle class. Finally, by

allowing Millie to be perceived as a metaphorical representation of Jamaica as a nation, especially within the politically volatile period of the late 1920s, then her death as a “free woman” serves as a literary reminder that Jamaica would rather die “free” than continue to be subjugated under colonial rule. In acquiring the popular heritage of folk legends, and the sense of an evolving cultural unity through the emerging middle class, de Lisser is suggesting that the “dominated” people were able to shape their own culture, thereby creating their own history which has its roots within the hybridity and the diversity of the Jamaican people.

In light of the fact that the gothic novel represented the excitement and pleasing thrill of terror, the sensationalism of gothic literature arose from literary conventions of the supernatural and haunting as repeatedly symbolised by ghosts in order to involve the reader. The great house of Rosehall which looms “huge and imposing” (3), and dominates the landscape, is surrounded by an atmospheric eeriness which is suggestive of a brooding evilness. The reader is informed that Rosehall is “the one estate of all others that he would have warned his old friend against” (9) and this statement immediately piques the reader’s imagination as to what mysteries lurk behind the huge gates. In addition, the visual representation of the “finest private residence in Jamaica” (5) as representative of “the pride and arrogance of the planter caste” (1), serves as a symbolic reminder of the wealth that was acquired during the period of slavery. de Lisser’s (re)creation of plantation slavery within this gloomy atmosphere of oppression in *The White Witch of Rosehall* exposes the false histories generated by colonial propaganda mythologising pastoral

plantations. Plantation slavery within the Caribbean, although interrelated on a larger economic scale, was largely operated as autonomous societies with most plantations remaining isolated from each other. Annie's open contempt towards her slaves — "they don't count; they have no feelings" (33) — enables *her* plantation to continue to manifest the "evil, reckless spirit of former days" and ignore the danger of emancipation. The notion that Annie rules "her people with terror" (76), immediately highlights the horrors and harshness of slavery, as seen through the eyes of Rutherford. His detailed description of the boiling house, "which seemed like a corner of Hades" (22), as well as his observations of the slave society on the estate and the graphic brutality of slaves being whipped — "she was flogged to her knees" (27) — place him a unique position. As part of the ruling colonial establishment and heir to one of the largest estates in Barbados, Rutherford, who "usually sees the world through the brightest of tinted glasses" (7), is unable to "tint" the brutalisation that was slavery. Through his "first hand" descriptions of the realities of slavery, he is able to destabilise the colonial arguments that supported slavery and colonial domination by portraying the exploitation of the slaves, with a powerful degree of realism as opposed to their "pastoral" and idealised representations. Equally, the horrific descriptions of slavery and the salaciousness of Annie Palmer feed into the psychological and physical aspects of terror and fearfulness characteristic of the gothic novel.

Davies questions the motives behind the portrayal of the vampirish white lady in Caribbean oral literature and concludes that it is as a means to portray "society's response to slavery and racism. Therefore, by projecting the

brutality of slavery and the cruelty of the slave “master” onto a woman (Annie is the “mistress of this estate” (27)), de Lisser creates a woman with white European colonial traits i.e., the masculine characteristics of authority, physical strength and psychological empowerment. In other words, he is repositioning Annie and using women to supplicate sensationalism. Described as a “strong minded woman” who can “bend people to her will,” she is self-confident and assertive. She dresses in men’s clothes which have “evidently been made for her” (102) in order to ride around the estate at night preying on any slaves who may be wandering around. She resides over Rosehall and the neighbouring plantation Palmyra and while she has an overseer she understands “all about this planting business” (34), thereby suggesting her ability to adapt within the confines of a masculine business environment. Her knowledge of the plantation industry is such that she suggests to Rutherford that he learn the business directly from her rather than from her male overseer, thereby placing her knowledge as superior to the white men around her.

Paravisini-Gerbert supports this view by suggesting that de Lisser foregrounds the “legitimacy of female power in the Caribbean plantation” (25) and recognises that Annie “subverts female passivity” in favour of female power. de Lisser explores this notion through his ability to reverse the gender roles insofar as they pertain to the characterisation of Annie. However, where Paravisini-Gerbert regards this as an empowerment of women, I would posit that de Lisser is in fact suggesting a disempowerment of colonial culture, in that by transposing the dominant society’s attitude towards slavery through a female character, he is able to not only heighten the horrors of slavery and the

sensationalism depicted within this gothic novel, but also in so doing, he is able to invoke a powerful response from the readers which in turn encourages them to question their own reactions towards slavery and racism.

Paravisini-Gerbert's recognition of Annie's reversal of gender roles is through her "tempestuous command in their [Annie and Robert's] sexual relationship" which she contends is one of the "clearest manifestations of Annie's female power" (34), and de Lisser's reformulation of a familiar trope of the gothic romance — the pursuit of the heroine by a predatory suitor — confirms this reversal of sexual power. Thus, while Annie displays a predatory nature and effectively becomes the predatory suitor of the narrative, Rutherford ultimately symbolises the naive victim who wants to do what is right. Annie Palmer is surrounded by rumours of her sexual appetite for slaves and book keepers alike, and when Rutherford appears from England, she immediately invites him to dinner where she is dressed "all in white, with throat and bosom exposed" (43). Furthermore, "when she fixed her eyes on him...there was provocation in them; an invitation scarcely to be misunderstood" (54). Her awareness of her own sensuality and needs amplifies her sexual prowess and destabilises the role of her as a "helpless victim" as normally prevalent within gothic literature. In contrast, Millie's own sexual awareness and confidence is based upon her freedom and independence. She is a beautiful woman who is desired by black and white men alike, but who has remained, by her choice, chaste. Upon encountering Rutherford, she decides that she "likes him", and therefore, in keeping with the social mores is willing to become his

“housekeeper” (40).³⁸ This decision to enter into a sexual relationship is hers to make alone. This recognition that Millie “could hold her own and did not lack for strength of character” continues to highlight the tension between — as well as exposing the differences — between the two cultures and it is interesting to note that de Lisser continues this role reversal by flipping the dominant society’s social codes and expectations. For it is indeed Millie who embraces and personifies the dignity of the plantocracy, by being respectable, hardworking and keeping herself chaste, while Annie is not only aggressively sexual but indeed uses her sexual prowess as a form of manipulation to obtain her goals’ end.

Across this work, de Lisser’s reversal of gender roles continues to manifests itself through the spectacle of slave floggings. The “wave of disgust” (27) that sweeps through Rutherford when he witnesses a flogging of a female slave, is not just at the act alone but at the ability of the white female spectator, Annie Palmer, to accept and even enjoy the event. Therefore, his rhetoric that “only a devil would willingly watch the agony of others as she had done” (28), continues to feed into the salaciousness of Annie’s reputation and enhance the sensationalism of a gothic novel through his comparison of her with the devil. However, de Lisser’s further extrapolation of the grotesque through his description of Annie while she witnesses the whipping is of more significance:

³⁸ According to the social mores of the period, the term “housekeeper” also implied a sexual relationship.

She had witnessed whippings for years and years, and her appetite had grown with what it fed on. The first flogging she had seen had made her ill, yet she had found a terrible fascination in it. She had gone to see another, and yet another; that first tasting of blood as it were, had awakened a certain lust in her which had grown and strengthened until it had become a powerful and abiding obsession. (76)

According to ancient belief systems, the devil was considered synonymous with the vampire and, therefore, where Annie had been previously compared to the devil, this passage, to all intents and purposes, compares Annie to that of a vampire whose “appetite” grows on what it has fed on. Vampires were believed to feed upon the life essence of living creatures and therefore, Annie’s vampirish tendencies are translated into a more moral evil whereby she effectively symbolises the coloniser who is feeding on the life essence of the enslaved (colonised) people. This personification of Annie as a vampire is extrapolated even further when Millie is “bitten” by an Old Hige conjured by Annie who sucks her blood out of her (147).

In relation to de Lisser’s representation, Annie not only embraces the masculine traits of the dominant colonial culture but also absorbs the ancestral beliefs of African culture through her ability to use the Afro-Caribbean religion of Obeah, a facility that effectively makes her an “Obeahwoman” and it is at this juncture that de Lisser disempowers the dominant colonial culture, and

reinserts an “authentic Jamaican culture” (Bollard 26). For it is this interconnection of European and Caribbean cultures that witnesses Annie’s ultimate failure and subsequent defeat. Lizabeth Paravisini-Gerbert and Margurite Fernández Olmas give a comprehensive account of the many Afro-Caribbean religions throughout the Caribbean in their 2003 study *Creole Religions of the Caribbean*. They conclude that Obeah is not a religion “so much as a system of beliefs rooted in creole notions of spirituality” (130). Their commentary that Obeah had two different categories of practice, the casting of spells on the one hand and the African derived healing practices on the other is particularly insightful especially when placed in juxtaposition with the differences they identify between Obeah and Myalism (a form of religion unique to Jamaica). Their suggestion that the “black magic” of the obeah (anti-christianity) and the “good magic” of Myalism are especially intriguing and inform my analysis when discussing the different forms of Obeah that de Lisser uses within this novel, especially when you take into consideration that Myalism is the foundation of the Native Baptist Movement. This was an early religious movement that encouraged black preachers and who both Paul Bogle and Sam Sharpe were part of. However, given that the term Obeah was an umbrella term created by Europeans to encompass all types of creole religions, for the purposes of this chapter, I shall continue to refer to the religion of Obeah without making any definitive religious distinctions.

Religions within the Caribbean developed due to European colonisation. They became hybridised as a result of the different African religions that were transported across the middle passage, from the various

regions of Africa. As a result, these religions developed as a way of enabling the enslaved population to retain a sense of identity. Therefore, Obeah within this context is a concept that promotes the identity of Africans vis-à-vis Europeans and Annie exists within this environment, because although she is white and of Irish descent, her “nanny” had been a voodoo priest, who was “versed in all the old African sorcery” (129). However, this is her downfall, for while she is attempting to sustain these African cultural traditions, she is not part of them. Whereas Obeahmen/women traditionally used Obeah as a source for healing and religion, Annie uses her knowledge of Obeah as a device to terrorise the people on her estates and cast spells i.e., uses “bad magic.” Aware of the fear and terror that these images evoke in the slaves’ imaginative consciousness she conjures malicious duppies from Jamaican folk culture, namely the Three-footed horse, The Old Hige and the Rolling Calf. By de Lisser allowing Annie to be the one to conjure these Jamaican duppies, he is exposing the European stereotypes associated with Obeah rather than the healing and religious beliefs that were so strongly held among the African people. This disempowerment of Annie through her contact with, but ignorance of Afro-Caribbean culture confirms the differences between the two cultures and the catalyst for this interconnection is examined through the juxtaposition of Annie and Millie and the impact that religion and the use of Obeah have on these two women.

Religion is an effective tool for de Lisser and he utilises the effect of religion and local folk culture throughout a number of his novels to inject an authentic Jamaican culture. For example, in the opening pages of *Revenge*, the

Carlton family are looking out from their veranda onto the surrounding mountains when they notice some fires. However, while they continue to observe the fires, they notice that more fires have started since they have been out, and Dick therefore recognises that these fires are part of a religious revival. Dick translates the significance of these fires to his cousin and describes them as “a call to righteousness,” informing her that “the people believe that the drought is a sign of God’s dis-pleasure, and that they are called upon to purge the wickedness out of the land” (2), the wickedness in this case being the white plantocracy. Equally, at the huge revival meeting held by Paul Bogle at Stoney Gut, a sign as to whether or not Paul Bogle is going to be successful is looked for in the sky, between the whiteness of the moon that struggles “out from the beneath the veils of vapour” and the darkness of the clouds that “drew towards the light,” that serves as a metaphorical representation of the white and black forces of the Jamaican population.

As already mentioned in earlier chapters, religion has long since played a large part in Afro-Jamaican history as a means of resistance within the struggle against slavery. Some of the most violent Jamaican uprisings that have been documented have resulted from religious incitements. The Sam Sharpe rebellion or Baptist War which functions as the backdrop to both this novel and *Psyche* although founded on passive resistance, emerged as a direct result of the activity of a Baptist preachers’ rebellion led by the Rev Sam Sharpe. Furthermore the Morant Bay Rebellion which saw such a large loss of life and a return to Crown Colony governing was incited by Paul Bogle, himself a Baptist deacon. These religious and symbolic references serve to highlight the

dichotomy between Western and African religions. Although both men are preachers of Christianity they still retain their ties to their African religion and roots. Sam Sharpe's disingenuous apology to Psyche for the "practices which were distinctly African and pagan" that she witnesses in "The Meeting" confirms his links and support of African religious practices. Similarly, although Bogle is a fervent believer in the white man's God, the God of colonial conquest, this God is unable to save his daughter from death. Therefore Bogle's subsequent revelation of the limitations of Christianity enables him to be redeemed and de-assimilated from the colonised culture, in order for him to be returned to his African roots. By accepting his African heritage and deities — "he heard the voices of ghosts in every wind...saw the eyes of ghosts in every star" (98) — he is able to exert justice for his daughter's death by slaying Raines before he himself is executed.

Traditional vehicles for African sacred beliefs resided in myths, songs, dance, craftsmanship, superstitions and supernatural creatures. The significance of ancestry and the fostering of cultural identity through this recognition of African religion, in practice find further expression through many of de Lisser's novels. Alleyne suggests that Africans did not leave their culture behind entirely when they were taken into the slave trade. He argues that they brought with them sociological tools, for example, skills, memories, habits and languages and transposed these onto the new country they were placed in (39). de Lisser communicates these cultural contacts throughout his engagement with the history of the African Psyche in his novel *Psyche* and the heritage that she brings with her to Jamaica. His depiction of African Psyche and her culture

as she is transported from Africa to Jamaica makes reference to her priestess anklets, her community in Africa as cattle herders and her native language which she uses when she speaks to Mashimba in her local dialect. Mashimba is a member of her village who was captured and brought to Jamaica with her. Initially the perspective the reader is given is that of Psyche's, and once again, the reader is able to empathise with her feelings of isolation, separation and bewilderment. Equally, Harris's seminal paper "History, Fable and Myth in The Caribbean and Guianas," recognises that the colonised retained their history through dance and maps this journey of African ancestry from the Middle Passage to the colonies, connecting the importance of tribal dances to spiritualism and Obeah. de Lisser retains a number of these ancestral beliefs within this novel through his inclusion of religious dance and his insertion of the mythological and supernatural creatures of the Three-Footed Horseman, the Soukouyant or Old Hige and the Rolling Calf as well as his narration of an "exorcism."

The notion of dance is instrumental in strengthening a sense of community and de Lisser includes numerous dances throughout his texts in order to create and illustrate this sense of community among the enslaved people. There is a dance at Stoney Gut before the rebellion in *Revenge*, and de Lisser significantly inserts a dance by the Maroons in *Morgan's Daughter*, where there was no performance of one in either the play or pantomime of the source text *Obi*. There are not one, but two performances of dance within *The White Witch of Rosehall* — the dance that brings the community together to perform the exorcism on Mille and the Jonkonnu dance. Originally a dance that

was made up of red or blue dancers, Jonkonuu is a political dance whereby the masked participants engage in the process of cultural resistance and self-definition. The dance of Jonkonnu is performed at Christmas and de Lisser recounts a version of this ritual dance within this novel.

de Lisser's recognition and interpretation of the significance of religious dance within the collective consciousness is further investigated by his inclusion of a sacred sacrificial dance set out at "Chapter 18, The Exorcism." de Lisser continues to create this sense of community amongst the slaves through his detailed description of the exorcism of Millie. Pradel's comment that: "the links between African sacredness and Caribbean culture are legitimised by the central role played by religion in the original societies of slaves" (258), allows de Lisser to explore this central role through the character of Millie, and the subsequent tragedy of her demise. Therefore, in the same way that Three-finger'd Jack relied on his community not to give him away, Takoo relies on the community "black and white, old and young, master and ex-slave" (154) to help save his granddaughter Millie, "the suffering girl before them" (154), from Mrs Palmer's curse. Millie as a free woman who is educated, respectable and able to make her own free choices can be seen as part of the emerging middle class. Representative of the authentic Jamaican culture already alluded to, the blending of Afro-Caribbean religions and European Christianity has merged into her mixed-race heritage. However, unlike his earlier heroine Rachel in *Revenge* who even in death believed that "God punished the wicked and helped and rewarded those who did right" (95), and retains this pious faith in God, at the rejection of her own African deities

and ancestry, “but you don’t believe in de Spirit, me daughter” (8), the superstitions and sacred beliefs of Millie’s African heritage outweigh any Western religion. As a result, Millie’s diffusion of the Catholic faith and subsequent rejection of Christianity can be seen not only as a form of resistance within the historical past of slavery but also in metaphorical terms as a rejection of contemporary colonialism.

The ritual or “exorcism” that Takoo performs over Millie to remove the curse placed upon her by Annie encapsulates African sacred thought through the rhythm of the drums and the dance of the black slave population. Harris compares the limbo dance with the spider-like Anancy, who is the synonymous folk hero of Jamaican folk culture, as a means of translating the significance of cultural retentions. de Lisser’s detailed description of this sacrificial dance, where “swaying people became wildly agitated...[with]...sweat pouring from their bodies,” the “Obeah charms” protecting the clearing, the “thrum, thrum” of the drums and the “chanting,” along with the respect and recognition afforded to the religion of Obeah, reinforces this unification of the folk consciousness and the power of imaginative literature. However, it is also this same power that brings about her demise. Millie’s curse is ultimately an African curse and therefore Christianity cannot, nor should it, save Millie. The legends of her ancestral heritage are “rooted” within her — effectively making her, her own self-contradiction. Millie has to die in order to legitimise the African culture traditions of the ex-slaves and thereby authenticate a Jamaican culture and provide “roots” for an increasingly literate black and coloured middle class.

In recapping the first part of this chapter, I have suggested that Jamaican history in the mainstream has been the history of imperialism. Colonial documentation and literature has predominately focused upon the ways in which the ruling class saw themselves with the result that black Caribbean history was effectively erased or relegated to “folk culture.” de Lisser sought to readdress this balance by writing within the literary genre of gothic literature and using women to supplicate sensationalism, thus highlighting the realities of plantation slavery. In so doing, he also brought to the foreground the Afro-Caribbean religions and traditions of the enslaved population. As Pradel reminds us “religious faith is expressed in proverbs, myths, legends, as well as in the memory of millions of individuals deported from Africa to the Caribbean” (260), and the literary conventions of gothic literature enabled de Lisser to create a literary space whereby the supernatural myths and legends of African traditions could exist, in order to investigate the oral forms that outlined the difference between the two conflicting cultures within Jamaican society. By disempowering colonial culture and empowering Afro-Caribbean culture as evidenced through the dichotomous relationship of Annie and Mille, de Lisser is able to illustrate how the “colonised” were able to manifest their spirituality and maintain a sense of identity, separate from the dominant European culture.

Sidney Mintz contends that, “the past continually conditions the present” (21), and therefore the power of folk culture and cultural traditions

resides in the continued oration and written (re)interpretation of these stories. Therefore, to change direction, the second part of this chapter examines how de Lisser's novel has been recognised as a national Jamaican narrative and Annie Palmer has become a national legend. Although not a heroine *per se*, it is her infamy and subsequent legacy that has manifested itself into the legend of Rosehall. The house, along with its inhabitants, is Jamaica's foremost legend and is permanently etched within the Jamaican consciousness. Rosehall has become a national historical heritage site in contemporary Jamaica, with the result that this continued reinterpretation and commodification of the legend in the twenty-first century raises questions as to its historical significance as against its sustaining impact upon the financial role with Jamaica's national economy.

First published in 1928 in his periodical *Planters' Punch*, de Lisser led with the title *The Witch of Rosehall*, and it was described in the periodical as "A Novel of striking incidents, woven around a character notorious in Jamaica history and legend. A vivid picture is also presented of life on a sugar plantation worked by slave labour in the Jamaica of a hundred years ago." (1929) It was published a year later in September 1929 by Ernest Benn in London with the adjusted title of *The White Witch of Rosehall*, possibly to encourage the sensationalism of a gothic novel, by placing a "white" witch at the beginning of the text.

Originally created from the oral testimonies of slaves, the legend of Rosehall had already been documented by John Castello in his 1868 pamphlet

Legend of Rose Hall Estate; in the Parish of St. James, and de Lisser's 1928 (re)interpretation of the legend according to Ray Fremmer "took up the story where Castello left off" (12). Even though Castello's pamphlet was reproduced in its entirety in Joseph Shore's 1911 book *In Old St. James* which juxtaposed "The Mystery of Rose Hall" alongside "The True Tale of Rose Hall," it is de Lisser's interpretation which has been credited with validating the tale of Rose Hall. As Fremmer writes:

When Herbert De Lisser put his novel *The Witch of Rose Hall* in the book shops in 1929 he intended it for nothing more than an entertaining piece of fiction. However, for many of his readers here in Jamaica anything printed in a book is the gospel truth and they accepted the story as fact, not fiction. It reached the point where so many people related the story to others who hadn't yet read it or heard it, and told it like they heard it from their grandmother, that it gradually became hard to doubt the story. (12)

While the inspiration for this story may have lain with the first lady of Rose Hall, Rosa Palmer, who had four husbands, with the historical Annie Palmer dying peacefully in 1846, the legend foretells the beautiful but dangerous young wife of John Palmer, who in the course of her lifetime, had three husbands who died under suspicious circumstances at Rose Hall and whose untimely death was at the hands of rebel slaves. The legend foretells that

Annie is buried in the grounds of Rose Hall. As a result this encourages the rumours of ghosts and apparitions which continue to breathe life into this vibrant story.

de Lisser's legitimisation of the legend through his fictional representation of Annie was well received. A.A.'s review of the novel in his article "West Indies Get Publicity in Two Novels" comments upon how "the author follows closely the history and traditions of the wicked Mrs. Palmer" and ascertains that de Lisser "is at his best in his descriptions of Jamaica scenery" concluding that "it is certainly a book to be read" (*Daily Gleaner* 7 Oct. 1929: 3). Further appreciation of the novel came after the publication of the novel in the comment and letters sections of *Planters' Punch*. Although I accept that many of these comments may be unreliable, given the paucity of resources, it is worth bringing these opinions to the reader's attention. Therefore, U.T.M. (U. Theo McKay, brother to Claude McKay) in his letter to the Editor of *The Daily Gleaner* not only comments that the novel "is the work of an artist," but acknowledges that *Planters' Punch* is a "well-got up magazine" that "helps to enrich our Jamaica literature for which we are indebted to the author" (4 Jan. 1929: 12). The novel has enjoyed successful reprints over the years, including a serialisation of over 40 instalments in *The Daily Gleaner* during the latter half of 1975. A new bound edition of the book published by Macmillan in 2007 benefits from an updated front cover, and favourable book reviews that appeared in *The Daily Gleaner* in 2008. The early covers of *The White Witch of Rosehall* portray Annie enclosed by palm trees, but foregrounded astride a strong stallion. Dressed all in red, her facial features

are severe and unwelcoming while the slaves appear beneath her horse, literally downtrodden, while the famous residence remains in the background. In contrast, the 2007 updated cover jacket links the ominous title with the foreboding architecture of “the finest house in Jamaica” by foregrounding the restored house at the centre of the cover. This central positioning of the house, as a symbol of the inequalities of slavery as opposed to the “witch,” is a reflection of how the Great House itself has taken on its own personality in the continuing perpetuation of this myth. Surrounded by blackness, the grotesque head of the Rolling Calf rising out of green smoke is imposed over the image of the house. This encourages a sense of eerie expectation and serves as a reminder of Jamaican folklores. The palm trees adjacent to the staircase and the three figures at the foot of the stairs all dressed in period attire, continue to present a sinister atmosphere and implied Gothicism.

In depth scholarly research on *The White Witch of Rosehall*, has been somewhat limited. However, Laura Lomas’s paper which aims to discuss “how DeLisser and other novelists, Joseph Shore (1911) and Harold Underhill (1968) have employed the legend of Rose Hall to assert continuous colonial and neo-colonial hegemony” (72), serves as an extension of the already well researched and published paper written by Glory Robertson in 1968. Although both Lomas and Robertson examine the origins of the legend, Lomas expands her analysis to include the contemporary tourist pamphlets that have since been produced. However her commentary on de Lisser’s novel is limited and Underhill does not feature at all, despite her earlier comment. Her arguments as to the legitimacy and unreliability of oral and written sources as set out in the earlier

written testimonies of Castello and a number of letters produced in *The Daily Gleaner* during 1895 merely echo Robertson's earlier paper and in my opinion are not as well presented.

To turn to Robertson's 1968 paper "The Rose Hall Legend." Robertson explores the origins of the legend and unpacks the many conflicting testimonies presented around this legend and the estate of Rosehall in an attempt to provide evidentiary and legitimate support for "probably the best known story in Jamaica." Eloquently debated and well researched, Robertson maps the trajectory of the legend from early oral sources and later newspaper correspondence, specifically a run of letters that were published in *The Daily Gleaner* during the latter part of the nineteenth century. These letters act as a buffer between two conflicting positions as to the legend of Rosehall and the reliability of oral stories. Robertson concludes that de Lisser's novel "put the seal of public acceptance of Annie as the villainess and of 1820-33 as the period of the tale" (10). Robertson's detailed research in establishing time lines and the background history of each of the Mrs Palmer's also raises questions as to the reliability and authenticity of oral sources and traditions.

As a consequence, while the ambiguities surrounding the life and death of the infamous Jamaican folk legend Annie Palmer remain, there is no doubt that the legend is in a league of its own, even after the "facts" of the legend were finally established in the mid-sixties. In 1965, after extensive archival research in Spanish town, the Government archivist Geoffrey S. Yates published his findings over two instalments in *The Daily Gleaner*. These

articles categorically stated that the lurid stories surrounding Annie Palmer and the gothically foreboding Rosehall were without any foundation. According to Yates's research, the "real" Annie Palmer was only married once at the age of 17 and was widowed by 1832. She took up residence on an estate Belle Vue, bequeathed to her by her uncle in 1842 and died there quietly and peacefully in 1846. Therefore, with the emancipation of slavery taking place in Jamaica by 1838 (and the Baptist War which is the backdrop to the story which took place in 1831), it is highly unlikely that she was murdered by a slave in her room.

Despite the publication and existence of these authenticated historical facts, the legend continues to have a life of its own. In addition to de Lisser's interpretations, constant revivals, reinterpretations and commodifications of the legend have gone from strength to strength, thereby attracting worldwide appeal and continuing to fill column inches in *The Daily Gleaner* and other newspapers.³⁹ US psychedelic rock band Coven penned a song "The White Witch of Rose Hall" for their 1969 album *Witchcraft Destroys Minds and Reaps Souls*, while contemporary websites of ghostly images are dedicated to the "white witch." Additional various engaging tales surrounding the legend of Annie in narrative form, both fictional and semi-historical, have not necessarily improved upon the original text. Various contributors throughout the decades

³⁹ Although this is not an exhaustive list, please see: *Daily Gleaner*, "Queen owns 3 novels by de Lisser", 2 Dec. 1953: 6. Print; "Death of a Legend", 21 Nov. 1965: 7. Print; "Was it really Annie?" 5 Dec. 1965: 7. Print; "How a witch was born", 22 Mar. 1981: 12. Print; "Here to plan shooting of White Witch of Rose Hall", 14 Feb. 1967: 7. Print; "annie, di white witch, 19 Aug. 2003 6-7. Print; "At the library – The White Witch of Rose Hall" 24 Oct. 1982: 6. Print; "West Indies get publicity in two novels", 7 Oct. 1929: 3. Print; "Book Review", 24 Aug. 2008: 6. Print; "Book Review", 20 Apr. 2008: 3. Print; "White Witch of Rose Hall to be filmed", 2 Nov. 1938: 23. Print; "Theatre '75", 4 Jan. 1976 n.pag. Print. "The White Witch of Rose Hall, Well-acted, intelligent and amusing", 13 Oct. 1975: 4. Print; "Nominated for Awards", 15 Sept. 1978: 4. Print. Also see *Gastonia Gazette*, "Annie's Black Magic Was Steeped In Evil", 2 June 1968: 6. Print; and *Xenia Daily Gazette*, "White Witch of Rose Hall Fell at The Hand of Those She Enslaved", 17 Dec. 1969: 4. Print.

have embellished the legend, with a 1968 reading by Harold Underhill, entitled *Jamaican White*, filling the gaps left by de Lisser and enhancing Annie's salacious reputation with the addition of emphasising her sexual appetite for various book-keepers and slaves.

The amalgamation of these interpretations is further promoted through Clinton Black's revisitation in his *Tales of Old Jamaica* while Sol B. River wrote a stage version of *The White Witch of Rose Hall* in 1998 which premiered in Jamaica to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the University of the West Indies. Although a 2006 revision of de Lisser's classic text entitled *Rose Hall: A Legend*, written by Mike Henry, regurgitates de Lisser's characters in a twenty-first century framework, it is the poorer for it. A more recent exciting reinterpretation has been sourced through local literature in a short story entitled *annie, di white witch*. Written in 2003 by Karen Beale, a youth writer this short story recounts the legend in local Jamaican dialect. However, although de Lisser's novel may be guilty of predictable plotlines and stereotypical language, (in light of the fact it was written in 1928), it is testimony to the creative talent of de Lisser that this novel continues to be republished. Although these alternative interpretations enhance the national trajectory of the tale, it is de Lisser's Jamaican narrative that has monopolised the historiography of this legend. Further adaptations of de Lisser's novel were made into theatrical productions, while a serialisation of his work appeared in a Swedish magazine in 1955 and the film rights were sold to a Hollywood film studio in the late 1930s. Although unsubstantiated, the rumours of a movie deal along with these various theatrical productions have kept the legend of

Rosehall within the conscious imagination. This significant (re)telling of de Lisser's legend has provided the tale with a level of historical verisimilitude which has not only continued to pervade the Jamaican psyche but has also attracted global attention and even encouraged tourism to the region.

The manifestation of the legend which has been commodified beyond the Jamaican shores includes the atmospheric house attracting as many column inches as its ghostly inhabitants. The house that stood "white in the golden light of the sun" and "dominated the landscape" (1) has become a legend within its own right. Various newspaper articles in *The Daily Gleaner* have traced the decay and restoration of the house, always prefaced with a mention of the ghost of Annie Palmer, with avid interest. (20 Feb. 1957:1; 6 July 1965: 11) The famous American entrepreneur John Rollins and his wife, a former Miss USA, bought the house in the early 1970s. A book was later published dedicated to the history of the house and its restoration. Complete with photographs, the legends and anecdotes were edited by the eminent Rex Nettleford in 1973. Recently, the house has been featured in a tourist brochure as a "national historic trust which belongs to all Jamaicans" (Lomas Note 4) and as a result the Rosehall Estate has become an iconic monument in its own right. This has been further endorsed by Prime Minister Shearer whose enthusiastic embrace of de Lisser's novel as a means of attracting "national...attention" to "our cultural history" during the opening ceremony of the newly refurbished house in 1971 not only validated de Lisser's novel as a national narrative, but also placed Rosehall at the centre of national pride by thanking Mr Rollins for restoring Rosehall to Jamaica.

A tour of the house today combines de Lisser's legend along with a scattering of different interpretations, but ultimately, it is his novel that they sell in the gift shop. I was fortunate enough to participate in a guided tour of the house and gift shop on my research trip to Jamaica in 2005. Escorted through the house by a guide in period dress, the house has been restored to include silk on the walls and mahogany throughout. Each bedroom where a "husband" met his death, along with Annie's bedroom as described in de Lisser's novel, is shown, complete with ghosts stories both past and present. The gift shop which is located in the dungeons along with the "pub" displays de Lisser's novel very prominently and is (or was at the time of my visit) the only fictional account on display. The commodification of the legend and estate are now complete in that today Rosehall is renowned not just for its sinister legends, but for its golf course and as a premier wedding venue.

de Lisser understood the significance and impact of cultural unity in formulating a Jamaican identity and translated this cross-racial and cross-culture unity into his literary works during the first few decades of the twentieth century. By seamlessly incorporating Afro-Caribbean cultural traditions into his literature he was able to establish the cultural values of the "folk" while simultaneously providing the Jamaican population with a "rooted" history, highlighting the role that they have played in developing their cultures and society. Through his self-conscious exploration of oral traditions, legends and social history de Lisser produced images of national identity that he was then able to translate into the written word, thereby creating a national literary

vision that continues today through his quintessential novel *The White Witch of Rosehall*.

CHAPTER VI

The Power of the Written Word: *Planters' Punch*, and the Relocation of Women into the Public Sphere.

The main aim of this thesis has been to recuperate de Lisser as a significant and influential early Caribbean writer. In my recovery of de Lisser, I have discussed the various ways that he represents women within his literature in order to project an image of a Jamaican nation. With the continuously held belief that gender and nation are socially constructed, with men occupying the public sphere of “war and politics” and women occupying the sphere of “femininity and domesticity,” this thesis has sought different avenues that highlight the way that de Lisser consistently blurs the boundaries between these spheres through the creation of female heroes, the reversal of gender roles and the creation of strong independent women who are not reliant upon men to move socially forward or upwards, thereby recognising that they are central to the creation of the nation, and not just in terms of “reproducing” the nation. Therefore, this final chapter investigates the ways in which de Lisser reconciles these separate spheres and moves women away from the private arena of domesticity and into the public sphere of politics and national identity through his magazine *Planters' Punch*.

As has already been mentioned throughout this thesis, the general constructions of nation and nationhood have been founded upon the traditional hegemonic notions of manhood and womanhood, as set out within the widely recognised public and private spheres of society. These culturally constructed

social spheres allocate men into the public sphere of civilisation and society while inserting women into the private sphere of nature and domesticity. Equally, traditional academic literature on nationhood and nationalism appears to suggest that nationalism is founded upon Nation and State but concedes that clarifying a definition of a Nation is complex and problematic. Ernest Gellner opts for two provisional definitions which simply suggest that either “two men are of the same nation if and only if they share the same culture, where culture in turn means a system of ideas and signs and associations and ways of behaving and communicating” or “Two men are of the same nation if and only if they *recognise* each other as belonging to the same nation” (5). In other words, according to Gellner, if you *look the same*, or vote for the same *political party* or *speak the same* then you are of the same nation. However, this definition is somewhat stunted in light of recent feminist and social construction theorists who reposition the significance of women into a more central role in creating nationalism and also take the view that gender, nation and sexuality are culturally and socially constructed. It also fails to take into account the changing transnational boundaries, multicultural societies and global communities that now shape individual countries and the world in general.

However, a question of the greatest importance to this study is how did de Lisser define a nation? As already mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, de Lisser held the belief that “one does not read the same papers...hear much the same sort of talk...eat the same food...enjoy the same recreations, without one’s mind becoming assimilated to the minds of one’s countrymen”

(*Twentieth* 48). While it would appear in the first instance, that de Lisser is adhering to Gellner's definition, his interpretation of a nation is more inclusive. de Lisser's "nation" of Jamaica was inclusive of race, gender and class. By borrowing "up" from the peasantry and appropriating folk culture to create a middle-class culture and borrowing "down" from the elite in his appropriation of highbrow literature into a more popular middlebrow format, he sought to create a nation of Jamaica that was completely inclusive of both men and women. As Tamar Mayer aptly states "while it is men who claim the prerogatives of nation and nation-building, it is for the most part women who actually tend to accept the obligation of nation and nation-building" (2). Therefore by personifying women as a symbol of Jamaica and re-inscribing the importance of women within the public sphere, de Lisser was able to recognise their pivotal role in the shaping and forming of a Jamaican cultural and national identity.

Throughout his career, de Lisser used both his novels and his periodical *Planters' Punch* as a means of relocating women within the public sphere, a fact that has been acknowledged by Rhonda Cobham in her article "Women in Jamaican Literature 1900-1950." This article charts the literary historical representation of women in Jamaican literature and although Cobham uses as her frame of reference literature written by black male and female authors, it is significant that she has included in her analysis de Lisser's early representations of the working-class black female (195). Therefore, by adopting Cobham's historical literary framework, this chapter will map the same trajectory but use de Lisser's novels, as they are set out in *Planters'*

Punch, as set against Jamaica's socio-historical context in order to highlight the significance of de Lisser's representation of women in Jamaican literature and discuss how he foresaw women as builders of a nation. Furthermore by mapping Cobham's literary historical investigation of women over de Lisser's literary work and career, one is able to re-orientate his work against those critics who claim that his work was one-dimensional and concentrated on the Jamaican elite. These general assumptions are challenged through the juxtaposition of de Lisser's novels alongside the contents of *Planters' Punch* which outline the social, political, ideological and aesthetic significance of women to his oeuvre. By relocating women in the public sphere and providing evidence that de Lisser's represented women as a symbol for Jamaica, I hope to validate my contention that although de Lisser's magazine appealed to the middle-class masses, he used his magazine as a "melting pot" to create a national historiography of Jamaican identity and cultural nationalism.

Scholarly research on *Planters' Punch* has remained very limited. Critics of de Lisser have relegated the annual magazine to a few sentences in their general biographies of de Lisser's literary merits. In contrast, Cobham investigated a small sample of his work from the magazine through her critique of "Myrtle and Money," while Rosenberg has concentrated on his 1929-1930 volume which she uses to support her critical analysis and interpretation of *The White Witch of Rosehall*. Her position focuses upon the juxtaposition of the printed layout of this "white" novel in *Planters' Punch* as set against the "black" articles contained within the periodical and her conjecture is that de Lisser was promoting white womanhood at the expense of the coloured and

black classes. Although her scholarly contribution is significant, in this thesis I adopt a different position.

It is my contention that de Lisser's paradoxical and multifaceted writings are more of a reflection of the "melting pot" of creolisation and the diversity of the different cultures within Jamaican society. Bolland uses the metaphorical representation of the callalou soup to project his observations regarding national and cultural unity. (*Creolisation* 16) Therefore, within the same vein of metaphorical allegories, I would suggest that de Lisser's "mixing" of *Planters' Punch*, which consists of one part sour, one part sweet and so on, serves the same purposes in drawing from all sections of Jamaican life and culture in order to create a Jamaican cultural unity. I would suggest that the printed layout should be examined not in terms of prestige and entertainment but instead in terms of the ways in which it suggests that women from both races shared equal space within a popular and heavily read magazine, thereby promoting a restorative pride and national unity. Edmondson is equally accepting of this shared public space. By challenging the history of women within popular culture she argues that the "lowbrow arena of the dancehall" and the "middlebrow venue of the beauty pageant stages" (*Middlebrow* 111) are used as "performative spaces" that become transgressively political and positive within the twentieth and twenty first centuries. Her contention that this "crossing of boundaries" from private to public space actually allows "the black, brown and Asian constituencies' desire for a publicly acknowledged respectable femininity" (*Middlebrow* 111), resonates with de Lisser's attempts

to give non-white women within Jamaican society a shared voice alongside the white Jamaican ladies of social standing.

Nestled within the 1929 edition of *Planters' Punch*, one can find an article on “Some Mothers of Jamaica and their little ones,” which contains four portraits of white Jamaican women of some means with their respective offspring alongside an article that traces the trajectory of black dance troupes within history entitled “The Dancing Girl of Old And of To-day.” Portraying a positive image of dancing girls, this article traces the history from ancient Egypt through to the difference between Jamaican “sets” and the more contemporary “troupe.” Written by de Lisser himself it provides a broad historical analysis of the rise of dance and performance on the stage and recognises the increasing respectability that this profession was attracting. With an appreciation for the local Jamaican dancers over other “travelling” dance troupes de Lisser concludes that “Jamaica will prefer her own girls as dancers, and this opens a new avenue to local talent” (2:3 21), and as evidence of his support to the local community this article is subsequently followed by the amateur dramatics of the “The Mayfair Promenaders,” another dancehall troupe who gave a series of performances at the Ward Theatre.

Equally enlightening, is de Lisser’s 1930 edition of *Planters' Punch*, in that nestled alongside an article entitled “Here Are Ladies Delightful” is an Asian inspired article “Our Jamaica Chinese Ladies – An Influence.” The first article recognises the rise of women within the public domain, specifically in America and acknowledges that “women are going to set the tone of modern

civilisation” (2:4 1). Alongside stereotypical notions of how women are perceived by Anglo-Saxon and East Indian men and society in general, de Lisser highlights women’s contribution to the war effort and how in securing the right to vote, they used it effectively to overthrow the conservatives in England in favour of a new Labour government. The second article acknowledges the “generation of West Indian Chinese” who are “Chinese in descent, but Jamaicans by birth” and as such “have a place in the Jamaica cosmos” (2:4 8). Focusing on the women who represent an “intelligent and cultured class,” it highlights Jamaica’s hybridity by specifically pointing out that many Chinese women hold responsible positions within non-Chinese businesses and they are encouraged to apply for any position “for which her talents and education fit her” (2:4 8). Although focused on the more affluent Jamaican Chinese, the article is significant in that it brings to the readers’ attention a different community that has not only produced one of the two female Jamaican doctors practising in Jamaica at the time, but also that they are hard working and will “help to make the Jamaica of tomorrow” (2:4 9).

Throughout his periodical, de Lisser also featured prominent women in Jamaican society. His opening periodical featured a portrait of Mary Gaunt along with a brief outline of her career. The following year he selected Mrs R. Fink “as the lady to whom, this year, ‘Planters’ Punch’ desires to call particular attention” and published a number of her poems. By 1925, in addition to publishing local literary talent, de Lisser also included “beauty pages” where pictures of “Jamaican belles” appeared. In an article entitled “The Fair Daughters of Jamaica: Characteristics” de Lisser’s editorial informs the reader

that his reasoning for their inclusion was in order to present “our island’s grace and beauty” and therefore a more comprehensive picture of Jamaica could be represented to the international arena, which would run counter to the “burlesque” and stereotypical images that misrepresented Jamaica. When de Lisser replaced these “beauty pages” photographs with a one- or two-sentence by-line they were openly missed and commented upon within the letters section of *The Daily Gleaner*. Therefore, it would seem that de Lisser was attempting to publish a broad spectrum of features that positively represented all the various women within Jamaican society.

de Lisser continued to encourage local talent and published poems by Doris Evelyn in 1936 and Dorothy Barnes in his 1938 edition. His rationale for publishing local writers is evidenced by his support of Evelyn in particular. He perceives her as a “youthful Jamaica writer of promise” and believes that she will “one day produce work of credit to herself and her country” (3:4 51). By providing a forum for women writers within his magazine, de Lisser was allowing them unprecedented access to an, albeit limited, public sphere. By encouraging controversial debates and supporting local female Jamaican artists he was potentially providing a wider arena for literary recognition — the national press. *Planters’ Punch* was de Lisser’s personal forum in which he could inter-mix his didacticism with political commentary.

As a result, de Lisser’s conceptualisation of women as a national symbol of Jamaica is not based on racial boundaries alone, and he continued to represent the social and historical realities of Jamaican society. Aware of the

problems relating to racial prejudice and social injustice, especially with regards to the injustices of colour discrimination, de Lisser placed strong female characters as central to all his novels, thereby personifying them as a national symbol for Jamaican identity and nationalism in order to present this multifaceted and “blended” nation. Although his political allegiance may have gravitated towards a more conservative forum, in terms of his advocacy of social mobility and a shared cultural history, he never wavered in his belief that it was women who were the collective identity for nationalism. He saw women as the foundational pillars of nation-building and attempted to reflect this across his literature and magazine.

Alongside these articles, individual features and advertisements of local produce and business, de Lisser also published his female focused novels, to the order of at least one per periodical. Throughout the length of the periodical, de Lisser’s novels tended to include character snapshots of prominent businessmen or women of the empire interspersed through their layout. Rosenberg’s issue with these “snapshots” and subsequent articles is that they create a biased picture in favour of the white elite. In refutation of this position, the pattern of de Lisser’s layout in terms of his novels and their relationship to the various articles would suggest that he is relocating women, *all* women, into the public sphere. For example, de Lisser’s repositioning of successful women into the main frame of “Christina’s Dream,” and surrounding articles served to inspire social mobility. The “character snapshot” situated towards the end of “Christina’s Dream” features a Mrs W.A. Vickers (1:1 18). The wife of the Custos of Westmoreland, de Lisser informs us, was an “indefatigable worker

during the war” as she raised a significant amount of money for the Red Cross and was responsible for the “The King’s Fund” which was “for disabled officers and men of the Army, Navy and Auxiliary Forces.” Clearly a woman of substance, her charitable endeavours highlight the significant social and political role that certain women played during the war. Acknowledging the powerful role that women were capable of playing within mainstream society as set against the uplifting sentiments of social mobility in “Christina’s Dream,” de Lisser sought to encourage the reader to take pride in Jamaica as a nation.

Rosenberg’s engagement with de Lisser’s periodical makes a compelling argument for *Planters’ Punch* to be read from an anti-nationalist and anti-labour position. She contends that de Lisser’s political beliefs as to who would aid Jamaica’s transition into modernity shifted from his working-class Afro-Jamaican woman allegiance at the turn of the century to a more “white” elitist rhetoric by the end of the First World War, and draws upon the evidence contained within his periodical as confirmation that his attitude changed. Her train of thought continues in this direction when she highlights that many of de Lisser’s articles were then focused on the white elitist society including the aristocratic women and ladies of society, culminating in her observations in relation to his attitude towards men within Jamaican society. She comments that by the 1930s artists and politicians were focusing on the iconography of the black male worker as representative of Jamaican identity and nationalism and concludes that because de Lisser did not feature positive images of men in his periodical, other than the leading Jamaican business

leaders, he did not view the black male worker as a significant part of Jamaica's "bright future." Rosenberg's conjecture is not in dispute, *per se*, as de Lisser did see women and not men as builders of a nation. However, her accusation that the magazine could be viewed as "an inversion of social history" is inaccurate given that de Lisser's various representations of women as I argue in this thesis encourage an alternative interpretation of his magazine. This is further evidenced through my interpretation of the juxtaposition of de Lisser's novels alongside his feature articles.

Literary representations of Jamaican women in early Jamaican literature focused on the lower-class Jamaican woman. According to Cobham the characteristic literary traits of the lower-class Jamaican woman was as an individual who was financially independent from men and families, hard-working but sexually promiscuous. As a result, these Jamaican women were perceived as "unchaste" and "sinful" by the dominant Victorian culture. de Lisser's novels *Jane's Career* and *Susan Proudleigh* which are obvious examples of this early national literature counteracted these overtly sexualised stereotypical assumptions through his examination of the mutually exclusive relationship of sexual favours vis-à-vis financial independence. Cobham makes the point that de Lisser in his early Jamaican literature actually "satirize[s] the moral values which the dominant culture tried to impose on the working class women," and by exposing the hypocrisy of Jamaican society de Lisser was able to write into existence black female characters who were financially independent but not at the cost of their moral respectability. These characteristic traits of respectability and marriage which were commonly

reserved for white female characters found further favour in the literature that continued to emerge after the First World War. With the emergence of the black middle class after the First World War and the increase of literacy rates, Cobham suggests that the appropriation of these characteristics by black and brown female protagonists is indicative of the desire of “the new black bourgeoisie” who sought to claim for itself the prerogatives of virtue and refinement from which their race had until now been excluded (“Women” 203). During this period, de Lisser published some eight novels in *Planters’ Punch*, culminating within *The White Witch of Rosehall* as the novel that closed the decade.⁴⁰ Without exception all of de Lisser’s heroines within these texts are virtuous, respectable and many are financially independent. Many of the protagonists move up the social scale through marriage and good deeds, as perceived by the dominant culture, and there is a plethora of comments through the novels relating to improvements of circumstances and turning one’s life around.

de Lisser also sought to represent women within a more political arena and of the three political novels that de Lisser produced during this decade, it is his 1928 novel “The Sins of the Children” that merits further commentary. Repositioning the main protagonist as female, “The Sins of the Children” focuses upon the issues of race and miscegenation in a distinctly political forum. In addition, the recurring themes of migration and local politics serve to illustrate the growing awareness of politics within Jamaican society. Set

⁴⁰ These novels are featured throughout the first six periodicals of the first volume of *Planters’ Punch* in the following order: “Christina’s Dream,” “The Rivals,” “The Devil’s Mountain,” “The Adventures of Mr Jenkins Abroad,” “The Defence of Jamaica,” “The Jamaican Nobility,” “The Sins of the Children,” and *The White Witch of Rosehall*. Please refer to Appendix III of this thesis for a brief synopsis of each novel’s plot and relevant themes.

against this incendiary political backdrop, Vi Bressley and Gus Steinway fall in love with each other. Loosely based on Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* — complete with star-crossed lovers and family rivalries — their “forbidden” love emerges from their racial differences as opposed to social status — for although Vi is wealthy and from a good family she is “coloured” and Gus is white. The main action of the novel focuses on the implications of their relationship not only for their families but also for Jamaican society in general.

The social and political positioning of Vi is critical to our analysis of this novel in relation to de Lisser's strategies of representing women as positive role models and symbolic of a Jamaican nation. Significantly, Vi's social and racial mobility have moved on from Christina's in “Christina's Dream” in that she is financially independent (she is Aunt Primrose's heir apparent) and demonstrates a racial pride as she resists the social constraints presented by her colour. However, it is here that de Lisser's characterisation of Vi becomes complicated. For on the one hand, Vi seeks “respectability through marriage” and is therefore claiming the “prerogatives of virtue and refinement” normally associated with white female characters. However on the other hand, she has had sexual intercourse outside of marriage and fallen pregnant and therefore conforms to the stereotype already perceived by the dominant Victorian culture as “unchaste” and “sinful.” The significance of this characterisation is the emerging independence of Jamaican culture which is not necessarily dependent upon colonial attitudes as signifiers for appropriate behaviour. Although the novel subsequently ends with a successful marriage, albeit the couple have had to marry outside of Jamaica, the acceptance that Jamaica is evolving is not lost

on the reader. Although the novel ends in marriage, suggesting tutelage, Vi is a woman of independent financial means, and does not “have” to marry Gus. So once again, de Lisser’s “happy ending,” is more in line with the ending of a romantic novel as opposed to any bonds of tutelage.

In unpacking this complex characterisation, I would further suggest that Vi symbolises the inter- and intra-racial difficulties that were affecting Jamaica during this time period. To this end, Vi not only carries the “baggage” of the old Jamaica and its antiquated colonial attitudes towards race and social status, but she is also a symbol of hope for the new emerging Jamaica. She refuses to be bound by her racial colouring and she demands to be treated as an equal. Her emergence as a strong, well educated and independent woman is indicative of Jamaica beginning to emerge from the shadows of colonialism with local Jamaican women fulfilling many challenging roles within the public sector and the civil service.

Finally, this is one of the few novels of de Lisser’s in which a child is featured. Returning briefly to the perceived public and private spheres, it goes without saying that women occupied the private sphere of domesticity, and therefore a woman’s seemingly natural role was to bear children. Children in de Lisser’s novels are noticeable by their absence and therefore it is not without a small measure of irony that de Lisser has titled this novel, “The Sins of the Children” in order to evoke the biblical notion of the sins of the fathers being visited upon children. With an article appearing alongside this novel entitled the “Children of Jamaica” where “‘Planters’ Punch’ has pleasure this

year in printing the portraits of ‘Some Children of Jamaica’” (2:2 10), it would appear that while de Lisser is reminding the reader of the woman’s traditional role within society from a conservative position, he then displays his radicalism through his renegotiation of her role in the public sphere. de Lisser is raising awareness that women within society are able to contribute much more to their nation than simply motherhood.

Moving towards the 1930s in Jamaican literary development, Cobham asserts that women were encouraged through literature to live a life of leisure and exchange sexual desires for motherly and saintly love as they were no longer able to seek sexual gratification outside of marriage. This new standard of morality affected a disproportionate number of unmarried black and coloured Jamaican middle-class women who were “left on the shelf” as a result of many of the Jamaican men marrying upward on the colour scale, i.e., by marrying a foreign white woman in order to increase their social prestige. The advantage that this brought to Jamaican society was that many Jamaican women, due to their status and education, were able to attain good careers (because they were unmarried) including writing. de Lisser’s novels throughout this decade support these moralistic attitudes. During this period, issues surrounding the performance of identity and an engagement with racial hierarchies appear to have concerned de Lisser. In the eleven novels that he produced over this period he examined these issues from a reformist position in order to provoke political, social or moral change.⁴¹ Included within these

⁴¹ These novels are featured through the periodical *Planters’ Punch* in the following order: “The Jamaica Bandits,” *Morgan’s Daughter*, *The Cup and the Lip*, “The Crocodiles,” “Poltergeist,” “Poltergeist? The Last Phase,” *Under the Sun*, “Anacanoa,” “Conquest,” “The White Maroon,” “Zombies” and “Haunted.”

eleven novels are two novels which he wrote for a “white” audience. His first “white” novel, *The Cup and the Lip* (1932) serves as a social commentary on the white middle class by providing a microscopic examination of their dominant social expectations and mannerisms, while the second “white” novel *Under the Sun* (1935) parodies the Jamaican man’s desire for social prestige and elevation as argued by Cobham, in that Christopher Brown, a working-class salesman from Jamaica, marries a white working-class girl, Amy while on vacation in England and brings her back to Jamaica.

de Lisser’s desire to inaugurate new levels of pride in a Jamaican identity and nationalism saw an increase in the number of “historical” novels that he wrote during this period. Of the five historical novels he produced, during this period, two referred to folk legends and oral traditions, namely *Morgan’s Daughter* and “The Crocodiles,” while his “Arawak” trilogy straddled early Spanish and British occupation. This trilogy, which consists of “Anacanoa,” “Conquest” and “The White Maroon,” deals with Jamaica’s early history during Spanish occupation and Britain’s subsequent conquest of the colony. By the late 1930s, according to Cobham, the black Jamaican middle class were culturally able to challenge these white social norms, and so de Lisser returned to the literary trope of the working-class woman as “a symbol of revised racial and socio-economic values” (“Women” 210). The return to the literary trope of the working-class woman as “a symbol of revised racial and socio-economic values” is featured through de Lisser’s republication of *Jane’s Career* in 1940-41, followed by his novel “Myrtle and Money” in 1941-1942.

The articles that were inserted alongside these novels during this politically incendiary period in Jamaican history further reflect this trajectory of cultural and national unity and provide further support to my notion that de Lisser foresaw women as the future leaders of Jamaica. In the same year that he produced his sentimental novel *Morgan's Daughter* which reclaimed a national identity through the collective memory of slavery and folk legends, the articles for that year focused upon "A Woman as Empire Builder" and "Ladies in the Working World" (2:5 1-3, 25 & 41). Although on the surface these articles appear superficial and sanguine, their politically veiled messages are not hard to miss. "A Woman as Empire Builder" extols the virtues of a Lady Willingdon and the impact that her stay has had on Jamaica. Her husband's social positioning is laid out as well, and although of English birth and ancestry, her husband is the Governor-General of Canada. de Lisser's article sets out the growing trade relationship between Canada and Jamaica and credits Lady Willingdon for nurturing this relationship by distributing West Indian produce to her friends and acquaintances as gifts. The significance of this gesture reveals the role that women play within the political arena, even though they are relegated to the private realm of domesticity.

Through the use of parlour politics de Lisser recognises the role that women played in not only cultivating trade relationships between different countries, but also in furthering their "public political careers" through meeting their husbands' political friends. Although this role is traditionally passive, in that the Victorian feminine ideal of the "Angel in the House" was a mother who selflessly devoted her life to her children and remained submissive

towards her husband, de Lisser is arguing that from this marginalised role, one can draw strength and re-dress inequalities. Therefore, by relocating Lady Willingdon's "domestic" role onto a public stage, i.e., that of *Planters' Punch*, he is encouraging other women to follow suit. As he explains: "what one gifted woman can accomplish in a large country may, to a certain extent, be accomplished also by other women with lesser opportunities and a different position in smaller countries" (2:5 3). In other words, he is suggesting that the women of Jamaica are more than capable of replicating these accomplishments in their "smaller countries" and from their differing positions.

This veiled reference to Jamaica and Jamaican women is not lost upon the reader. Neither is the equally veiled warning that "women anywhere, outside of their own country, may make many friends for their country" (2:5 3). If women are representative of "Jamaica" as set out throughout this thesis, then Jamaica does not have to have just one "best friend" i.e., England and can cultivate "friendships" with other countries, namely Canada. This article juxtaposed against the political ramifications set out in *Morgan's Daughter* — which treats the desire for a rebellion to eradicate the British — could serve as a stark warning to the British colonial government about the growing political unease in Jamaica.

Similarly, in the same periodical a fundamental preoccupation of his article "Ladies in the Working World" is a recognition that social and cultural barriers are changing and that "to the young woman under thirty to-day it seems the most natural thing in the world that she should work, especially if

she is not of ample and independent means” (2:5 25). Thus, whereas the preceding article focused upon international relationships and a woman’s ability to influence those relationships, this article focuses upon the misplaced class snobbery of society that has prevented women from working as de Lisser embarks upon a soliloquy examining class relations and the common man. This running commentary on social positioning further highlights the social obstacles that Elizabeth has to endure and cannot overcome in *Morgan’s Daughter*. Of the four “working ladies” who adorn this article the most prominent picture is that of de Lisser’s niece, Rita Gunter.

Other articles produced during this decade focused on other prominent women within Jamaican society as well as locally produced literature from Doris Evelyn mentioned earlier in this chapter. Towards the close of this decade in the same periodical that saw the publication of his final novel in the Arawak trilogy, “The White Maroon,” de Lisser published an article that courted controversy as evidenced by opinions sent in to The Daily Gleaner. In an article titled, “English and Jamaican Society” two different viewpoints of Jamaica were offered from two women of social standing, Lucille Parks and Rita Gunter who hail from English and Jamaican ancestry respectively. Both are Oxford graduates but provide different perceptions of Jamaican society.

de Lisser expected the article to arouse the public’s opinion and even encouraged the debate by stating that as a “mere man” he did not offer his own opinion but has had “much pleasure in printing [these] contributions that are certain to prove interesting and provocative” (4:1 4-5). Parks’s rather

disparaging attack on Jamaican society and manners effectively suggests that English and Jamaican social manners are too far removed from each other with the result that the “Jamaican will never improve by aping the outer habits of the Englishman... Let him try and pierce to the qualities beneath” (4:1 4). Parks’s analysis seems to focus on the “privileged” class, whereas Gunter’s position acknowledges that there are not many “idle and rich” in Jamaica and she focuses her attention on the other stratas of society. According to Gunter, Jamaica is an agricultural country so the landed gentry have actually to work for a living, as she recognises the importance of the manufacturers and industrialists within the social strata. As a result Gunter argues that Jamaican society is composed of “planters, civil servants, engineers and workers generally” (4:1 5). Gunter continues by referring to the history of society in Jamaica as less than 200 years old and argues that Jamaica could never compete with England because of its geographical location which by its very isolation sets it at a disadvantage as against England’s cultural closeness to Europe. Significantly, Gunter ends her article on a note of female Jamaican unity by concluding:

Each type of girl is the result of her environment, the one a product of a small country with its limitations, the other of a large country with all its advantages...yet in this matter...Jamaica’s daughters are found to be more sincere and kindly, genuinely friendly, happy and generous, and, above all things, lacking in that peculiarly repellent hardness and calculation

characteristic of some English society women of
London. (4:1 5)

It would appear from this excerpt that both Gunter's and de Lisser's positioning are reflective of each other. Gunter is suggesting that Jamaican women do not desire to be like their counterparts and are in fact more sincere and happy as a result of their having been exposed to the harshness of London society. By encouraging a positive representation of Jamaican women for a middle-class, middlebrow audience Gunter, along with de Lisser, advocates women as central to the formation of a national identity. de Lisser's ability to use the displaced voices of others within *Planters' Punch* to position his nationalistic tendencies is an interesting and clever tactic and this "hidden in plain sight" concept is further reflected in the controversy that these articles courted within the local newspapers and de Lisser's own encouragement of such publicity. These articles highlight the influence that de Lisser was able to wield within the local media by owning and producing his own magazine and serve to aid our understanding of just how much power and influence he held in influencing public opinion. So just how influential was *Planters' Punch*? In order to fully appreciate the significance of *Planters' Punch*, it is necessary to investigate the marketing of *Planters' Punch*, and its widespread appeal.

Therefore, to change direction, the annual marketing of *Planters' Punch* generally took place in the last week of November, with advertisements for the magazine being displayed in *The Daily Gleaner* throughout the month of December. It went on sale from the 1st December each year. Marketed as a

“literary achievement,” the publication highlighted de Lisser’s novels a source of entertainment for the alleged 50,000 plus readership it attracted. de Lisser himself identifies his readership by citing in the opening article to the first edition that “while no work is intended for one section of our people only, no work of mine would ever have seen the light of print had it depended on their support alone.” He was also careful to publish the periodical around Christmas time when even the most frugal of families would be willing to spend an extra shilling, even though he knowingly sold it “for about a fourth of its cost price.” Although de Lisser recognised that it was the Kingston advertisers who effectively held the purse strings for the publication, it also needed a readership, and therefore the two went hand in hand, and it was de Lisser’s job to provide it. Therefore, while on the surface it would appear that *Planters’ Punch* was aimed at the white middle-class man and woman, its appeal was directed towards a mass market on both sides of the colour line. The first edition is the only edition that did not have an advertisement gracing its front page. Instead, it had a caricature of de Lisser “mixing” a large vat of *Planters’ Punch* (the national drink of Jamaica) that he could only reach via a step ladder. The green hills of Jamaica are viewed from the open window and a planters’ “pith” helmet and jacket are hanging on the back wall.⁴²

The *Punch* puppeteer which is hiding behind the “P” in the title is probably homage to the English magazine *Punch*, which was potentially the inspiration for de Lisser in creating this magazine in the first place. The significance of this caricature is reflected in the colonial influence of the

⁴² See Appendix II of this thesis.

planter society as juxtaposed with the mixed-race representation of de Lisser “mixing” both figuratively and literally the “punch.” This play on words in terms of a drink or delivery of a satirical punch line is veiled just beneath the irony of the “British” pith helmet. The marketing strategies for the first edition of *Planters’ Punch* advertised the magazine in *The Daily Gleaner* as “a Publication that every Local Reader should obtain: the Author is a Jamaican — and it deals with things Jamaican!” (25 Nov. 1920: 5), which was effectively promoting support for a local author through the local population. Alongside these advertisements that ranged in size but were clearly advertised in both the advertisement pages as well as within the newspaper narratives, were small “wanted” advertisements that informed the readership when and where *Planters’ Punch* was on sale. For example the 1927 edition informs the reader that “Planters’ Punch for 1927 is now on sale at all book stores. Price 1/, post free 1/4. An excellent number with several amusing stories and profusely illustrated” (10 Dec. 1926: 12). It would appear that where the newspaper needed a small white space to be filled, it advertised *Planters’ Punch*.

Other advertisements highlighted not only de Lisser’s full length novels, but also traded on any other significant events that were generally taking place in Jamaica. An advertisement for the 1927-28 edition not only comments on the fact that *Planters’ Punch* is an extra large volume with an additional 30 pages, but also features a piece titled, “Entertainment of Royal Visitors by Jamaica.” This inclusion of reports relating to the Royal family reinforced the ties to Britain, but also encouraged people to purchase the magazine through this manipulation of worldwide news and the assertion that

Planters' Punch is "the finest magazine ever produced in the West Indies. A Work of Art Literary and Pictorial" (8 Dec. 1927: 4). Equally, in order to market the magazine to a wider audience, the advertisement encouraged readers to treat the magazine as a souvenir and send it to their extended families. One such advertisement reads: "As a souvenir from Jamaica 'Planters' Punch' is in the first class. Every Jamaica family should have one to read at home and at least one to send to the relative abroad this Xmas" (8 Dec. 1927: 4). This encouragement to widen the readership of the magazine across national boundaries highlights the notion that *Planters' Punch* may have had an international as well as national audience. In a display of nationalistic unity, future advertisements in 1931 and 1933 referred to *Planters' Punch* as "A Jamaica Magazine" before tapering off to mainly small advertisements in the Wanted section. A revival of the banner advertisements in 1938 advertised *Planters' Punch* as "more beautifully illustrated than usual" and traded on de Lisser's success with *The White Witch of Rosehall* to publicise his latest offering which for the 1938-39 edition was "The White Maroon." Finally, in keeping with all things Jamaican, the advertisement also informs the reader that other contributions "about this part of the world" are from "Arnot Robertson, Miss R. Gunter and Miss Dorothy Barnes. The latter two are local Jamaican residents" (2 Dec. 1938: 13).

The final advertisement for *Planters' Punch* which followed the editor's death posthumously published the magazine to the "General Public." The information is concise, informing the readers that the magazine will "be issued as usual in the first week of next month and contains the usual

interesting reading matter.” However, other than the price, there is no flowery language to advertise any of the contents or any other inducements to buy the magazine (other than de Lisser’s death).

Following on from the well-timed placements and advertisements of *Planters’ Punch*, written appreciation of the magazine generally followed throughout December and January. Normally in the form of “letters to the editor,” the commentators were both local readers of *The Daily Gleaner* and purchasers of the magazine. Positive comments ranged from a discussion of the contents, including enjoyment of specific novels or articles and enthusiasm for the quality of the print. The magazine was A3 in size, and was printed on heavy, white paper. The later version of *Planters’ Punch* was printed on shiny paper. The periodical generally ran to over 100 pages in length, and nearly all the magazines featured at least one full-length novel written by de Lisser. Written commentaries relating to *Planters’ Punch* were featured within *The Daily Gleaner*, as set reviews or within the Editor’s Letters section. For example, a review of the magazine written by His Honourable Mr. Robert E. Noble, R.M. St. Thomas, appeared on page 4 of *The Daily Gleaner* under the heading “Review of Work: Wit and Humour” as he applauds the magazine for its mix of “delightful satire unmixd with bitterness.”

Although the magazine was financially successful, de Lisser’s desire to produce this magazine, it would appear, was not for financial gain, but to reach a wide reading audience. He sought to provide the entire Jamaican community with reading material that was essentially Jamaican in content and written by

Jamaicans for Jamaicans, and Noble re-enforces this attitude with his observation that “Although a large circulation is not needed to make *Planters’ Punch* a financial success the more the new magazine is read, the greater will be the enjoyment to very many people and I would therefore wish it to pass through as many hands as possible” (3 Dec. 1920: 4). If the desire was for it to pass through “as many hands as possible,” then the inference was that the magazine should be passed around communities and shared amongst fellow readers. Therefore, while it may not necessarily have been bought by the many it was read by them which made the actual readership of the magazine a lot higher than the sales figures would indicate. This is further evidenced in later editions of *Planters’ Punch* (predominantly the war years) when readers were actively encouraged to pass the magazine on to other members of the community through little citations throughout the magazine.

This chapter began with the intention of highlighting the important role that *Planters’ Punch* played in not only relocating women from the private to the public sphere, but also in reflecting a Jamaican identity, while remaining within the confines of the British Empire. In setting out the significance of *Planters’ Punch*, and the influence it wielded within Jamaican society, it is clear that *Planters’ Punch* was not just a vehicle for de Lisser to publish his fiction. Indeed, a final review of the magazine in *The Daily Gleaner* concluded that *Planters’ Punch* is “a magazine that many will wish to preserve as a period mark in Jamaica’s history” (9 Dec. 1944: 19). Although it was aimed predominantly at a female readership, the magazine featured fashion and beauty pages, nostalgic literary anecdotes of yesteryear, along with historical

articles which reflected upon Jamaica's complex and chaotic history. In addition to this "light" reading, the magazine also included numerous articles and debates upon contemporary social issues affecting Jamaica which tended to attract de Lisser's own acerbic commentary through his satirical alter-ego H.G.D, who commanded column inches. The magazine also operated as a local forum where local literary talent could be discovered and de Lisser regularly featured local poets or artists amongst the pages. Complimented for its elegant production the magazine received warm affection over the years and became an integral part of the Christmas festivities.

In addition to the heavily advertised pages of local businesses and products, *Planters' Punch* also carried advertisements for all the luxury hotels and popular vacation spots. de Lisser needed to attract as much sponsorship as possible in order to continue to publish the magazine at a full one fourth of its cost. For in the 24 years that the magazine was published, it never increased in price, even though the periodicals increase in pages was quite exponential. As a result, it was necessary not only to attract the business leaders of commercial Jamaica but also to keep their patronage. This would have had a direct influence over the magazines content and assists with my understanding of not only the influence that the magazine exerted within the public arena, but also sheds some light onto why de Lisser produced his oeuvre in such a way so as not to openly offend anyone. By maintaining this balance he was able to produce and finance such a vital form of public literary space, not just for him, but for the many literary local talent that he was keen to promote. In so doing, he was able to bring women into the wider public sphere of politics and

highlight their important contribution in creating a national identity, which in turn establishes their rightful place as builders of a nation.

CONCLUSION

Too Conservative to be a Nationalist: Herbert de Lisser's
"Forgotten" Career.

...de Lisser creates larger-than-life characters such as Annie Palmer, Psyche, and Elizabeth Morgan, who dominate the action in which they are involved. Such characters are memorable for their exaggerated, eccentric, or extraordinary qualities rather than for their reflection of "normal" human behaviour. (Birbalsingh, "H.G. de Lisser" 146)

Birbalsingh's observation in relation to de Lisser's central positioning of female characters within his novels manages to encapsulate a primary concern of this thesis, which is the desire for his work to be remembered. In creating "larger-than-life" female characters who dominated the action of his novels, de Lisser hoped that they would be memorable characters that would remain with the Jamaican literary psyche, if not within the confines of the novels, then possibly through the oral literary traditions that had first given birth to a number of them. de Lisser needed his female characters to have "extraordinary qualities" in order to affirm what he perceived to be symbolic representations of women as national motifs.

Prior to de Lisser and MacDermot, most West Indian literature was written by English writers who saw Jamaica as part of the British Empire and

as such their literature reflected this colonial mindset. Birbalsingh, in his literary biography of de Lisser, acknowledges that “de Lisser’s fiction contains the first extensive and reliable portrait of Jamaica in imaginative literature” (148). However, according to Ramchand, although de Lisser was “unequalled” as an “illustrator, in the novel form” he “is not a major West Indian artist” on the grounds that his “anti-nationalist position has affected West Indian attitudes to his place in West Indian writing” (*WNIB* 19). Originally written in 1970, Ramchand’s influential book *The West Indian Novel and its Background* has become a foundational text in the study of West Indian literature and Ramchand’s opinions of and conclusions about de Lisser have left a legacy that has been difficult to contest. Nonetheless, this thesis has attempted to do just that by re-examining this biased anti-colonial positioning to restore de Lisser to a more central position within early Caribbean or West Indian literature. By investigating de Lisser’s literary works through his representation of women he can be situated within a more inclusive Caribbean literary canon. At the same time as critiquing his claims, Ramchand’s recognition that de Lisser “takes up a feminist theme long before feminism became an issue in our writing” (*WNIB* 41) is central to this study by supporting my position that de Lisser was an early Caribbean author whose writing was complicated by the literary framework of colonial ambivalence. de Lisser was aware that women did not have a voice in mainstream society and literature and sought to redress that imbalance by creating formidable and fearless women at the centre of his novels.

Each chapter throughout this thesis has examined a different representation of female identity, by examining an array of female heroes, folk legends and national myths in order to map modern, independent women and their relocation into the public sphere, alongside his experimentation with the various genres available to him. Therefore, this conclusion seeks to highlight the ways in which he experiments with literary techniques and tropes in order to create an imaginative and distinctive literature that made him not just a “unique and engaging writer” but “the first West Indian novelist to present Jamaica from an insider’s point of view” (Birbalsingh, “H.G. de Lisser” 148). In other words, de Lisser was the first “native” author to write about Jamaica from a position of personal and cultural knowledge. As Birbalsingh reflects upon de Lisser’s political position he concedes that he may have been “too conservative, ambivalent, or unemotionally matter-of-fact,” but Birbalsingh is quick to point out that whatever his political affiliations were he was “a highly experienced career journalist” which gave him an advantage in reproducing the “liberalizing trends and social changes...accurately in his novels” (148).

As a result of de Lisser’s ambivalence, many an academic critic has labelled his political position as “too conservative.” Equally, because he has been recognised and respected as a “highly experienced career journalist,” his editorials, both political and satirical have found favour while his literary output has been disregarded. Cobham has argued that “the majority of de Lisser’s novels were written at a time when nationalism was on the increase,” and therefore contends that de Lisser’s dilution of black Jamaican manliness in his novels points to his journalistic argument that “Jamaicans, especially Black

Jamaicans, were incapable of leadership, innovation and, therefore self-government” (“Herbert George de Lisser” 174). While I support Cobham’s assertion that many of de Lisser’s novels were written against the backdrop of a new formulation of nationalism, I offer an alternative interpretation regarding his literary motives. Writing within this socio-cultural space of colonialism de Lisser’s novels have engaged with a number of female literary stereotypes or, even, archetypes. This thesis has debated the ways in which de Lisser reinterprets and reconstructs these images in order to translate them into positive emblems of a Jamaican identity. Although he adopts the framework and mimicry of an accepted colonial literary genre, he then subtly adapts that genre to his own ends. Through the renegotiation of dominant literary tropes, de Lisser was able to create a unique form of national literature that simultaneously deflected colonial attention in order to reflect the increasing nationalistic attitudes of an emerging independent Jamaica.

Put another way, it is through de Lisser’s representation of women and their central positioning within his novels that he is able to highlight a distinctive Jamaican identity within the confines of the accepted colonial legacy. This in turn enables him to destabilise notions of domination and superiority through his renegotiation of a number of established colonial stereotypes, namely the sexually promiscuous black working-class Jamaican woman or the tragic mulatto which, according to Ramchand was “almost without exception... derive[d] from or consolidate[d]...two stereotypes of the coloured person — the unstable mulatto (usually male) and the highly sexed and sensuous Coloured woman” (23). Ramchand provides examples of these

two literary stereotypes to elaborate upon their imagery by further suggesting that the “unstable mulatto” yearns “for whiteness” as there is a “mulatto touchiness about ancestry,” while the highly sexed and sensuous coloured woman continues to reinforce the popularity of this stereotype in later West Indian narratives.

Although de Lisser continued to investigate these stereotypical tropes throughout the body of his literature, his most successful interrogation of the black working-class woman stereotype is through his first two novels *Jane's Career* and *Susan Proudleigh* which both present a strong female character at the centre of the text. Through an investigation of his two female protagonists Jane and Susan respectively, de Lisser sought to challenge these traditional (mis)representations in order to present images of black working-class women who are successful, respectable, moral and intelligent. By reconfiguring these black women as part of the new generation of Jamaica who have “learnt to read and write,” he attempted to lift the Jamaican nation through his embodiment of these women as personifying an explicitly Jamaican nationality and identity. In contrast to the sexually promiscuous stereotype, both Jane and Susan are defined by their moral standing. Jane is well behaved, does not get involved with the local village boys and openly rejects her supervisor's advances at work. Equally, Susan dresses better than her contemporaries, resides in a “front” house rather than a yard and carries herself with an “air of social superiority.” Thus, through his adaptation of the genre of the “domestic novel” de Lisser recognises that it is women who will elevate the nation through social mobility and education. Furthermore, by creating positive female role models

he developed nationalistic tendencies that encouraged a sense of pride and self-respect. This desire to keep oneself up is synonymous with the new generation of expressive women and an emerging female independence, a phenomenon which de Lisser outlines within these two texts and in his later novel “Myrtle and Money” (a sequel to *Jane’s Career*). Through de Lisser’s complication of the traditional stereotype of the black working-class female he is able to introduce a self-respecting woman. By contesting these traditional representations he creates women of independence who advocate female nationalism and argue that black women should be recognised as builders of a nation in their own right.

In terms of racial identity, unlike the earlier literary representations of the “mulatto” stereotypes, de Lisser reconstructs his own fictional image of the “mulatto” in order to break the boundaries that have for centuries contained such mixed racial identity. Although he works to a degree within the manufactured gender paradigms of performance and domesticity, by re-establishing the female mulatto as the centrepiece of a number of his novels and by infusing her character with an emerging independent spirit and a desire for nationalism, de Lisser creates a “woman” (as opposed to an object of desire) and a leader. Working within the colonial frameworks of the historical narrative and gothic literary genres, examples of de Lisser’s literary (re)presentations of mulatto women — or (as I prefer) women of mixed-race — within this thesis are evidenced through Elizabeth (*Morgan’s Daughter*), Psyche Huntingdon (*Psyche*), Rachel Bogle (*Revenge*), and Millicent (*The White Witch of Rosehall*). de Lisser further renegotiates this unflattering

stereotype through his adaptation of the trope of yearning to be white and touchiness about ancestry. For de Lisser's female characters their "yearning" is not to be white, but to be accepted within mainstream society. Elizabeth is proud of her dual heritage and certainly does not shy away from her "African" heritage; indeed, she relies upon her heroic matriarchal ancestry in her attempt to bring an end to the oppression of slavery. In order to emphasise women as a symbol of Jamaica, in his later literature he foregrounds women of mixed-race heritage as female heroes and (re)writes them into the literary and oral consciousness of Jamaican culture as female legends. By skilfully blending folklore, Jamaican history and shifting contemporary attitudes, de Lisser creates strong female heroes and female folk legends that not only personify Jamaica as a nation, but also destabilise their literary and racially stereotyped boundaries, as they bridge the cross-racial and cross-cultural divides to create cultural unity.

This power of the oral tradition in folk culture which permits the telling and (re)claiming of a historical consciousness allows de Lisser to fuse fact with fiction. As a unique and engaging writer, de Lisser is able to create a national Jamaican narrative that tells Jamaica's *own story*. A final case in point is de Lisser's repositioning of the traditional colonial notions of nation and nationalism as portrayed in his 1936 novel "Anacanoa". Although in keeping with these colonial genres, de Lisser renegotiates many of the colonial concepts evident within these colonial discourses through the notion of (re)naming and the dislocation of gender stereotypes. de Lisser's vision of women as a symbol of Jamaica as a nation not only refutes the iconography of the colonial

portrayal of women, but his marginalisation of white male heroes and repositioning of Anacanoa as central to the action allows the reader to reinterpret the “hero” of the novel as a leader of the indigenous population that was subsequently annihilated through colonialism. By introducing a female voice into a “colonial” adventure narrative, de Lisser is challenging the preconceived notions of nationhood and by celebrating her ancestry through later novels her legacy ensures that she is metaphorically inextricable from the founding and (re)claiming of the Jamaican nation.

Representations of women as a symbol for a Jamaican nation have remained the focus of this thesis and have been analysed through competing constructions different representations of female identities. Through de Lisser’s portrayal of women he has given credence to a distinctive Jamaican identity. By (re)locating nationalism within a matriarchal society that recognises the strength of women, he does not debase its men, as suggested by Cobham, but rather recognises that the national concepts of colonising nations are founded upon the ignorance and arrogance of patriarchal rule. By uniting and interlocking (rather than dividing) these gender-determined public and private spheres or “worlds,” de Lisser empowers this idea of a Jamaican nation that is an independent entity within the colonial Empire. Through his representation of women in his literature he is able to cross both racial and class lines which enables de Lisser to create a unique and united Jamaican identity that is culturally and racially cohesive, however multifarious and hybridised.

To know the influence de Lisser yielded during his lifetime and the neglect he has suffered over the ensuing decades makes de Lisser's assumption about having a biography written about him bittersweet. In a personal commentary entitled "The Forgotten Works of H.G.D." that de Lisser published in the commentary section of *The Daily Gleaner*, he reveals that his deepest desire is to be remembered for his literary works. Although this commentary has been taken at face value, it was written by de Lisser and therefore is an important finding within this thesis as it gives us a personal insight into de Lisser and his writings. Written in his best satirical tone, de Lisser writes that the rationale behind the book that was being published that year (*Under the Sun*) was so that he could give his "future biographers" a more in-depth analysis of the intentionality behind the novel. He reveals his unspoken wish that someone in the year 2000 will be "writing a life of me" (26 Nov. 1935:12). de Lisser himself provides his own self-fulfilling prophecy, for it is not "The Forgotten Works of H.G.D." which have been kept in a drawer for twenty years, it is the forgotten works of Herbert G. de Lisser that have been neglected for some 67 years and hopefully this thesis has gone some way in recovering his body of work as well as his intellectual significance.

APPENDIX I

This extract has been taken in its entirety from *Folklore from Contemporary Jamaicans*, by Darryl C. Dance. p. 96,97. See Bibliography for further details

Nine-Finger Jack.¹

Like Captain Morgan's daughter that captured Port Royal. Di' you learn about it?

[Dance] No.

Well, the first man that captured Port Royal, his daughter – he had a daughter by a Black woman – and he were a white man. You know being here and alone and all that, he see here now is Black people to move with. He go with a Black woman, and get that girl. She were a hero. For imagine (*you* don't know the *distance*, but from St. Elizabeth she walk on *foot*, not on the *road* in the *bushes*, to Morant Bay, where she met with a man that they call Nine-Finger Jack, you see. And for lifesaving sake,² she gots to decide that she fall in love with Nine-Finger Jack, and Nine-Finger Jack, he were on his journey too, you see; he was on his journey, and the both of them meet. And he was a *dangerous* man, and seeing him, she jus' figure to herself who he be. She hide, and as she see that he is going to see her, she look out and as her eyes blent on him,³ she just hail out, "I wonder what can this be; it's the first in my life I have ever seen a man that I have fall in love with at the first sight." And he say the same. And then

now the both of them start to moving and met with some of her father men. And being Captain Morgan's daughter, they have to obey her as they would obey her father. And as they start to draw sword (for there wasn't anything like guns), she says, "No, if it is to be, it will have to be two, not he alone. It's the first man that I ever fall in love with, and I decide to die with him." And it carry on and on. They walk until – they walk their shoes off their feet, through bush, you know, through the forest – they can't go on the road. That's where Paul Bogle and those men – Paul Bogle was hang by the market square in Morant Bay, and Gordon, all of those men, during those while – they were warring while Captain Morgan were warring for Port Royal over by Palisadoes. And when they was through and they reach their destination, they decide on that they have to kill Nine-Finger Jack. And she decide to suggest to her father, it have to be both of them. And then she hug Nine-finger Jack, and he hug her. And they just dash, both of them, to death.

¹ Collected in Kingston from a resident of Cassava River on July 8, 1978.

This informant's Nine-Finger Jack is clearly derived from Three-finger Jack, the popular legendary figure whose mother raised him to exact vengeance upon the white master who enslaved and killed his father. In his first attempt he was captured, but he killed his guards and escaped, taking with him the hated slave master, whom he then enslaved. None dared to track the feared fugitive except another Black Maroon, Quashee. During their encounter, Jack lost his fingers, thus the name Three-finger Jack.

² To save her life.

³ Met with his.

APPENDIX II

Illustrations.

H. G. de Lisser

DLB 117



H. G. de Lisser in 1944, the year of his death (photograph courtesy of the National Library of Jamaica)

Photograph of Herbert G. de Lisser, taken in the year of his death. This is the only publicity photo of de Lisser.



ARAWAK GIRL
From 18th-century Engraving by Capt. J. G. Stedman

A depiction of Anacanoa in *The Arawak Girl*.

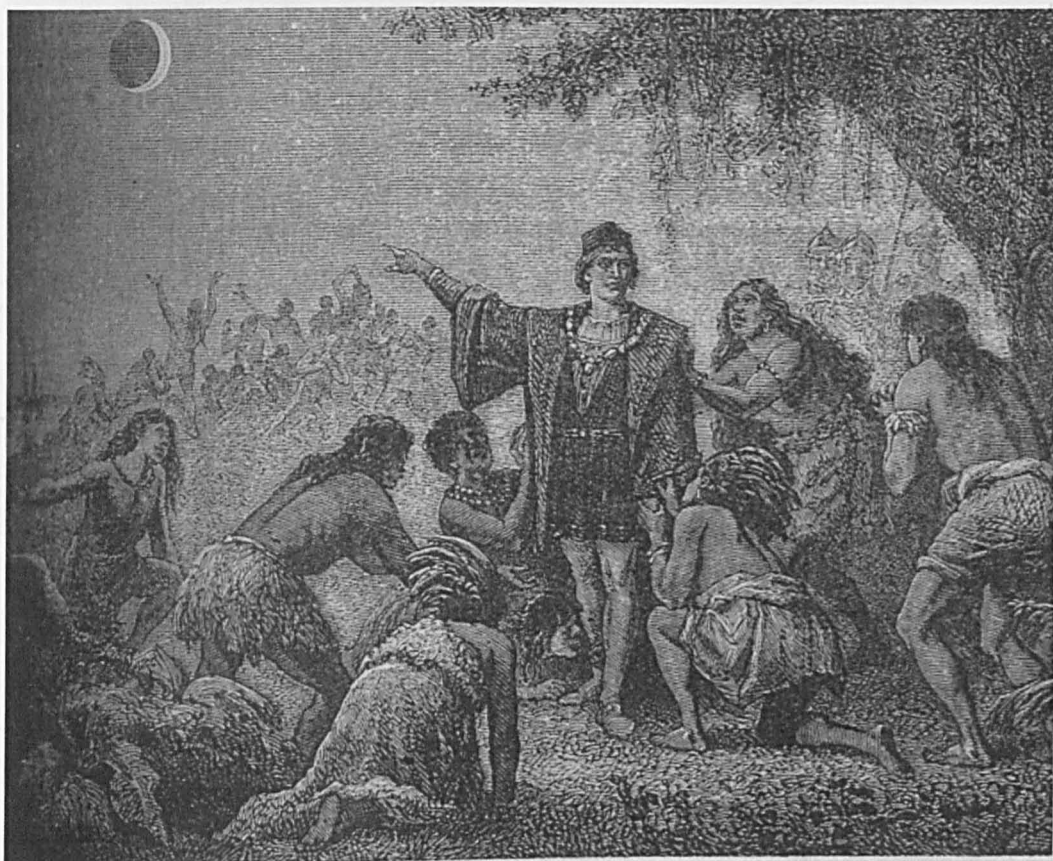
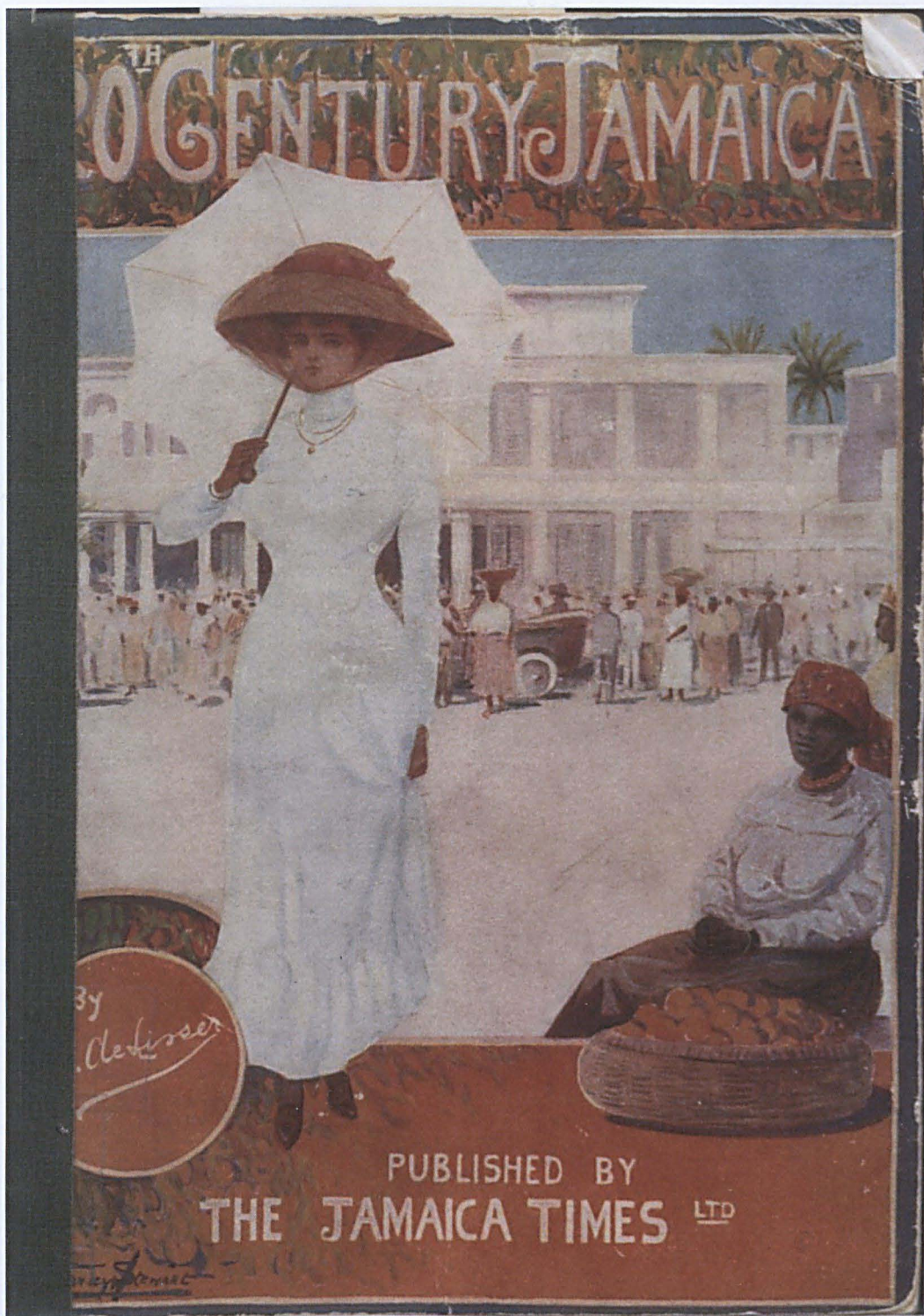
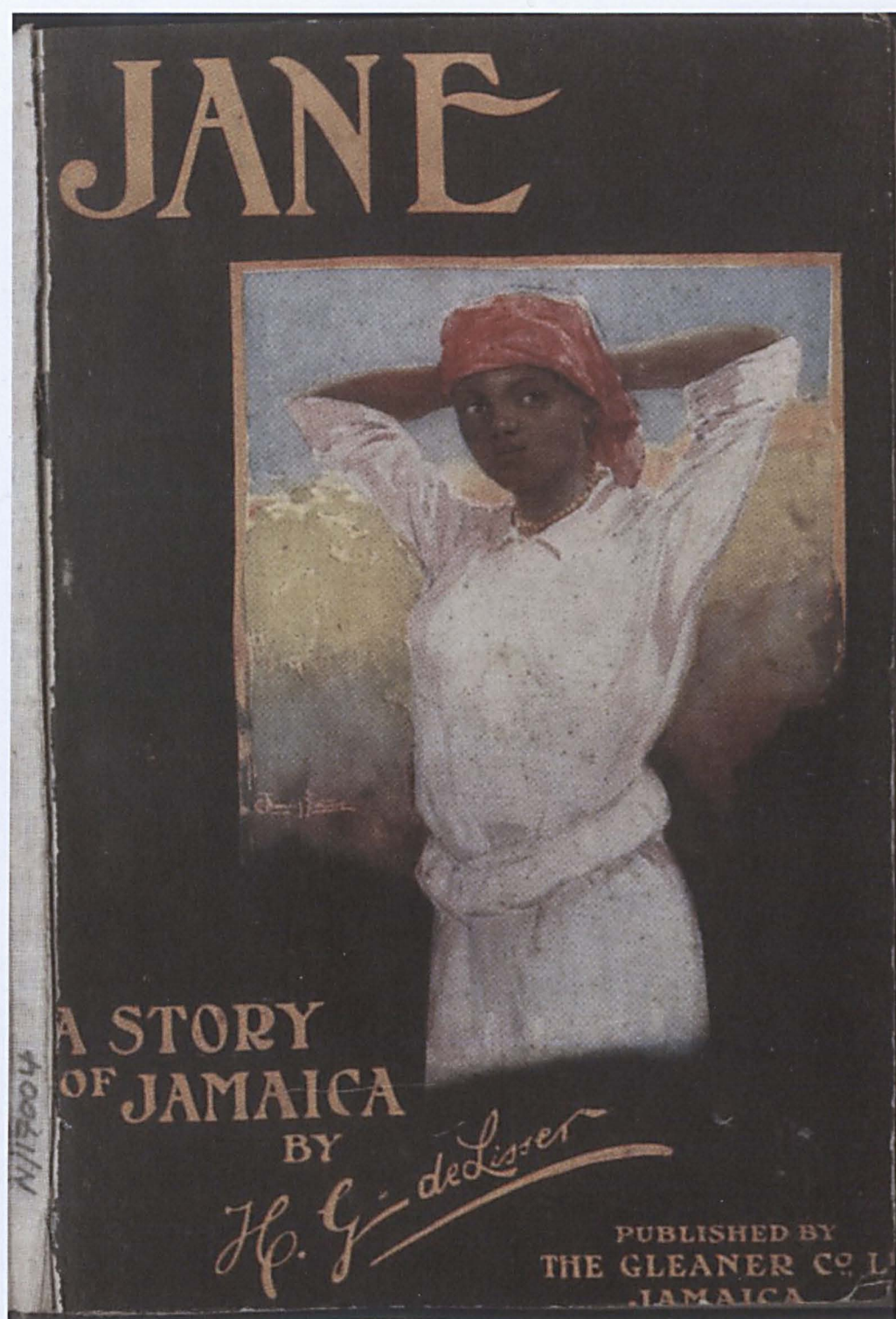


Fig. 86. — L'éclipse de lune de Christophe Colomb.

The moon scene in "Anacanoa." Picture taken from *Astronomie Populaire* in
1879



Front cover of de Lissner's 1912 book *Twentieth Century Jamaica*.



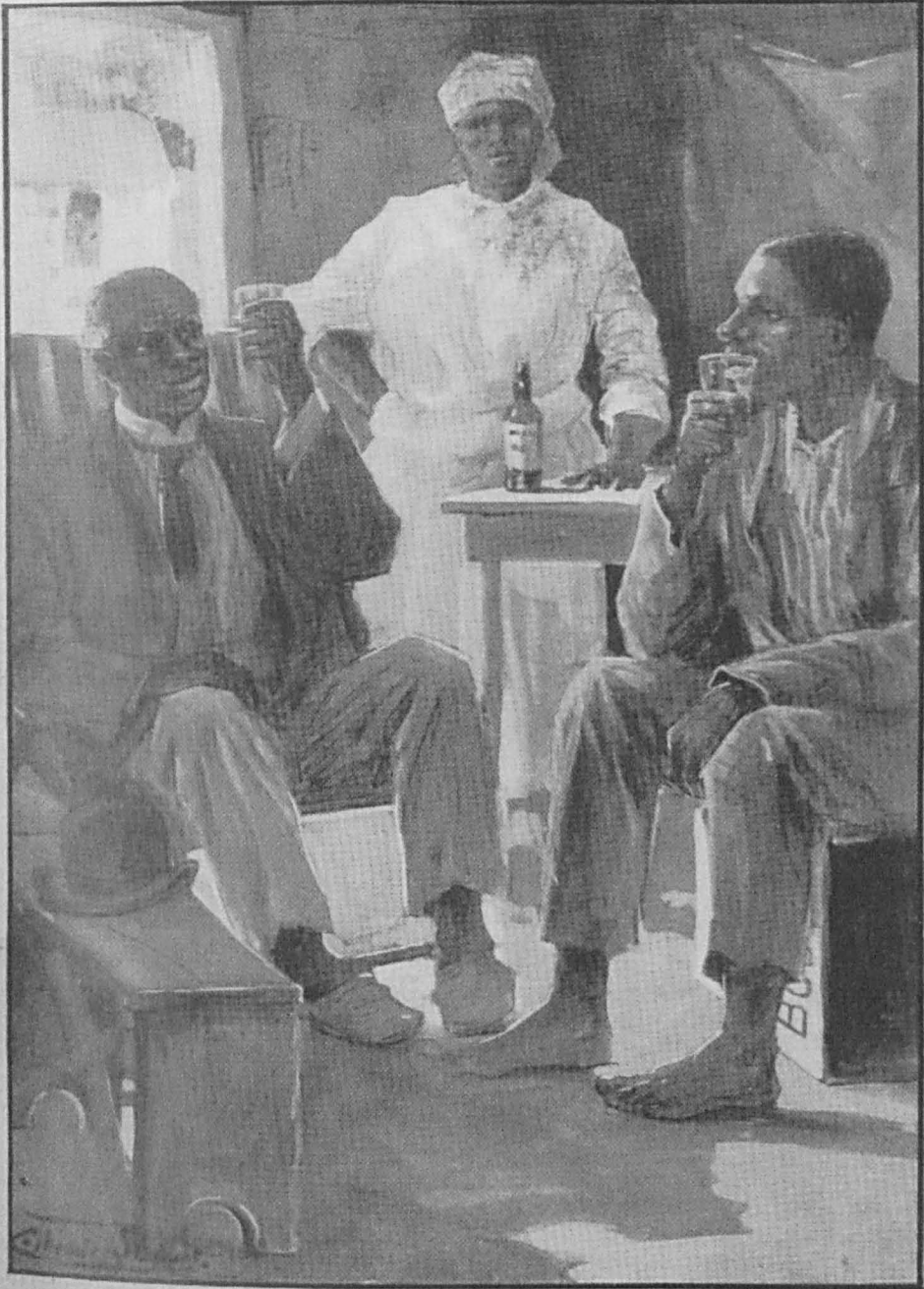
The dust cover of *Jane: A Story of Jamaica*. 1913.



Jane going to the shop.

Page 117
G

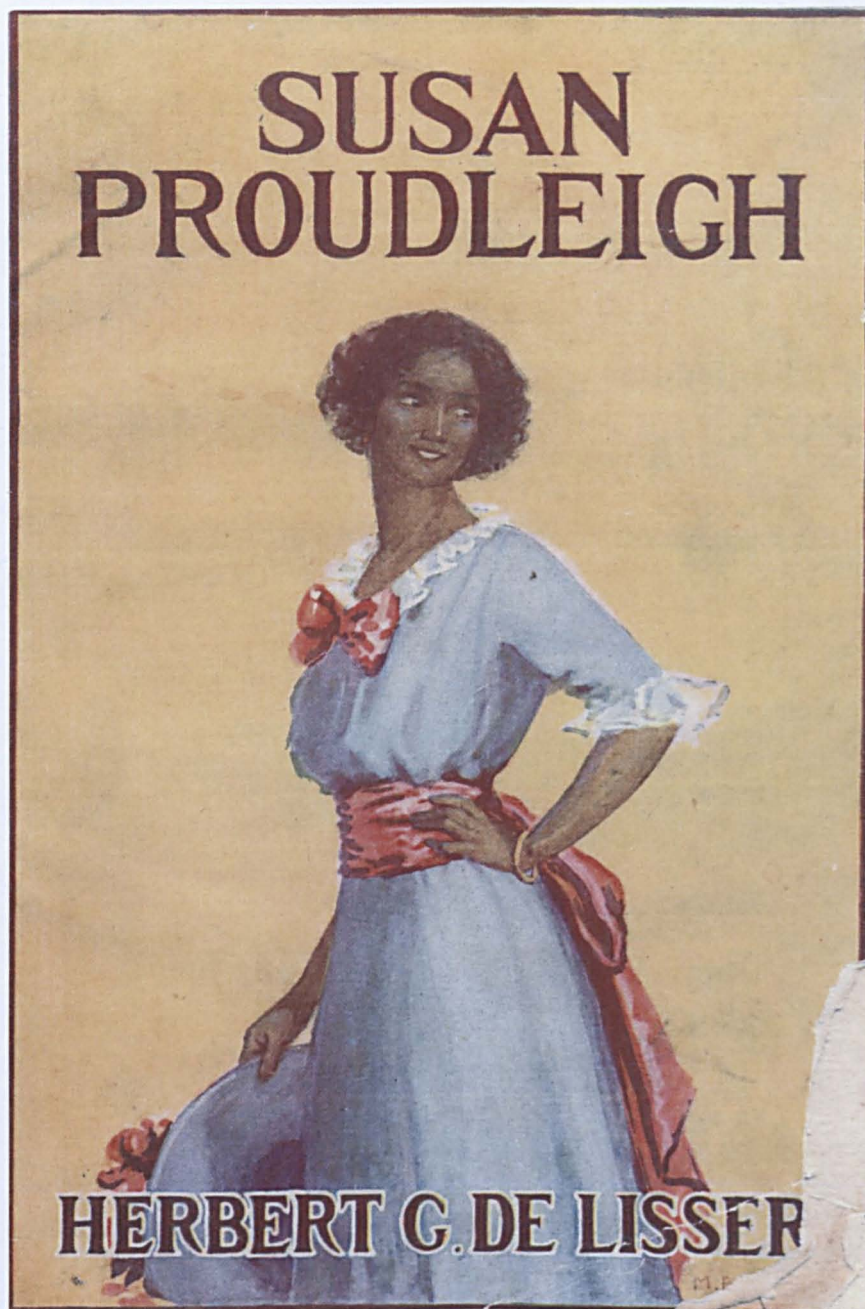
The first of two illustrations inside the British Library's edition of *Jane's Career*.



Daddy Buckram invokes a Blessing.

Page 219
Q

The second illustration.



The front cover of *Susan Proudleigh*.

Look for
this name

W & A Gilbey

And immediately a bottle of Pure Grape Wine is conjured up in your brain.

Among these Wines stand out Gilbey's Port and Gilbey's Sherry. These excellent liquors are known and appreciated by all as

Honest Wines of Good Value.

So inseparable is the connection between the name W. A. GILBEY and Genuine Port and Genuine Sherry Wine, that a bottle of either without the name written as above would be abhorrent.

**Wholesome Wines to take are Gilbey's
Castle 1 Spanish Port and
Castle Spanish Sherry.**



Castle 1 Spanish Port

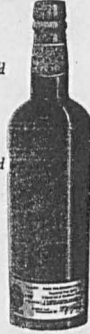
PORT WINE

Castle 1 Spanish Port guaranteed
two years in wood at time
of Bottling.

SHERRY WINE

Castle Spanish Sherry guaranteed
three years in wood at time
of Bottling.

FRED. L. MYERS & SON,
AGENTS FOR
W. & A. GILBEY.
THE SUGAR WHARF.
188 Harbour St., - KINGSTON.



Castle Spanish Sherry

TRIUMPHANT SQUALITONE

A TROPICAL EXTRAVAGANZA

*To Sir Sidney Olivier
with the author's
compliments*

BY
HERBERT G. DELISSER,
AUTHOR OF
"IN JAMAICA AND CUBA"
"SUSAN PROUDLEIGH"
ETC.

Copyright by Author.

THE GLEANER CO., LTD., PRINTERS,
KINGSTON, JAMAICA.

Advertisements and the Author's personal note to Sir Sidney Olivier.

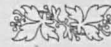
LILY
THE
ARISTOCRAT
OF
JAMAICA
CIGARETTES

JAMAICA TOBACCO CO.
Manufacturer.

Revenge.
A Tale of Old Jamaica.

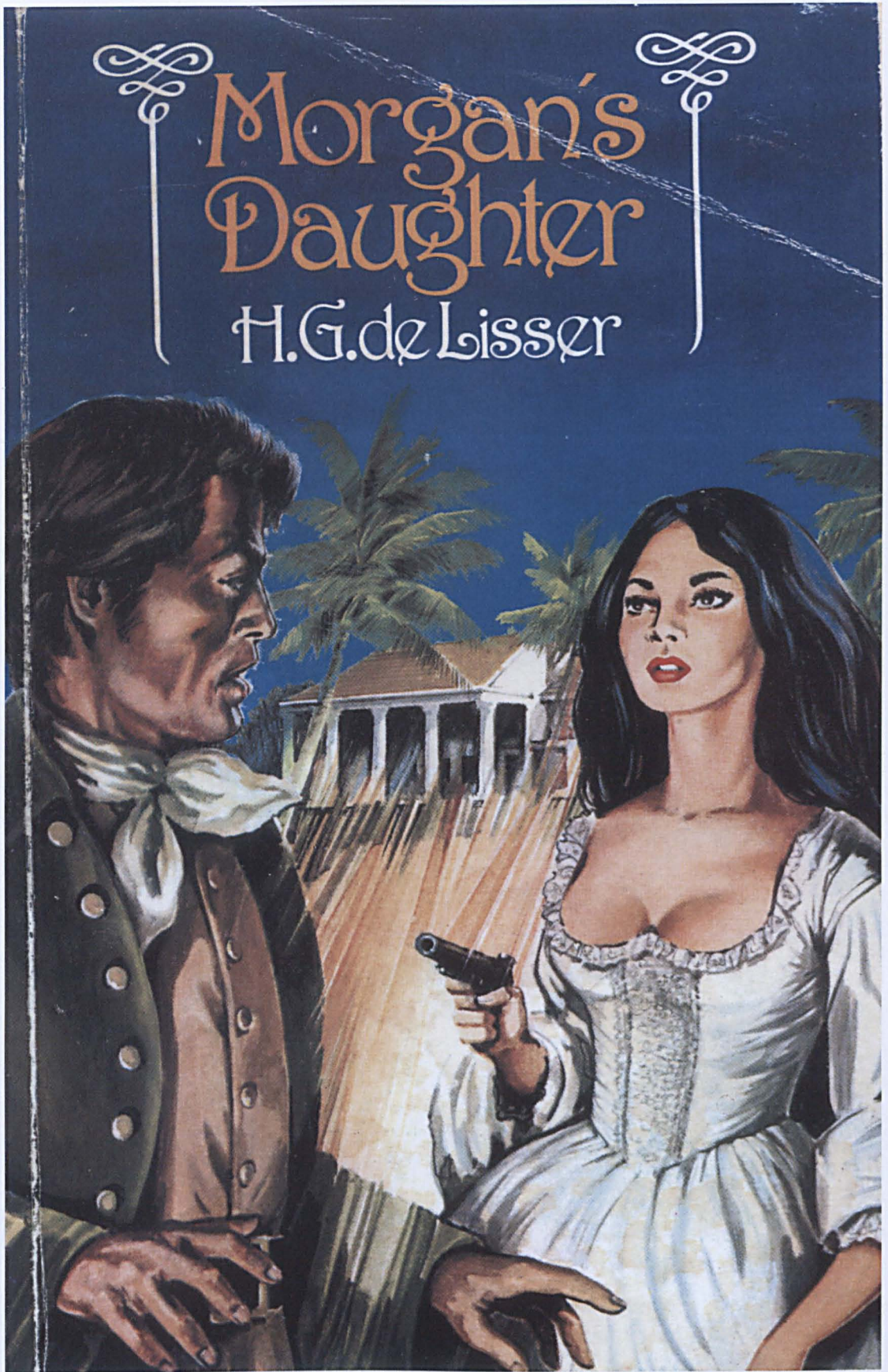


BY
HERBERT G. deLISSER,
AUTHOR OF
"JANE'S CAREER,"
"SUSAN PROUDLEIGH,"
"TRIUMPHANT SQUALITONE," ETC.



PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR BY
THE GLEANER CO., LTD.,
KINGSTON, JAMAICA,
1919.

Advertisements within *Revenge*.



The 1953 cover of *Morgan's Daughter*.

Morgan's Daughter

By HERBERT G. DE LISSER,

author of
THE WHITE WITCH OF ROSEHALL,
SQUALITONE, Etc.

CHAPTER ONE

UP from the bottom of the ravine toiled a man, for the path was steep, and light from the moon penetrated but feebly into depths obscured by the heavy overhanging foliage. The sound of the waterfall which he faced was thunderous; he could see the white gleaming water dash as he made his way to higher ground, but for the most part darkness enshrouded him, darkness and desolation. Soon the waterfall was on his left, and now the blackness about him was intense and he had to move forward and upward with caution. He had entered a natural tunnel which, even at noontide, was gloomy, and through which, thousands of years ago, the river which now precipitated itself on the other side in a tumultuous cascade must have flowed.

The tunnel soon widened into a kind of cave, a small hollow formed of huge stones, mighty monoliths which seemed, when there was light by which to perceive them, as if they had been placed in their present position by giants and not merely by some terrible convulsion of nature ages ago. The great rocks stood one upon the other with crevices between, and the roof was of two or three huge pieces of rock propped upon one another and upon the stone-uprights to right and left, precariously as it appeared, and yet earthquakes had shaken this country within historic times, and cave and tunnel had withstood the shocks.

The man paused within this hollow, moved over to the extreme right of it and searched behind some debris for a moment, drawing out almost immediately two of the long muzzle-loading guns of the period. Evidently he had secreted them there some time before. He now pushed on into the open, coming out on higher ground. He was clear of the tunnel; soon he stood upon land comparatively clear of trees and easier to negotiate. He marched forward confidently, the rough and rugged path sloping downward now.

He was leaving the Cane River Falls behind, but the river itself was still to his left, brawling over the huge boulders which strewn its bed. The mountains were now more removed on either side, and in the light of the moon, when they could be glimpsed through some thinning in the forest on his dexter hand, they could be seen towering upwards to heights immense, great splashes of blackness which reached towards the sky.

The moon rode high; it was within two or three days of the full and all night would shine out brilliantly, a wonderful illuminant where its rays were not attenuated and shattered by thick-growing woods. It shone down upon a patch of rocky land through which ran the trail which this solitary traveller was pursuing. On this patch of open ground he halted, crouched down upon a boulder to one side of it, and began carefully to examine and to load his guns from a horn of powder slung about his waist. His face glowed in the moonlight. It was as black as soot, a polished black from amidst which his eyes glared fiercely. But though the complexion was sable the nose was prominent and aquiline, the chin long and distinctly marked. A striking physiognomy, as anyone would have recognised at a glance.

He wore a soft straw hat of native manufacture drawn down upon his brow, but otherwise was not garbed like the ordinary native. Instead of the loose osanburg trousers and sack to serve as jacket, he was clothed in tight-fitting corduroy pants and the frock-coat of the time, the skirts of which were buttoned up behind so as to render movement easier. He wore a waistcoat also which reached almost up to his neck. He had no collar or cravat, merely a sort of scarf of soiled white cloth which protected his neck; but what was most observable about his costume were his knee-high boots, which explained why he had walked so cautiously when climbing up from the ravine into the tunnel he had traversed. No other man of his colour would have gone about with boots on such a journey. The soles of feet long calloused to a horny consistency would have made little of the rough going of this trail, and

the fact that those gentry no longer existed in Jamaica.

The guns were soon loaded, the man stood upright. A tall sinewy figure, alert even in that deserted spot, glancing keenly about him, he was at once a commanding and a grotesque figure. Commanding because of his air, his look of fierceness; grotesque because of a costume so incongruous with his surroundings, so unusual in a negro slave or freeman, and topped by a hat so much out of harmony with the rest of his garb. His sharp questioning glance around him, was, it seemed, a matter of habit merely; there was probably no one near him within a radius of three miles. And now he resumed his march along the narrow tortuous path, and soon was passing through great masses of trees and underbrush on his journey towards his goal.

After a mile or so he crossed the river bed more than once, for the rains had been falling of late and the river had overflowed into the low-lying land on either side. The water was not deep, though there were seasons when it would be in spate and neither man nor beast would dare risk its crossing unless weary of life. To-night it was like molten, moving silver in the moonlight, chafing against rocks that rose up in its course, murmuring mysterious sound as it made its way to the sea. Presently he left it behind.

He came to an open road. Trees grew thickly here; one could easily lie concealed a yard or two from any passer-by. Opposite was the sea, but a stretch of wooded land hid it from sight. Its tang was in the air, and a peculiar coolness in the wind that stirred the leaves of the forests gave warning that the first hour of morning had come. The man, glancing up at the moon as it rode effulgent and serene so far away, drew back into the shelter of the shadows like one who thinks he may still have some time to wait in patience.

He may have waited for about an hour when he distinctly heard the sound of hooves striking upon the unpared, uneven surface of the highway. A cavalcade was approaching at leisurely pace. He peered out of his place of concealment; plainly discernible was a mounted group which came at a slow trot in his direction.

When they were near he counted them rapidly. Five in all. They came on confidently, suspecting nothing, fearing nothing; they were almost abreast of him when a word of command fell upon their ears—the single word, "halt!" This was followed by the swift emergence from among the trees to their right of a man with a coal-black face and a pointed gun. Involuntarily the party drew rein.

"What the devil is the meaning of this?" burst from the lips of one of them, a white man whose expression of startled incredulity showed how unexpected was this encounter.

"Get off your horses," was the only answer vouchsafed, "and no fooling with pistols. The first man who attempts resistance I shoot."

But no one obeyed the command. Instead, the man who had first spoken looked furiously at the negro with the gun.

"Who are you and what do you mean? Put down that gun instantly, or I will have you flogged within an inch of your life, you impudent dog! Put it down, I say—"

A bullet sang over his head; the highwayman had fired. Not to kill, or even to injure; but the shot had passed close enough to the speaker's head to warn him that the marksman had deliberately chosen to miss him. The next bullet might find an intended billet.

"Get down at once," came the order, "or I will bring you down. All of you."

As the highwayman spoke he waved his left hand in the air, a casual movement as it seemed. But besides the two persons in front, one of whom was a woman, there were three negroes, each of whom led a pack-horse, and who had been watching him intently and with fear in their eyes. Now they broke into a loud, affrighted cry as they saw the man's hand, a cry of terror as they almost leaped from their horses and threw themselves grovelling on the earth. "Three-finger Jack!" they exclaimed simultaneously; "Oh, Massa God, hab mercy on us!" At the utterance of the name, though he himself had not particularly observed the highwayman's wave of the hand, the gentleman on the horse started, a look of astonishment sweeping over his face. "Three-finger Jack?" he stammered, but could make no fur-

An absorbing novel of Jamaica life in the stirring and romantic days of the late eighteenth century

"Not you, madam, unless you will. Sorry to have had to inconvenience you."

This speech, which seemed more besting a gentleman than a robber upon the King's highway, apparently assured the party more than ever that it had to do with the notorious Three-fingered Jack, for that dreaded character had never been known to injure a woman, or even to annoy her if that could possibly be avoided. Men he had robbed and slain, and the negroes feared him desperately because of the great oshah charm against all enemies he was believed to possess. The white man whose party this was, realised that it was hopeless to expect his people to offer any resistance to the single robber who stood there menacingly with a finger on the trigger of his gun. They were all unarmed; what was still more terrifying was that the black highwayman was supposed to have been dead these three or four months.

Himself, Colonel Breakspere felt a superstitious thrill run down his spine as his eyes sought the hands of the robber proclaimed as Three-fingered Jack by the cowering slaves, and perceived that from the left hand two fingers had been shown. On all accounts this man had been shot in January of this same year and his head battered to pulp with stones. Yet there he stood, audacious, defiant, and clearly determined to carry his threat to completion were he not implicitly obeyed.

"Stay where you are," Three-fingered Jack commanded the slaves, who indeed had no intention of stirring from their abject position. He approached the enraged Colonel, having first slung his gun over his shoulder and drawn a pistol from his waist-band. He rapidly passed his maimed hand over the upper part of the Colonel's person, though he expected to find no weapon. He guessed that had the Colonel been armed he would have drawn his pistol and fired it, even if that had meant his death signal. Colonel Breakspere had yielded only because there was no possibility of putting up a fight.

The highwayman watched him closely, taking care that his victim should have no opportunity of snatching at the levelled pistol. The swift search over, the highwayman motioned the Colonel away. He now seemed chary about speaking, and careful that the broad limp straw hat that he wore should conceal as much of his face as possible.

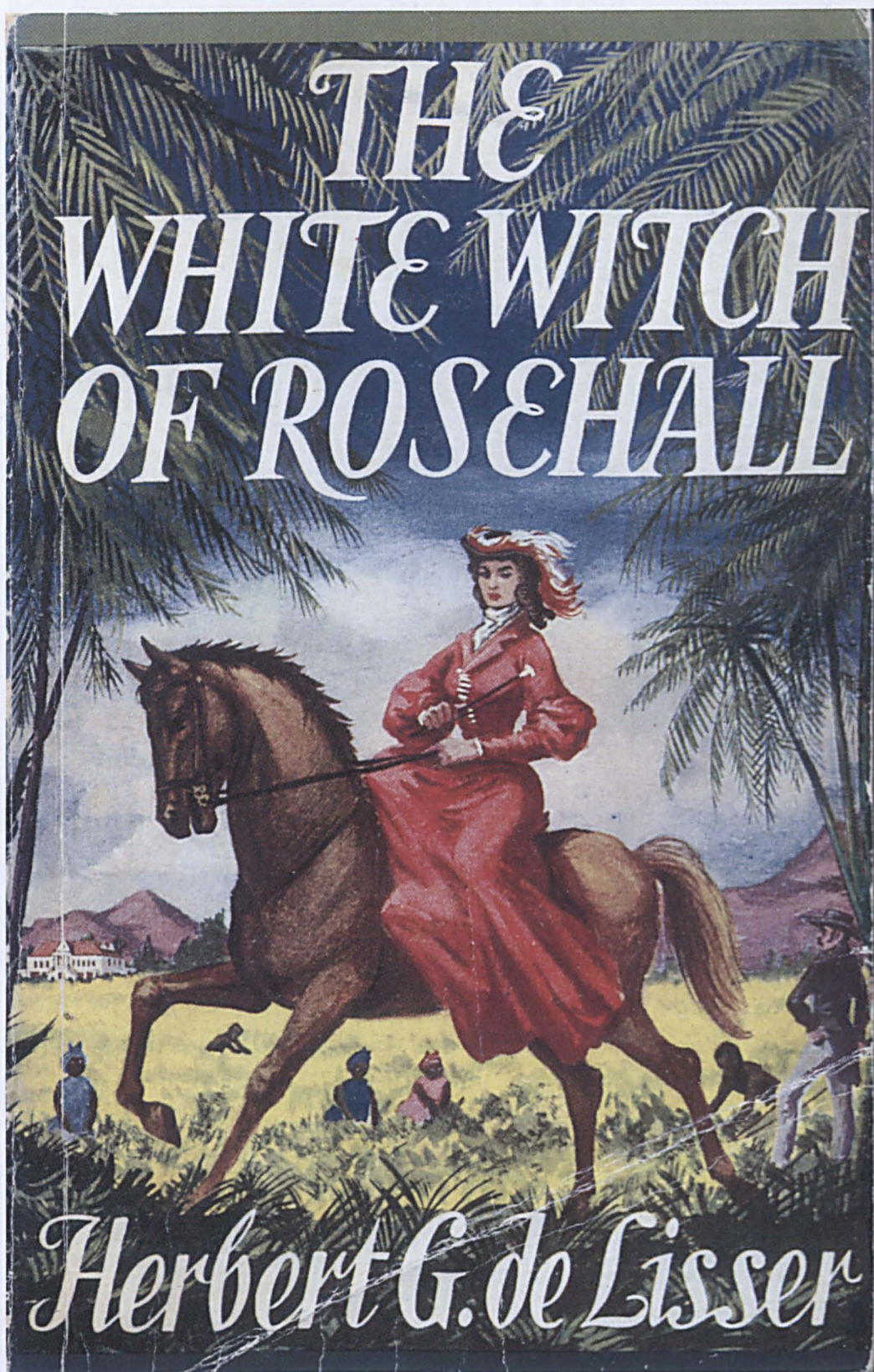
He went quietly up to the horse, observing with the eye of one who evidently knew something about horses that this was a high-spirited animal and probably unused to strangers. The beast did not move as the man came near, but at that moment its master uttered a sharp word of command and it wheeled round and would have dashed off in the direction whence it had come had not the highwayman sprung forward and seized its reins. Even so the splendid creature, hearing again the word "home!" uttered sharply from its master's lips, strove with a spirited bound to obey, as he had long since been trained to do. Three-fingered Jack pulled at the reins, then grasped the nose-piece near the bit and was nearly dragged off his feet as he did so. It was the hand with three fingers which held the horse. The other still grasped the pistol, which he dare not relinquish. In a flash he realised that he stood in grave peril.

For, seeing his predicament, the Colonel shouted to his slaves to throw themselves upon the man, while he himself darted forward with the evident intention of doing so. At the same time his daughter, grasping the turn which affairs were taking, spurred her horse forward to ride the straggling robber down.

It was the simultaneous movement of both father and daughter that saved him. In an instant the girl perceived that she might injure the Colonel and so swung her horse aside. Colonel Breakspere, too, seeing his daughter's charge, and fearing that the desperate negro might shoot her, hurried himself forward with such precipitancy that he lost his footing and fell prone to the earth. The situation might yet have been saved had the slaves ventured to follow their master's shouted instructions, but, though they feared him mightily, their dread of Three-fingered Jack was infinitely greater. Was not his presence here, at this very instant, living proof that he could not be slain and was aided by dark and mysterious Powers?

The plunging horse dragged the highwayman some distance up the road, and so out of immediate danger. But the grip at its mouth had not been relaxed, and the strength of a powerful arm was

The first page of *Morgan's Daughter* as it appeared in *Planters' Punch*.



Front cover of *The White Witch of Rosehall*.

THE WHITE WITCH OF ROSEHALL

HERBERT G. DE LISSER

The 2007 updated front cover of *The White Witch of Rosehall*.

Publication of Humour for Young and Old,
Rich and Poor, Small and Great.

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Planters' Punch

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The first cover of the first edition of *Planters' Punch* 1920.

A Woman As Empire Builder

LADY WILLINGDON, whose portrait adorns this page of *Planters' Punch*, came to Jamaica a stranger in January of 1930, remained but a short time, but left as a friend of whom Jamaica will always think warmly.

By everyone she is regarded as one of the most charming women who have ever visited this country; a great lady, and so natural in manner, so genuinely gracious in address, so bright and unaffected, that she wins friendship and admiration spontaneously; exactly a woman born to accomplish much in the exalted position she occupies.

As wife of the Governor of Bombay, the Governor of Madras, and the Governor-General of Canada, she has had great opportunities of assisting her husband in his task of meeting and influencing men of very different dispositions whose amiability might mean much to the smooth working of an Administration and to the strengthening of the ties that bind an outside Empire to a Mother Country.

In a position such as she occupies mistakes might be fatal. A casual disregard of others, haughtiness, even a temperamental disinclination to mix much with men and women might have consequences of an unpleasant character. A helpmeet who wins unpopularity or, at best, is regarded with but lukewarm feelings, is a handicap to anyone in public life; trebly so must she be to one to whom is entrusted the delicate diplomatic task of pleasing with dignity the elected leaders of a country, men of every temperament, of differing views, and of diverse attitudes of mind. She can be no recluse. She must be in the public eye continually; in her relations with others she must not show condescension or restraint. "The fierce light that beats upon a throne" beats also upon a vice-regal chair and everything stands revealed. In that light Lady Willingdon lives as the wife of the Governor-General



MARIE VISCOUNTESS WILLINGDON, C.I., G.B.E.

of Canada, and questioning eyes in that Dominion would soon have discovered her unfitness for the part she was called upon to play had there been such unfitness. But she has triumphantly passed that test, and when she visited the West Indies last winter she achieved fresh triumphs. Informally, unofficially, she was an Ambassadors of Canada to these parts of the British world, and on her return to Canada she became, in a manner of speaking, the Ambassadors of these West Indies to the Great Dominion.

FOR rest and change came Lord and Lady Willingdon to the West Indies: that was the reason publicly given for their visit. And

change they had in plenty, but of rest there was little or none. They came to work. They came to work for Canada, for the Empire of which Canada is a part, and for the West Indies also (for they believe that closer and more harmonious relations between Canada and the West Indies will be of benefit to the West Indies as well as to Canada. Lady Willingdon made many a friend for Canada here. Let us now glance at what she has been doing for the West Indies since her return to Ottawa.

Again and again it has been mentioned in the Canadian papers that she has distributed presents of West Indian fruit and other products to well-known people in Canada, people who can help to promote West Indian trade with that country, and it needs no emphasis to impress it on anyone that gifts of this kind from the lady of the Governor-General have a hundred times the significance and subsequent consequences of similar gifts sent from Jamaica or from some other person resident in Canada. Let us not deceive ourselves. Whatever else democracy may mean, it does not mean a bringing down, in the minds of the democracy, of everyone to

a common level. No form of social or political organisation can obliterate the natural feeling of human beings; position will always count, especially when position is reinforced by personality. In a way, personality makes position; prestige is the result not only of high place but also of character: a nonentity on a throne will count for little as compared with a personage who must be respected for his or her ability and personal appeal. The two in combination, position and personality, are well-nigh irresistible; hence when a woman like Lady Willingdon sets herself to be what we have called an Ambassadors for these West Indies to Canada, with the view of popularising the West Indies in the Dominion, the result must eventually

One of the articles mentioned in Chapter VI from *Planters' Punch*.

tion.

THE world is well accustomed to women playing a part in political affairs. Great ladies of England and France did not need the suffrage to exercise a remarkable influence: they had their drawing rooms. There they could meet the political friends of their husbands and of their husbands' parties, and renew loyalties that may have begun to waver, and strengthen existing devotions to men and causes. There they could be gracious to those who counted in the fields of finance or art or science, for the favour and support of these were always well worth securing. How Lady Palmerston worked for her husband is told in Guedalla's life of the famous Victorian statesman; how women aided Disraeli in his marvellous career, Andre Maurois has indicated to us. Women have always swayed men and influenced the course of events, mainly indirectly. But we at least have never heard before of any great lady endeavouring to increase the commercial intercourse between any two parts of any Empire by the simple but very charming and effective method of sending presents of the products of one country to people in the other country who were likely to be potent factors in the development of trade.

Trade was once looked upon as beneath the attention of the upper classes of the European countries; it was regarded as something sordid. The sword was the symbol of majesty and power; the sword and ownership of land; then learning won to a high regard when connected with the ecclesiastical or legal powers, and then high finance. It was long before the merchant gained respect; the trader was too often thought and spoken of as a huckster. There has been a change, a rapid and decisive change, and now the ablest brains of a country may be devoted to trade development, and this



MRS. G. C. WAINWRIGHT
Formerly of Montreal, Canada, now of St. Andrew, Jamaica. Mrs. Wainwright has been many years in this island and is one of the most esteemed ladies from Canada who have lived here.

very best brains to increasing commerce between nations. An Ambassador thinks not only of the political relations of his country with the Government to which he is accredited. He thinks of the trade interests of his country also, though he may never speak of them. He knows how all important these are in these strenuous, competitive times.

But that a great lady not connected with trade should think of it, and make an effort to promote it between two countries, is something new, something over which one may well pause for a moment. Even if the act be but a kindly one, a momentary gesture of friendliness, it means something. But this distribution of West Indian products in Canada by Lady Willingdon, in the form of presents, was not the outcome of a mere impulse; or, if it was, it almost immediately became a fine and thoughtful policy. It was deliberately meant to aid and benefit, it represented a contribution to the endeavour to draw Canada and the British West Indies more closely together in commercial relationships, to render them more helpful to one another and more dependent on each other. For this, if for this alone, Lady Willingdon deserves to be remembered in our West Indian story.

LADY Willingdon strikes those who have had the pleasure of meeting her as having always been a sportswoman, a woman of the field as well as of the salon, one who had loved open-air life and healthy sports as well as the witty persiflage of drawing rooms and the exhilarating movement of the dance. She has a quick intelligence; bright she has always been in temperament as well as brain, a dispeller of dullness. Had fate decreed that she should have become a member of Parliament in the British House of

aged it with energy, with efficiency, and she would have defended it against its critics with gusto. She was born to be something in the world. She must have arisen to influence. She has done so, and her influence has perhaps been greater as the wife of a British Administrator who has served his country in different parts of the world than it might have been in any other sphere. Perhaps, after all, most of us are given in life the work we are best fitted to do.

LADY Willingdon is, of course, English born and bred; but in Canada, and out of Canada, she is very much a Canadian. It has sometimes been said that the English are not adaptable. That depends entirely on the sort of English, on the individual. Generalisations, carried too far, are woefully misleading; they may become mere negations of truth. The English nation has produced every type; the "nation of shopkeepers" has Shakespeare and Shelley and Wordsworth to its credit; it lost the American Colonies over a century ago, but in our day it has managed to keep Ireland within the Empire. Nearly a hundred years since, too, it might have lost Canada: there was a movement, a rebellion there in which an ancestor of the late Prime Minister of Canada, Mr. MacKenzie King, had a share. But England had in Canada about that time a Governor-General, Lord Durham, whose fine intellect and character helped mightily to keep Canada within the Empire, and since then she has selected as her representatives in the Dominion men who (with their wives) should feel that Canada's interests are theirs and that their duty is towards the country in which they represent the English Throne. These men and women can be as sincerely Canadian as any of the native-born, their sense of duty blending with a genuine inclination. Of these is Lady Willingdon.

Photo by Cleary and Elliott.



MRS. W. A. ALEXANDER
For some years a popular resident in Jamaica. Mrs. Alexander whose husband was Manager of the Canadian Bank of Commerce, has now returned to Canada.



MRS. HENRY HOLGATE
Who, born in Canada, is now a resident in Jamaica. Mrs. Holgate lives at Serge Island, in St. Thomas, and is a very popular figure in the social life of Jamaica.

APPENDIX III

Annotated Bibliography and Publishing History of the Novels of Herbert George de Lisser.

de Lisser, Herbert G. *In Jamaica and Cuba*. Kingston: The Gleaner Co. Ltd, 1910. Print.

de Lisser's first non-fiction novel compares the two islands of Jamaica and Cuba in terms of their population and societies. Included in his observations are his commentaries on their histories, religions and the effects of changing political alignments. He also brings into the foray Panama. Rhonda Cobham has conducted a detailed analysis of this book highlighting de Lisser's seemingly pro-American position in relation to Cuba and Panama in her paper "Cuba and Panama in the Writings of Herbert George de Lisser." Published by The Gleaner Company in 1910, it has never been reprinted.

---. "Jane's Career: A Simple, Realistic Story." *Daily Gleaner* Oct. - Nov. 1912. Print.

---. *Jane: A Story of Jamaica*. Kingston: The Gleaner Company Limited, 1913. Print.

Jane's Career charts a peasant girl's migration from the country to the city, highlighting both her social mobility in terms of her marriage to a man of good standing and her independence in an emerging independent Jamaica. The novel is successful in its use of local dialect and its realistic portrayal of a working class Jamaican during the socio-political climate that was facing

Jamaica at the start of the twentieth century. Criticism against the novel has been levelled at de Lisser in suggesting that he leads his heroine to an imitative dead end, through her subsequent marriage and therefore assimilation into Jamaican society. Further critical engagements with the novel by notable scholars who have commented upon its literary merits include Mervyn Morris, John Figueroa and Kenneth Ramchand. However, it is contemporary critics Leah Rosenberg and Belinda Edmondson's recuperation of the novel as an excellent example of early Caribbean literature that harbours nationalistic ideals and notions of Caribbean racial identity that allows for a more comprehensive critical engagement with the novel.

His first fictional novel *Jane's Career* was initially serialised in *The Daily Gleaner* during the months of October and November 1912, under the title "Jane: A Story of Jamaica." It was later published with the same title in book format by The Gleaner Co Limited in 1913, before being published in England by Methuen Colonial Library, with the updated title *Jane's Career*. It was re-published in *Planters' Punch* in 1941 by de Lisser himself in order to encourage a "new generation" to read "a literary masterpiece" for "a small amount." This control over his printed work serves to emphasise not only de Lisser's influential position in society and his impact on the reading public, but also highlights his continued support towards promoting Jamaican culture.⁴³ *Jane's Career* was later reproduced by Rex Collings before being picked up by Heinemann in the 1970s.

⁴³ For a full explanation of his decision to reprint *Jane's Career*, see *Planters' Punch* Vol 4 No.3 1940-41, p.4.

---. *Twentieth Century Jamaica*. Kingston: Gleaner Pub Co. Ltd, 1913. Print.

de Lisser's second non-fiction book is a popular book that debates Jamaica's potential political affiliation to England, Canada or America. It also discusses and highlights the changing Jamaican society, its people, religion, politics and culture as it enters the twentieth century. Published by The Gleaner Publishing Company in 1913, it was never reprinted.

---. "Susan or Mr Proudleigh's Daughter." *Daily Gleaner* 13, 20 Mar., 3, 10, 17, 24 Apr., 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 May, 5, 12, 19 June 1915. Print.

---. *Susan Proudleigh*. London: Methuen, 1915. Print.

Susan Proudleigh is the second of de Lisser's novels that uses local dialect and investigates the psychological development of the black working class Jamaican woman. The novel seeks to represent a realistic portrayal of the living and working conditions of the Jamaican population who migrated to Panama to help build the Panama Canal. The limited scholarly attention focused upon *Susan Proudleigh* by Antony Boxhill and Mervyn Morris compare this novel favourably alongside *Jane's Career* as excellent early examples of early West Indian literature. Equally Rhonda Cobham recognises in her paper "Cuba and Panama in the Writings of Herbert George de Lisser," that he "catapults his heroine directly into the social and industrial milieu of the Canal Zone" (173). He also satirises the crucial issues of racism and the harsh

working conditions that had attracted a lot of controversy, in order to manipulate his reader's sympathy towards the workers predicament.

de Lisser's second novel *Susan Proudleigh* was published by Methuen Colonial Library in 1914 following a successful serialisation in *The Daily Gleaner* which had been sponsored by The Jamaica Tobacco Co. This serialisation was published under the title "Susan or Mr Proudleigh's Daughter" and appeared in *The Daily Gleaner*. The book was never republished and only ran to one print.

---. *Triumphant Squalitone*. Kingston: Gleaner Pub Co. Ltd, 1916. Print.

A political satire and the only novel that de Lisser wrote in the first person narrative, this novel focuses upon a fictional decision by the British Government in 1916 to make Jamaica a republic. The political significance of making Jamaica a republic is overshadowed by the "tin-pot" politics of local government that de Lisser satirises through his depiction of the candidates and the election process. This novel highlights not only de Lisser's comprehensive knowledge of local politics, but also how newspapers and propaganda works from the inside out, and highlights how both the media and the public can be manipulated to serve a specific outcome.

de Lisser's continued attempt to produce a local literature for a local population meant that he had to keep the costs of publication down in order that the reading public could buy the book for 50 per cent of its production costs. de Lisser explains in the introduction to *Triumphant Squalitone* that "the only way in which a cheap edition of a book can be published in Jamaica is by making that book the medium of advertisements," and as a result *Triumphant Squalitone* was heavily advertised throughout by local businessmen. Although *Triumphant Squalitone* only ever ran to one print, it was republished in *Planters' Punch* in 1944 on the eve of Jamaica's political self-government. Although de Lisser died in May of that year, the decision to re-publish the novel was de Lisser's.

---. *Jamaica and the Great War*. Kingston: The Gleaner Co. Ltd, 1917. Print.

de Lisser's third attempt at social commentary, this non-fiction novel highlights Jamaica's involvement in the First World War and includes documentary essays about the role Jamaica played. It was never republished and has not attracted any critical debate.

---. "Days of Terror: A Dramatic Novel." *Daily Gleaner* 3, 6, 10, 13, 17, 20, Jan. 1914. Print.

---. *Revenge*. Kingston: Gleaner Pub Co. Ltd, 1919. Print.

de Lisser's first foray into the historical genre was his 1919 novel *Revenge* which sought to re-tell the historical events surrounding the Morant Bay Rebellion of 1865. It brings to life for the first time within a literary framework, a positive representation of the Jamaican national heroes Paul Bogle and George William Gordon. There is scant published literary criticism on the novel. Victor Chang affords the novel a few lines when discussing de Lisser's historical novels in general, while Rhonda Cobham engages with the novel at length in her unpublished thesis and in her published paper "Fictions of Gender, Fictions of Race: Retelling Morant Bay in Jamaican Literature," which compares various literary formats of the Morant Bay Rebellion. Although *Revenge* was originally serialised in *The Daily Gleaner* under the title "Days of Terror: A Dramatic Novel," when published in book format de Lisser had changed the title to *Revenge*.

---. "Christina's Dream." *Planters' Punch* Vol 1. No. 1 Dec. 1920. Print.

This is the first of a trilogy of novels which trace the life of the Jenkins family who are struggling to make ends meet in the depression-fuelled 1920s. This novel is a microscopic examination into the working class living conditions of shop assistants, clerks and blue collar workers at the turn of the century. This novel and its subsequent sequels highlight not only the social mobility of the family, but also the changing attitudes of the society around them and are successful in highlighting the hypocrisy of colonial society. No critical appraisals have been made on this novel and it was only ever printed in *Planters' Punch*.

---. "The Rivals." *Planters' Punch* Vol 1. No. 2. Dec. 1921. Print.

This novel jumps the story of the Jenkins family forward some six months and reintroduces the other family from the original novel, the Jameses. This novel continues the themes of social mobility and migration seen in earlier novels. The novel was only published in *Planters' Punch* and to date there has not been any scholarly research.

---. "Devils Mountain." *Planters' Punch* Vol 1. No. 3. Dec. 1922-23. Print.

A light-hearted satirical comedy, this novel focuses upon a robbery that takes at the Myrtle Bank Hotel in Kingston, highlighting the social issues of miscegenation and satirising the ineptitude and naivety of the police force. This novel was only ever published in *Planters' Punch* and again it has not attracted any critical appraisal.

---. "The Adventures Abroad of Mr. Jenkins." *Planters' Punch* Vol. 1. No. 5. Dec. 1924-25. Print.

This third novel in the trilogy of the Jenkins family saga continues the story of the Jenkins and the Jameses families, but locates them in London on vacation. While de Lisser's themes of social mobility and migration are still prevalent, they are not as heartfelt or well written and as a result, I would contend that de Lisser penned this final novel as a way of completing the

trilogy and highlighting his own knowledge of London. The novel was never re-printed or published outside of *Planters' Punch* and there has not been any debate on its content.

---. "The Defence of Jamaica." *Planters' Punch* Vol. 1. No. 5. Dec. 1924-25.
Print.

A short story written in 1924, the action takes place in the year 1946, and assesses the implications of Jamaica being invaded. It was never republished and has not attracted any critical engagement.

---. "The Jamaica Nobility." *Planters' Punch* Vol. 1. No. 6. Dec. 1925-26.
Print.

A political parody in relation to Marcus Garvey and his movement, the novel centres around two working class Jamaican men who have been given titles of nobility under Mr Garvey's political regime. The novel successfully highlights the political ramifications of Garvey's movement on the working population and argues that it will not change anything in Jamaica. If anything, it begins to question the unity within the working class and highlights the superficial bickering and social status of the working population. The novel was only ever published in *Planters' Punch* with no critical engagement.

---. "The Sins of the Children." *Planters' Punch* Vol. 2. No. 2. Dec. 1928.
Print.

The focus of this novel is upon the issues of race and miscegenation through its main protagonist brown-skinned Vi, and her white "lover" Gus Steinway and is the third concurrent novel that features politics and local government within its storyline. The recurring themes of migration and local politics illustrate the growing awareness of politics within Jamaican society and this is the only novel where the political framework is not overtly satirised. The novel was never published outside of *Planters' Punch* and it has not received any scholarly attention.

---. "The Witch of Rosehall." *Planters' Punch* Vol. 2. No. 3. Dec. 1929.
Print.

---. *The White Witch of Rosehall*. London: Ernest Benn, 1929. Print

The most famous novel written by de Lisser it re-creates the legend of Annie Palmer within the genre of a Gothic novel. de Lisser novel is successful in setting out a realistic portrayal of how a sugar plantation worked and also highlights the harsh conditions and exploitation of the slaves. It also makes full use of folk lore and legends and attempts to incorporate these into mainstream literature as a means of promoting a national culture to the Jamaican population. Critical commentary on the novel has been limited to general bibliographies of his work. Scholar Glory Robertson has traced a comprehensive trajectory of the legend and has included de Lisser's influence in retaining the historical consciousness of the legend, and more recently

Lizabeth Paravisini-Gerbert has examined the novel from a position of female empowerment, while Laura Lomas comments upon the orality of the legend and its status as “national literature.”

In October 1929, Ernest Benn Limited (formerly Benn Brothers) printed de Lisser’s most successful novel to date. de Lisser had already produced this novel in his 1928 edition of *Planters’ Punch* thereby reducing the cost of the novel to the price of the periodical. From this initial publication *The White Witch of Rosehall* has been consistently re-printed throughout the ensuing eighty years. It was originally reprinted by Ernest Benn in 1929, 1936, 1948, 1952, 1954, 1955, 1956, 1958, 1960, 1961, 1966, 1967, 1968, 1970, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1976, 1978, followed by reprints by Mass Market Paperback/Humanity Press 1982, 1988, 2001. It was then reprinted by Macmillan Education in 1980, followed by reprints by Macmillan Caribbean 1980, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1986, 1988, 2001. The final reprint in 2007 included an updated revision of the front cover in 2007 and an e-book copy is now available for Kindle devices. I am not sure when the publishing rights moved from Benn to Macmillan. I know that Palgrave produced a re-print of *White Witch of Rosehall*, but I have no date. Palgrave is the academic arm of Macmillan and therefore, it is fair to assume that this is the link between Ernest Benn and Macmillan.

---. “The Jamaica Bandits.” *Planters’ Punch* Vol 2. No. 4. 1929-1930. Print.

A humorous satirical novel which examines the trope of performance as identity. de Lisser uses the ideas of cross-dressing and comical performances to examine how people are “blinded” by the dangers around them through their own social snobbery and naivety. The novel investigates how performance and the creation of identities are used to manipulate situations and society. With no critical commentary available, the novel was only ever published in *Planters’ Punch*.

---. “Morgan’s Daughter.” *Planters’ Punch* Vol 2. No. 5 Dec. 1930-1931. Print.

---. *Morgan’s Daughter*. London: Ernest Benn, 1953. Print.

Morgan’s Daughter is a historical romance which seeks to restore a female folk legend and reclaim a Jamaican national legend “Three-finger’d Jack” and place them within the realm of popular and accessible literature. The recurring themes of performance and racial identity are prevalent within this novel, as is the historical account and recovery of Jamaican history through the legends of its folk history. There has been no critical debate on this novel. *Morgan’s Daughter* was originally published in *Planters’ Punch* in 1930. Ernest Benn published a hardback version in 1953 with a paperback version being produced in 1961. It was re-published by Macmillan Education in 1980.

---. “The Cup and the Lip.” *Planters’ Punch* Vol 2. No. 6. Dec. 1931-1932. Print.

---. *The Cup and the Lip*. London: Ernest Benn, 1956.

This novel serves as a social commentary on the white middle class. Centred on a love triangle between Mr Pemberton, a rich confirmed bachelor, his nephew Arthur, and Gladys, an English woman of limited means, this novel is successful in providing a microscopic examination of perceived social expectations and mannerisms, highlighting both the hypocrisy of the white middle class, and the superficiality of manners, as well as examining Jamaica's social consciousness. Significantly it is the first Caribbean novel to inject into the main storyline the East Indian workers. Frank Birbalsingh recognises the "uniqueness" of this novel in his paper "Jamaican Indians: A Novelist's View," stating it is the "only novel which offers an extended portrait of Indian characters" (91), and that this portrait "is the most detailed and extensive that exists in Jamaican literature" (91). Originally published in *Planters' Punch* in 1931-1932, it was posthumously printed by Ernest Benn in 1956, and has only ever run to one edition.

---. "The Crocodiles." *Planters' Punch* Vol. 3. No. 1. Dec. 1932-1933. Print.

A novella which focuses upon the Jamaican legend of the crocodiles, the novella contains many references to obeah and the ability to transform from crocodiles to humans and vice versa. Recurring themes of miscegenation and Obeah are present within this novel, which allows for a short entertaining tale. This novel was never published outside of *Planters' Punch* and no critical appraisal has taken place.

---. "Poltergeist?" *Planters' Punch* Vol. 3. No. 2. Dec. 1933-1934. Print.

---. "Poltergeist? The Last Phase." *Planters' Punch* Vol. 3. No. 3. Dec. 1934-1935. Print.

These two novels continue de Lisser's fascination with Obeah and unrequited love. Although de Lisser utilises the recurring themes of Obeah, love triangles and social status within this novel, it is not as fluid as some of his earlier novels. It was never republished outside of *Planters' Punch* and there is no scholarly debate.

---. "Under the Sun." *Planters' Punch* Vol. 3. No. 4. Dec. 1935-1936. Print.

---. *Under the Sun*. London: Ernest Benn, 1937. Print.

Under the Sun parodies the Jamaican man's desire for social prestige and elevation. The novel focuses upon a brown middle-class respectable Jamaican who marries a white "working-class" girl from England with high social aspirations and returns to Jamaica with her. It is a compelling novel that successfully satirises and examines the social constraints, hierarchies and class distinctions of both Jamaica and England. Originally published in *Planters' Punch* in the year 1935-1936, it was published in book format by Ernest Benn in 1937. The novel only ran to one print.

---. "Anacanoa." *Planters' Punch* Vol. 3. No. 5. Dec. 1936-1937. Print.

---. *The Arawak Girl*. Kingston: Pioneer Press, 1958. Print.

Recovering the history of the Arawak Indians, the indigenous people of Jamaica, “Anacanoa” is the first of a trilogy of novels that charts the early history of Jamaica during Spanish occupation and the subsequent successful invasion of the British in 1655. This novel and its subsequent trilogies is an attempt at recovering a history of Jamaica that has not necessarily been successfully recorded. There has been no critical debate on the novel. Originally published in the 1936-37 edition of *Planters’ Punch*, The Pioneer Press published “Anacanoa” in 1958 under the title *The Arawak Girl*. The Pioneer Press was the publishing arm of *The Daily Gleaner* resurrected by the Managing Director S.G. Fletcher in the late 1940s to meet the demands and intellectual agenda of post war Jamaica. A wide variety of books was published in order to reconnect with some aspects of Jamaican life, and *The Arawak Girl* was the only publication that dealt with the period of Spanish occupation.

---. “Zombies.” *Planters’ Punch* Vol. 3. No. 5. Dec. 1936-1937. Print.

Published in the same edition of *Planters’ Punch* as “Anacanoa,” “Zombies” is a short novella which focuses on the kidnapping of a young girl called Rose by General Sam to be used as a sacrifice in the ‘Obeah’ ways. Although continuing with the recurring themes of Obeah and hinting of its origins to Haiti, this is a “crowd-pleasing” novella of little merit. It was never republished and has had no scholarly appraisals.

---. "Conquest." *Planters' Punch* Vol 3. No. 6. Dec. 1937-1938. Print.

"Conquest" continues to establish an historical trajectory of Jamaica that not only foregrounds the Arawak Indians as the founders of a nation, but also attempts to delineate the history of the Maroons, as a way of promoting cultural and national pride. This novel was only published in *Planters' Punch* and has received no scholarly attention.

---. "The White Maroon." *Planters' Punch* Vol. 4. No. 1. Dec. 1938-1939. Print.

The final novel that completes the trilogy, this text focuses on the continued ancestry of the Arawak people, and Juan's return to the mountains to "lead" the Maroons. This novel appears slightly contrived in order to produce a happy ending. It appears that the appropriation of the Maroons, Bridget's helplessness and Maria's re-discovery of her "Jamaicaness" is an attempt to dilute the historical significance of this time period into a more fitting context for the readership. It was never published outside of *Planters' Punch* and has attracted no scholarly interest to date.

---. "Haunted." *Planters' Punch* Vol. 4. No. 2. Dec. 1939-1940. Print.

Although this novel's main focus is on Obeah, it is the prominent changing attitudes to class and colour that make this novel really interesting. This enthralling and complex novel deals with issues arising from the decline of the plantocracy, illustrating the changes that are taking place, especially with

the implications within the novel that colour and class are not so important these days. Equally, the reference to the riots of 1938 is very significant, especially as de Lisser was accused of not commenting upon these riots, and it is not lost on the reader that James is advocating the uprising of the working class. The novel was never published outside of *Planters' Punch* and has not received any scholarly attention.

---. "Myrtle and Money." *Planters' Punch* Vol. 4. No. 4. Dec. 1941-1942. Print.

This is a sequel to *Jane's Career* and examines the social consciousness and realistic reflections of the "middle-class masses" at the beginning of the 1940s. Other than H.P. Jacob's brief review of "Myrtle and Money," Rhonda Cobham is the only other critic to analyse the text which she considers to be one of the "finest de Lisser ever produced" (Cobham, "Herbert George de Lisser" 175), in light of his contrasting of the subtle ironies between mother and daughter and "the comment which the novel makes on the burgeoning materialism of the new Black middle class." (Cobham, "Herbert George de Lisser" 175). It was only ever published in *Planters' Punch*.

---. "Psyche." *Planters' Punch* Vol. 4. No. 5. Dec. 1942-1943. Print.

---. "The Return." *Planters' Punch* Vol. 4. No. 6. Dec. 1943-1944. Print.

---. *Psyche*. London: Ernest Benn, 1952. Print.

Psyche and its concluding novel “The Return,” assesses the historical dichotomy and reconciliation of both a mother and a daughter bearing the same name against the background of the Sam Sharpe Rebellion of 1831 and the consequences of racial discrimination and identity. Initially published in *Planters’ Punch* over two consecutive years, these novels were amalgamated with its conclusion “The Return” for publication as a complete novel under the title *Psyche* by Ernest Benn in 1952, although the novels were set out as book 1 and book 2. Macmillan Novelty Trading Co. took over the publishing rights and re-printed the novel in 1980 and again in 1985. To date there has been no academic research on this novel.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

This thesis excavates a considerable amount of inaccessible and previously neglected material. As a result it is necessary to provide a brief rationale concerning the composition of this bibliography. Each citation is entered according to the model set down in the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers: Seventh Edition*. This bibliography is divided into primary and secondary sources. This system has been adopted due to the relatively limited amount of published critical and scholarly research as well as the voluminous amount of inaccessible and excavational material. Both the primary and secondary sources sections adopt the MLA practice of listing individual works in chronological order. In the case of anonymous texts, they are listed as prefaced by “anon” followed by the article heading, date of publication and page numbers, where they exist. For an entry where there is no article heading, the date and page number are listed if known. Any miscellaneous material, for instance, email correspondence, is listed recipient and date while websites are listed at the end of the relevant section. Finally, while on a research trip to Jamaica, I was fortunate enough to be able to view the complete run of volumes of *Planters' Punch*, which are available to view at The National Library of Jamaica, Kingston and The University of West Indies, Mona Campus Library, who between them house a complete set and for which I gratefully acknowledge the help that I received from both institutions which enabled me to carry out this extensive research. As a result I was able to

transcribe the entire contents of all of the volumes main articles and features, along with the relevant page numbers and other interesting information, including de Lisser's introductory remarks or comments. This information is not only invaluable in terms of contextualising the significance of *Planters' Punch*, but also in providing an insight into the wit, humour and writing style of de Lisser. In 2011, a joint project between The Caribbean Digital Library and The National Library of Jamaica has for the first time, made many of these periodicals available to view, free of charge, over the internet.

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