6-2021

Sonali Fernando's Mary Seacole: The Real Angel of the Crimea as Successful Cinematic Adaptation of Post-Colonial Voices

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April 29th, 2021

Honors Capstone

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Abstract

This honors thesis will explore the thematic relationship between Jamaican-British pioneer Mary Seacole's autobiography, *The Wonderful Adventures of Mary Seacole in Many Lands* (1857) and the BBC docudrama *Mary Seacole: The Real Angel of Crimea* (2005) directed by Sonali Fernando. In this paper, critical conversations around race, gender, class, and citizenship in both literature and cinema will contextually add to the dynamic between literature and film adaptations, while contextually contributing to the lack thereof for intersectional experiences in narrative media. Moreover, the paper will consult both literary and film theorists such as Homi Bhabha and bell hooks to understand postcolonial voices framed through the perspective of a black woman, in both text and screen. By looking at this adaptation through a literary and cinematic lens, this paper intends to uncover the film's veracity in honoring the legacy and tenacity of the woman who has been called England's best black Briton.

Introduction

Post-colonial literature and migratory narratives intrigued me when taking my first English course, Victorian Age, where my professor engaged in the life of a Jamaican-Scottish nurse navigating an industry dominated by white counterparts. At times, I have found myself in both cultural attachments and dissonance with native Caribbean black people, African Americans, and other racial identities, similar to the esteemed nurse, and her internal experiences. For many first-generation individuals, college has allowed us to self-reflect ideas of privilege, socioeconomic structures, and cultural identities. In the English department, specifically, I have challenged myself with a range of different courses outside my comfort level and outside what I have learned in previous academic institutions that did not offer these time periods and topics. With courses like *Newtonian Literature*, *British Writers,* and *John Donne and the Metaphysicals*, I tried my very best to abandon the lack of literary exposure I suffered from in high school and tested my writing and comprehension capabilities. Regarding abroad work, I received a scholarship my sophomore year to travel to Hong Kong with Professor Ameya Balsekar and Professor Jason Brozek to study sustainability and urban planning, a topic I am not so comfortable with. However, after immersing myself in Chinese and Hong Kong studies my freshman year, I wanted to challenge myself and explore beyond the cities and environment I currently live in, while making those connections back home.

Winter term of my junior year, I had the pleasure of taking The Victorian Age with Professor Timothy Spurgin. Through this course, I learned a lot about capitalism, feminism, and socialism during the 1800s England under the rule of Queen Victoria. During this class, we had the pleasure of reading the autobiography of Mary Seacole, *The Wonderful Adventures of Mary*

Seacole in Many Lands (1857), which follows the titular Jamaican nurse who emigrated to the United Kingdom to serve under the Crimean War. A woman of many qualities, strengths, and flaws, Seacole became an important figure because she abandoned post-colonial and intersectional anxiety to pursue her ambitions. As a first-generation student of two Caribbean immigrants (Jamaica and St. Kitts and Nevis), I pondered on the conversations regarding both immigration and the African diaspora in post-colonial literary studies, and the lack thereof in the English department at Lawrence University. I connected Mary Seacole to my own grandmothers, who both came to the states with their children to provide a better life, yet their narratives and representation in both film and literature are severely lacking. This prompted my interest in studying more about Mary Seacole.

In my research after the class, I found out a Seacole biographical film, directed by Charlie Stratton, starring Gugu Mbatha-Raw, will be released in December 2021. Realizing that both the director and two of the three co-writers are white, I questioned the veracity and ethics of adapting a narrative like this and if these filmmakers were aware of transferring post-colonial voices to cinematic screens. As many adaptations of Victorian culture have been displayed on screen, I have yet to find one portraying the black experience, let alone one honoring Mary Seacole. Through extensive research, I came across the BBC documentary on Vimeo (not on BBC's website), uploaded by Sonali Fernando, the director. Fernando, a Sri Lankan-British filmmaker, have made films about post-colonial women's experiences, including a visual tribute to Audre Lorde and *Great Excavations.* On Fernando's website, she writes, "I am a UK-based filmmaker, born and raised in London, who has worked across a range of genres and filmed in

twenty countries, including Mexico, India, Brazil, Egypt, Turkey, India, Malawi, South Africa, Ethiopia and many parts of Europe".

In this research, I will be investigating theories of diaspora and decolonization in literature and cinema, specifically looking at the autobiographical work and cinematic adaptation of Mary Seacole's story, directed by Sonali Fernando. Through looking at both the literary and cinematic interpretations, I will focus on topics such as intersectional feminism in diasporic literature, colonialism, assimilation, and famous English concepts like diaspora theory and migration theory. Studying abroad spring term of my senior year in London, England exposed me to the different post-colonial narratives, both historical and contemporary. Locations like Brixton, Tillbury Docks, and Notting Hill, heavily populated by a British West Indian community, highlighted the transnational journey and further mistreatment by British Parliament and society. As a member of a dense Caribbean Community in South Brooklyn, New York, I find myself in debt to the Caribbean culture that has raised me and nurtured me. West Indian heroes like Mary Seacole have made tremendous contributions to English literature, providing a personal account of young black women migrating to colonial empires at times of war.

I will first investigate more of Mary Seacole's life through her commemorations in London such as museums and statues dedicated to her service in the Crimean War. This includes the Florence Nightingale museum, the Mary Seacole statue, located at St. Thomas' Hospital, the Museum of London, and the Science of London, just to name a few. The Museum of London has a theatrical production where a woman acts as Mary Seacole and publicly interprets her life to young children. These conversations will inform me of modern interpretations of Black British

representation in literature and film and how that compares or contrasts to what Caribbean-Americans experience in America.

Background

Investigating the post-colonial voice of Caribbean writers, specifically Mary Seacole, requires a historical analysis of the transatlantic slave trade, the reality of race, immigration, class in both Jamaica and Great Britain during the Victorian Age, contemporary society, and how these voices have been transcribed to different media and works of art. Slavery in the United Kingdom commenced in 1555, where Englishman John Lok brought five enslaved Africans from Guinea back to the European country. Captain of three trips, the Bartholomew, the Trinity, and the John Evangelist, Lok embarked a voyage that took seven weeks to land and twenty weeks to return. The expedition seized 400 pounds of gold, 36 butts of Guinea pepper, 250 elephant tusks and five Africans to learn English and serve as interpreters for future trades with Guineans. Telling the narratives of their expeditions, Richard Eden, who travelled with John Lok, made anthropological observations similar to a voyager's scope of an animal and similar to the qualitative analysis of the commodities they purchase. Eden recounts, "this is also to be considered as a secret worke of nature, that throughout all Africke, under the Equinoctial line, and eere about the same on both sides, the regions are extreme hote, and the people very blacke." (Eden, 176). By leaving the source of expeditious information in the hands of imperial voices, many enslaved Africans found themselves subjected to invisibility and obstruction of identity. Educating enslaved black people with English literature, where they then utilized colonized language as weaponization against monarchical power, initiated a movement in the late 18th century ignited by writers like Olaudah Equiano and Igantius Sancho. However, the transatlantic slave trade magnified after Queen Elizabeth motioned two Royal Ships to expeditions capturing

West Africans and West African resources for profits and trading limits, and further suppressing enslaved voices on a national platform.

As British forces started invading West Indies, destructing lives of the Taino people and importing West Africans in the archipelago, Commonwealth leaders William Penn and Robert Venables invaded Jamaica, seizing the colony from Spanish forces. The development of the plantation system escorted a growth in the transatlantic economy and increased demand for African labor. Demand for sugar plantations maximized in England as cravings for coffee, tea, and chocolate was at a high. Emigrating to Jamaica from Maidenhead, England, Peter Beckford started a sugar plantation on the island in 1665, before actively engaging in politics and being appointed Chief Justice of Jamaica in 1703. Beckford's sugar investments elevated his wealth, where the inaugural assemblyman of Jamaica became the richest man in the recently colonized country. Beckford ruled his land with monarchical force, using a loud, brash Jamaican accent to dictate trade policies and enslavement. He indulged in lascivious entertainment, exploiting the resources and labor for self-aggrandization. According to The National Lottery, "an absentee planter, Alderman Beckford ruled his land in the West Indies with tyrannical strength, rapidly increasing the Beckford fortune. But these great profits were at the expense of the brutal treatment of the slave labour." (National Lottery 4) After English leader Oliver Cromwell launched a successful attack against the Spanish armada, winning the battle of Ochos Rios in 1657[1], and the Battle of Rio Nuevo in 1658[2], importation of enslaved Africans increased the black population at least five times the number of whites in Jamaica. After British declaration of

[1] The Battle of Ochos Rios was a military war on the island of Jamaica where Spanish forces failed to take back the country from English occupants.
[2] The Battle of Rio Nuevo is the largest battle to be fought in Jamaica where English forces suppressed invading Spanish routes

Jamaica as an English colony through the 1670 Treaty of Madrid[3], the country's economic self-sufficiency grew as a result of the sugar monoculture and slave plantations.

Angered by the forced expansion of British settlement in Jamaica, Spanish Maroons, destroyed plantations, ambushing any colonial territory established. This community, comprised of West Africans, Tainos, and mulattoes, established domesticity in stockaded mountain farms, remaining independent from English rule. Enslaved uprisings established an Ashanti[4] political identity, engaging in combat with West African influence and a strict sense of unity and loyalty. Queen Nanny, an 18th century leader of the Maroons, spearheaded the Windward Maroons' defense in the First Maroon War, strategically defeating the British empire by burning plantations, freeing enslaved Africans, and raiding weapons, foods, and possessions. According to Alan Tuelon, Henry Williams recounts his experience first meeting the revered Obeah woman at the treaty. "When the treaty was signed with the Windward rebels there was a very ferocious obeah women in attendance," Williams reports. "In his fascinating account of this ceremony Philip Thicknesse, who served as a Lieutenat in the Regular Army, wrote that she, "…had a girdle round her waste…with nine or ten different knives hanging in sheaths to it, many of which I have no doubt, had been plunged in human flesh and blood…" (Tuelon 23). This "savage" description, using phrasing like "plunged in human flesh and blood" and "ten different knives", paints this one-dimensional horrific figure to mainstream British audiences, caricaturing the Maroons as beastly individuals. Additionally, the lack of black voices publicized in English media disallows defense against these false images, communicating that what Williams report is truth. The First Maroon War ended April 20, 1739, with a treaty that the Maroons can live freely

[3] Treaty of Madrid settled the war between the Spanish and English ended and England owns Jamaica.
[4]The Ashanti are the largest Ghana tribe known for their matrilineal leadership and fierce combat.

under the supervision of a British official, but under the condition they must capture or report any enslaved black Jamaicans that recently escaped and fight alongside the English when invaders enter their territory. This treaty weakened relationships between enslaved Jamaicans and the Maroon community, especially under the leadership of Cudjoe, who reckoned the Maroons stayed faithful to British empires at the expense they maintain their freedom.

Brutalized treatment against enslaved West Africans in Jamaica reportedly exceeded the abuse against any other colonized country in the West Indies. The slave system operated on a hierarchical power structure, where white men and women exercised overt dominance over enslaved Caribbean's through repressive laws, punishment, and exploitations of bodies. "There, when they were not having to carry out hard manual labor, they were subjected to, or threatened with, flogging and mutilation for a wide and constantly increasing variety of offences," reported St. John's College, Oxford. "Slave women were abused by white men, and all- men, women, and children- were more or less abandoned to under nourishment and disease." (SJC 32). Inspired by the successful resistance of Queen Nanny in the First Maroon War, former Akan[5] paramount chief Tacky (or Takyi), and his followers killed their masters and overseers on Easter Monday. Revolting at plantations owned by William Beckford, Tacky's revolt recruited hundreds of enslaved Africans only to be met by British militia in Spanish Town, Jamaica and Maroons, who were obligated by treaty to help suppress any salve rebellion. Engaging in a battle at Rocky Valley, the Maroons and the enslaved black Africans fought a bloody war until one of the Maroons decapitated Tacky's head and displayed it on a pole to demonstrate consequences of revolt. By facilitating combat between Maroons and enslaved Black Africans in Jamaica

[5] Akan is a meta-ethnic tribe in Ghana and Ivory Coast.

reinforced an indirect imperial control European implemented between different marginalized black identities in the colonized country.

After the Tacky's Rebellion, the British parliament prohibited Obeah culture, a medical witch practice adopted by Maroons to ensure solidarity and spiritual protection, to repress any colonial ties to West African identity. This same folk medicine, adopted by Jamaican-British nurse Mary Seacole, treated tropical diseases, medical ailments, and illnesses slaves suffered from in transatlantic voyages by White British expeditions. Obeah medicine, originated from Akan identity, included a diverse list of medical, spiritual, and religious traditions and rituals practiced mainly by Caribbean black women as a sense of control and relevance in healing in enslaved African communities in Jamaica. However, in 1820, Dr. James Thomson published "A Treatise on the Disease of Negroes as They Occur in the Island of Jamaica", which constitutes obeah as a dangerous tradition that disrupts the productivity and reproductive responsibilities enslaved black women possessed during this time. Europeans sought to discredit and disband the power of Obeah practice in England, exoticizing the ailments as detrimental, constructing a colonial dominance over black women's bodies and black women's intelligence. Stephen Fuller's "Woman of the Popo Country," Bryan Edwards' *History, Civil, and Commercial of the British Colonies in the West Indies*, and William Holland's *Johnny Newcome* helped to initiate what Toni Wall Jaudon has described as "obeah fictions," or the voluminous discourses surrounding obeah that often described a series of mysterious ailments, a diasporic (African) practitioner, a hidden stash of obeah objects, etc. These items present the material embodiments of what Jaudon describes as the "sensory plurality" recorded in obeah fictions, seemingly everyday objects whose assembled meaning in the context of obeah rendered them strange and

foreign". (Cottrell 2) Negative representations of obeah culture has ostracized Caribbean legacy from black womanhood, creating a cultural dissonance and an anxious landscape for Jamaican nurse Mary Seacole to engage with. However, Seacole's narrative authority and introspective voice provided an idiosyncratic movement where black Caribbean women took agency in reclaiming their narratives and taking control of their post-colonial identity.

Alongside the removal of Obeah practice by the rebellion, Europeans sought to repress any West African influences in enslaved Jamaican culture, enforcing an assimilatory behavior that pledged allegiance to the United Kingdom. However, Jamaican folk culture enmeshed elements of Akan culture, Maroon identity, and Arawak festivities. According to Dr. Rebecca Tortello, Jamaican life and culture initiated from a brutal system that forged an integration and consolidation of places and people as a new emerged Jamaican identity is adopted by the enslaved. Referencing Barbadian academic The Honourable Kamau Brathwaite, Tortello explains, " "Slaves," Brathwaite explains, "danced and sang at work, at play, at worship, from fear, from sorrow from joy" (p. 220). They recreated African musical instruments from materials found in Jamaica (calabash, conch, bamboo, etc.) and featured improvisation in song and dance. All of these customs and many more such as the Christmas street parades of Jonkonnu[6], were misunderstood and undervalued by Europeans except the political use of drumming to send coded messages from plantation to plantation." (Tortello 4). With many restrictions directly and subconsciously enacted by European powers, storytelling in Jamaican culture allowed ancestral influences to descend as a strong connection to a mixed post-colonial identity in order to preserve ancestral connections. Jamaican folklore infuses humor and morality as an oratory tactic

[6] Jonkonnu is a fusion of African masked dances and British folk utilized as street entertainment in Jamaica during Christmas day.

to divert from the extremities brought by enslavement and dehumanization. Key components in Jamaican storytelling include exaggeration, repetition, dialect, word choice, extremes and melodrama. For post-colonial women, specifically Jamaican women, storytelling provided power through active voice of narrative and reason to diverse audiences. In England, freed enslaved Africans integrated with Jews, Irish people, Germans, and Huguenots, employed as servants, seafarers, and migrant workers. As the slave trade abolished in 1804, memoirs and reflections on life during slavery heightened, publicizing a voice that reflects on the trauma and discrimination they faced to British audiences.

Before black abolitionists accounted their lives through the cruelty they experienced and the testimonies they offered, many European American engaged in these topics, classified as captivity literature. This genre tracks European expeditions on entering a foreign land and retelling their experiences with a self-promoted privilege point-of-view. As author Joe Snader argues, " Among this is one that literary scholars have called the captivity narrative, the text devoted extensively or exclusively to documenting a real experience of subjugation in a foreign land. Today, however, we do not think of the captivity narrative as an early modem genre, but rather as an American one, largely because literary scholars have defined the captivity genre in terms of Anglo-American captives and Native American captors." Examples of captivity literature ranges from *Sufferings in Africa* by James Riley (1815)[7] to *Robert Drury's Journal* by Robert Drury (1729). Although authors have offered critical analysis on the relationship between slavery and race, examining human rights at a time where West Africans were still enslaved in other parts of the world doesn't directly engage with the true feelings experienced in slavery and indenture

[7] This is a memoir detailing James Riley and his crew captured after being shipwrecked in 1815.

servitude, especially when filtered through a white experience. Abolitionists like Olaudah Equiano, Ottobah Cugoano, and Ukasaw Gronniosaw scribed autobiographies, detailing their lives from their native country to forced migration in colonial empires, engaging in themes of faith, freedom, and trauma. Significantly, the first woman to petition parliament, Mary Prince, revolutionizes the abolition movement by navigating through the mental and physical lacerations she received due to her intersectional identity. *The History of Mary Prince, A West Indian Slave*, published in 1831 and released while her hometown Bermuda still legalized slavery, became the first account of the life of a freed black woman in the United Kingdom.

Mary Prince's legacy as the first black woman to write an autobiography and petition parliament cemented herself as a pivotal force in black Caribbean women's essence to British history. Born in 1788 to an enslaved Bermudan family, Mary Prince suffered from constant slave sales and brutal owners before ending up in Antigua to the Wood family. In 1826, she married Daniel James, a newly freed Bermudan, who bought her freedom, employed as a carpenter and as a cooper. Because of this marriage, Mary was severely beaten and forced to migrate to England with her enslaver. Prince eventually fled and found freedom but could not reunite with her husband as a result. The Bermudan abolitionist campaigned against slavery, working alongside the Anti-Slavery Society, a movement organized to eliminate slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. Even though The Slave Trade Act 1807 made slave trade illegal, underground enslavement and brutalized treatment continued, which encouraged the organization to sever European power from British colonies. Auxiliary societies, consisted of white British women, started abolitionist programs for enslaved women found in Birmingham, England called Birmingham Ladies Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves. In her pamphlet,

"Immediate not Gradual Abolition" (1824), white abolitionist Elizabeth Heyrick acknowledged the importance of identifying gender abuse in slavery and the responsibility every human has in allowing the transatlantic slave trade to continue. "The perpetuation of slavery in our West India Colonies is not an abstract question, to be settled between the government and the planters; it is one in which we are all implicated, we are all guilty of supporting and perpetuating slavery," she argues. "Women should be involved in these issues as they are qualified to not only sympathize with suffering, but also to plead for the oppressor". (Heyrick 1824) Prince took her narrative to Heyrick and her organization, recognizing the misogynoir culture both civil law and society suffered from as emancipation stories favored men like Olaudah Equiano and Ignatius Sancho. Mary Prince became the first woman to present an anti-slavery petition to Parliament and the first black woman to publish her autobiography, which led to a court case that attacked her intersectional identity with reference to her sexuality and fidelity.

More so, Prince's post-colonial voice engages with the victimization she experienced as a black woman in slavery, detailing the suffering and objectification she received from other enslavers. The West Indian abolitionist reflects, "We followed my mother to the market-place. At length the vendue master, who was to offer us for sale like sheep or cattle, arrived and asked my mother which was the eldest. She said nothing but pointed to me. He took me by the hand and led me out into the middle of the street, and turning me slowly round, exposed me to the view of those who attended the vendue. I was soon surrounded by strange men, who examined and handled me in the same manner that a butcher would a calf or a lamb he was about to purchase. The bidding started at a few pounds, and gradually rose to fifty-seven. The people who stood by said that I had fetched a great sum for so young a slave. I then saw my sisters led forth

and sold to different owners." (Prince 1831) Prince's frank language intensifies the macabre of her situation and animalistic treatment, saying, "offer us for sale like sheep or cattle". Prince's post-colonial voice echoes the strain colonialism put on relationships not only between women, but also between women and their body. The racial sexualization Prince experiences as she's being glared at by men possessing control over her physical body shares a sentiment that's only experienced by Third World women in colonial spaces. The similes Prince tells the readers communicates a simple, morbid idea so that audiences of every literary consciousness can register the treatment she received and empathize with the devastating effects of colonization by imperial Europe.

Reception to Prince's novel echoes the misogynoir post-colonial women suffered from when publicizing their narratives to a mainstream audience. Joseph MacQueen, editor of Glasgow Courier, defamed Prince's autobiography and her character in a specified article in the Blackwood's Magazine, a platform T.S. Eliot describes, "the best piece of literary journalism that I know of in recent times". MacQueen states, in reference to Prince, "by tools like Mary Prince and Joseph Phillips, mislead and irritate this country, browbeat the Government, and trample upon, as they are permitted to trample upon, our most important transmarine possessions, the value and importance of which I am bound to shew to your lordship and the public." (MacQueen 752) Speaking in a bashful tone, MacQueen's rhetoric reflects the xenophobic and gender-discriminatory sentiments shared by Victorian England as industrialization and mass migration ushered Caribbean and African populations in the colonial empire. For MacQueen to tarnish Prince's name on a multi-national platform exacerbates the

portrayal, image, and conviction black women narratives hold in hegemonic white spaces, a conflict that still continues today.

However, despite marking herself as an integral part in London's long colonial history, her representation and legacy severely lacks, highlighting a dismissal of post-colonial black women's narratives to mainstream public. For the Bermudian abolitionist, the only recognition she received in modern day England was a plaque honored by Nubian Jak Community Trust, which reads, "Mary Prince 1788-1833 Abolitionist and Author lived in a house near this site 1829 London Borough of Camden". The Nubian Jak Community Trust is a commemoration of minority ethnic and Black British people who have contributed to London's history, promoting cultural diversity and multiracial recognition. Started by Jamaican British entrepreneur Jak Beula Dodd, the trust publicized Prince's plaque in Camden Road, the first plaque for a Black British woman in the long list of memorials. In response to the ceremony commemorating the plaque, Labour Member of Parliament Dianne Abbott says, "she put herself at risk by telling her story and it's very important that we remember the slaves who took part in the struggle to abolish the slave trade." (Mallan 2007) This respect for Prince's legacy seems limited to black descendants despite Prince's role in British abolition and integration. For Caribbean black women, cinematic erasure and superficial conceptualizations of Black women experiences in British media and culture emphasizes geo-cultural oppressions and microaggressions that promotes false, harmful ideas and dissonance from hegemonic British culture. Patricia Hill Collins, an academic specialized in race, gender, and class, elucidates the matrix of oppressive ideologies such as stereotypes, hyperboles, and caricatures solidifies institutional discrimination against black women in media and pop culture. "Maintaining the invisibility of Black women and our ideas not

only in the United States, but in Africa, the Caribbean, South America, Europe, and other places where Black women now live has been critical in many social inequalities," she explained. "Black Women engaged in reclaiming and constructing Black women's knowledge often points to politics of suppression that affect their projects. For example, several authors in Heidi Mirza's (1997) edited volume on Black British feminism identify their invisibility and silencing in the contemporary United Kingdom" (Hill Collins 3). Mary Prince's only depiction in other media and pop culture in her 230-year legacy is a supporting love interest to Barbadian-Polish virtuoso violinist George Bridgetower in the Julian Joseph libretto, *A Fable of 1807* commissioned to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Slave Trade Act of 1807. Although Prince's role engages in her life story through resistant characterization, her arc serves as romantic interest for the main character, a trope suffered by many women in narrative structures. Nonetheless, Prince's sole representation in entertainment relies on the authorship of black creatives in England, a population very small due to the exploitation and lack of resources needed to publicize British black narratives. For period dramas, with settings like the Georgian England and Victorian England, black British characters and figures have faced more erasure in English literature, limiting the education on black experiences in different generations.

At the turn of the 19th century, Victorian England foresaw a dramatic increase in industrialization, mass migration, and women taking a more authoritative responsibility in labor and production. Victorian Era, defined by the reign of Queen Victoria, spans from 1837 to 1901, intricately explore class, privilege, and discovery both domestically and internationally. Inventions and machines made in factories encouraged efficient production and maximized resource distribution, using steam engines and railways to elevate trade between businesses.

Historian Andrew Knowles notes, “by 1837, when Queen Victoria came to the throne, steam railways were being built across the world, and steam engines were being put to different uses”. As textile and agricultural mechanization grew to an all-time high, demand for these products would soon surpass the ability of the machines, engendering a desire for more employment in factories. This transition to mechanization happened rapidly, where many employees suffered from poor work conditions such as low wages, poor health, no benefits, and women were significantly paid less than men. Writing during this time explored the realities and dangers of factory work and the emerging socio-political ideologies that reformed conversations around wealth disparity. Victorian literature took a more naturalistic approach in fiction, drama, and poetry, constructed around judgments against aristocracy and investment in the quotidian lives of lower social classes. As Jackson I. Cope analyzes in “An Early Analysis of ‘The Victorian Age’ in Literature”, “Victorian is a thoroughly functional adjective to apply to the new literature since ‘whatever beliefs and opinions become prevalent among a people will, of course, color the national literature during the time of their predominance. Literature is the artistic expression in words of whatever men think and feel… It takes an impulse from its age, and it also gives an impulse to its age… although literature makes really the chief nutriment and life of civilization, it is a condition of all literature that would aspire to be immediately influential that it should sympathize to a considerable degree with the reigning spirit of its age” (Cope 16) Cope’s description of literature, phrasing his definition like “whatever men think and feel” and “it should sympathize to a considerable degree” exposes the male dominant culture in literature and education and how perspectives regarding marginalized identities and women were extremely limiting prior to these English time periods. The Victorian Age elevated feminist ideologies,

pushing to reform rights to vote and own property, while gaining momentum in employment and economic ascension.

Subsequently, 19th century Victoria Age represents middle-class, femininity, and abandoning the cult of domesticity. For women, patriarchal politics generated socioeconomic disadvantages such as unfair compensation and wage inequality, overworking themselves in assembly lines and coal mines. Victorians heavily believed women were held by the cult of domesticity, a metaphorical sphere that dictated women's role and responsibility in nuclear families should be operated with submission to the father and the family and regulate the chores and dynamics within the household. Because this subservient stereotype was heavily applied during this industrial age, women were commonly subjected to harassment and objects of power that unfortunately started to normalize (by men) in English culture. Texts such as *Cranford* by Elizabeth Gaskell, *Middlemarch* by George Eliot, and *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte engage with these themes and narratives, providing mainstream audiences with nuanced scopes of women in different classes, the gender discriminations they face, and the dynamics of the ensemble they enter. "So, the women within the novels struggled daily to make it through the day without being harassed or taunted by men," said Kara L. Bennett, a scholar specialized in Victorian literature. "So, although the women in the texts come from different classes and hold different working roles, they all face the same issue: they are all working women". (Bennett 5) Although feminist Victorian literature reflected the sentiments and opinions women face in the nineteenth century, women of color, both citizens and immigrants, became an excluded demographic in the historical landscape, which led to both advantages and disadvantages. For Black femininity in Victorian England, maneuvering through British imperialism and economic

prosperity became a survival mechanism to stay hidden from oppressive powers yearning to strip their identity and self-authority.

Historically speaking, notable representations of black women in the Victorian Era is harder to trace than white women and men of African descent. The presence of black women in Great Britain resulted from escaping slavery, migrating from Caribbean countries, and visits from American scholars and activists. Because of imperial control on mass communication and literary media, journalists scandalized black women in newspapers, reporting narratives that branded them negatively and harming their access to proper resources and socioeconomic necessities. To ensure the status of their independence, based in the legal ambiguity Britain had with the imposition of slavery, many black women assimilated into British culture, using survival tactics like language and servitude to remain free. As Montaz Marche, a History scholar of University of Central London states, “the reason why black women are so undetectable in the archives is precisely because they desired it to be so. Black women, as social chameleons, uniquely adopted the desired characteristics of British civility, thus becoming undistinguishable from their neighbours and successfully assimilating into communities in Britain, their home.” (Marche, 2019) When black women were mentioned in the newspapers, most reported “fugitive” slaves that escaped from their enslaver to pursue a free life in Great Britain. Not living differently from White Victorians, Black Victorians would dress similarly in grandiose gowns, abandon their colonial identity, and speak with a similar language to adhere to British values. Omoba Aina was an Egbado princess liberated from King Ghezo’s enslavement by Captain Frederick E. Forbes and subsequently became the goddaughter of Queen Victoria. Aina willfully changed her name to Sara Forbes Bonetta and accustomed herself to British

middle class through education and Christian baptism. Assimilatory behavior echoes the fear black British civilians experienced daily and the negative consequences imperial power had on migratory narratives. By controlling main sources of media, white writers dominate the way black narratives are delivered to mainstream audiences, limiting the dimensions of their lives and promoting harmful caricatures that can jeopardize employment and opportunities. When historians resurrect evidence of black Victorians for archival use, they fail to gather any information on the names of the figures in the image and the circumstance of the photograph. In "Black Victorians: History Claims We've Only Ever Been Slaves", Shamika Sanders write, "The only unfortunate factor is that a majority of the images found are without the photographer's name or the name of the woman featured. They'll be forever unknown. Yet, in viewing, the photos (described as "striking" by CNN) feel very natural to see–like you've known all along that somewhere, in some time, Black people walked the old brick roads of England or America as high society." (Sanders 2015). By controlling and limiting the way black British are perceived and registered in Victorian Era, journalists initiate a domino effect that erases the legacy contemporary Black British can possibly celebrate and rob the demographic of nuanced representations beyond enslavement and discrimination.

Mary Seacole's legacy, however, is revered to larger audiences, presenting a statue dedicated to the nurse for her contributions to medical information. Besides the large blue plaque on 14 Soho Square in Central London, England, which reads, "Greater London Council, Mary Seacole 1805-1881; Jamaican Nurse Heroine of the Crimean War", the Jamaican nurse is honored with a bronze statue a century and a half years later after her death. On June 30th, 2016, St. Thomas Hospital presented a memorial statue honoring Mary Seacole, unveiled by Baroness

Floella Benjamin OBE. Funded by schools, hospitals, and army units, the first memorial to honor a black woman is positioned before a bronze disc, symbolically working as a model of the earth for travelling artists, racial intolerance, and a rejection to imperialist powers. The Mary Seacole Memorial Trust writes, "The disc points up the essential emotional narrative of Mary Seacole's life. In a key passage in her autobiography, she describes waiting in the hallway of the Secretary at War to be accepted as an official member of the nursing team being sent to the Crimea. When she realises that she has been stonewalled solely on account of her ethnic origin, she communicates a personal pain that can be shared by anyone who has ever been rejected merely for who they are rather than for any lack of merit." (2016) Standing opposite the House of Parliament, Seacole's statue represents an integral force in consolidating black Caribbean British identities with English culture, a struggle still experienced today. Seacole's statue was sculpted by Martin Jennings, a British sculptor known for memorializing traditional figures installed at major sites in England. Jennings, a white man, using his expertise to re-imagine a black woman, who arrived in England and established a hotel business on her own, highlights the responsibility non-black artists can take to honoring narratives and legacies of post-colonial figures in history.

Victorian representation in cinema takes a more Eurocentric approach, highlighting urban environment conditions, privilege disparity, and how gender dynamics informed socioeconomic structures between the constitutional monarchy and British communities. With an emphasis on reality and veracity, Victorian education and literature rarely engage with imaginative storytelling, imposing children and adult audiences the importance of gender roles and regurgitation of information as a successful gate to accumulating wealth. Period drama *The Young Victoria* (2009), explores the heir presumptive to the British throne Princess Victoria and

the pressures she faced as she assumes regency. However, the film, directed by Jean-Marc Vallee, portrays the titular character as submissive and naïve, surrendering her superior position in desire for her court, Prince Albert. As Julia Kinzler, a critic specialized in representing power in cinematic portraits of royalty, writes, “Whereas the configuration of Albert as effete indoor hunter and Victoria’s superior position in Landseer’s painting suggest Victoria’s “sovereignty over a feminized Albert”, the film adapts and transforms its codes in terms of gender dynamics. Here, a girlish and nervous Victoria awaits Prince Albert who dynamically walks down the hallway towards her. The ambiguity of the Landseer portrait, i.e. domestic femininity versus the Queen’s superior position, is dissolved by the film’s rather unproblematic interpretation which evacuates Victoria of her feminism.” (Kinzler 60) When adapting feminist voices, male directors may fall in portraying women with gender-based tropes and caricatures, capitalizing on the male-dominated influence in the cinema industry. From damsels in distress to manic pixie dream girls, filmmakers indulge in apparent gender disparities in character development, shaping how audiences make restrictive generalizations and reinforcing false ideas that masculine traits are superior to feminine traits. Laura Mulvey, a British feminist and film theorist, explored the patriarchy of psychoanalysis in her essay, *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*, through her coined term, the male gaze, which looks at the misogynistic looked-at-ness of women in cinema.

The male gaze suggests that women appear secondary, and the female viewer is subjected to the overwhelming presence of male influence. Mulvey states that “the gender power asymmetry is a controlling force in cinema and constructed for the pleasure of the male viewer, which is deeply rooted in patriarchal ideologies and discourses.” (Mulvey 64). For literature and cinema based in Victorian Era, ethnic and gender minorities face narrative suppression as a tool

of power reinforcement, using these stereotypes and ideologies to further inform and impact audiences how these identities should be perceived. While also focusing on class and urbanization, these period dramas stresses how men dictate socioeconomic heteronormativity in British life and culture and how patriarchal structures impacted commerce, opportunity, and presence in contemporary British history. British Broadcasting Corporation, also known as BBC, uses visual media, both narratives and documentaries, to educate English audiences on British history, capitalizing on its cultural significance to reinforce hegemonic ideologies back to audiences. Based in Westminster, the multimedia channel hosts historical period docudramas, finding alternative ways to visually communicate Victorian beliefs and prideful recognition heroes contributed to the United Kingdom.

Docudramas combines elements of documentary and narrative fiction, presenting real-life information in a dramatic manner. These dramatic documentaries marry two opposing genres to reimagine scenarios that audiences have no evidential reference to social issues and quotidian lifestyle in period cinema. According to Dr. Samer Ziyad Al Sharadgeh, a scholar at Umm Al-Qura University, “the docudrama improves on the historical drama through its use of actuality presented in recordings of events and locales where possible, and closeness to original stories. This form (docudrama) arose because of the desire of filmmakers during the post-war period in Europe to utilize the documentary format developed during the war in the commercial arena”. (Sharadgeh 15). Docudramas have been criticized for its distortion to history, advancing of prejudices, and rearranging characters and events for public approval and narrative license. As dramas have been integral in providing entertainment for audiences, incorporating true life experiences may mix elements of fictionalization and reality, disturbing historians and

descendants on failing to adhere to actual accounts. This framework uses performative and interview hybridity based in audiences' familiarity, reconstructing sequences adapted from works and historical texts to emphasize pivotal moments within the two-hour timeframe. Using narrative naturalism, such as people, locations, and dialogue allows the viewers to find comfort in this recognizable reality. This terrain of identification allows information to deliver quicker to audiences, relying on verisimilitude as a window to evaluate circumstances at that time period and the messages directors want viewers to register.

Hybridity in docudramas play a significant role in the characterization of Mary Seacole in Sonali Fernando's documentary. To be politically committed and creatively invested, filmmakers must find alternative ways to convey realism through constructions of customs and habits at the same time period. Through adapting text to monologues, recreating costumes and production designs to fit with the values of Victorian culture and disbanding those elements with contemporary re-interpretations of the esteemed nurse's life, Fernando possesses the responsibility to handle hybrid modes of production to honor her subject's life story. However, to Fernando's advantage, exploring autobiographies through docudramas allows both the subject and the director to demand subjective connectivity with the audience in its cinematic peculiarity by appealing to both narrative and documentary familiarities. Commenting on the irrelevance between documentary and fiction in the classification of docudramas, film journalist Peter Watkins affirms how audiences adhere to any filmic structure even when filmmakers juxtapose visuals with another mode of information (music, animation, etc.) "We can no longer separate or differentiate films in terms of being artistic, pleasurable, aesthetic vs. those we consider as rubbish – without understanding that nearly all contemporary cinema films, documentaries, and

TV programmes (including news broadcasts) which are intended and shaped for a mass audience, share certain common elements: a mono-form structure and a hierarchical relationship to the public," he stated. "Whenever we watch a film, or even a few moments of TV, we are – with alarmingly few exceptions – participating in a repetitive process of manipulation, whether this was intentional on the part of the filmmaker/producer, or not." As visual media tend to take liberties in production or mode to evoke thematic significance and narrative idiosyncrasy, the linear European "mono-form" structure of beginning, middle, and end uses common structures to tell uncommon stories. For Seacole, using English language and structure to deliver an unfamiliar narrative helped her autobiography become so well-known in the United Kingdom. Fernando understanding Seacole's post-colonial voice by applying those same mechanisms in her structure and production demonstrates a filmmaker's respect and understanding for a woman who built a business in a predominantly white society.

Analysis of Mary Seacole: The Real Angel of Crimea (2005), directed by Sonali Fernando

Mary Seacole (1805-1881) has made massive contributions to medical culture and black entrepreneurship, hence being recognized in 2004 as BBC's "greatest Black Briton". Because of her contributions as a nurse and hotelier in the Crimean War, the Victorian heroine's story has been adapted to biographies, documentaries, animations, and a future feature film adaptation soon to be released. However, Seacole's narrative agency in her transnational, post-colonial journey drew the most attraction from her autobiography, *The Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands (1857)*, promoting a confident businesswoman despite the limits placed on her identity by oppressive institutions. Conducting herself as a surrogate mother to soldiers abandoned by British government and devastated by the consequences of the war, Seacole's performative identity and Caribbean influence established a maternal relationship with her patients, landing her the name "Mother Seacole". As a biracial Jamaican-Scottish woman, Seacole reflected on her privilege and oppression as she navigated different destinations, creating conclusions and observations based on her experiences and the colorful individuals she came across in Balaclava, London, and Crimea. Sonali Fernando, a British writer and filmmaker specific in exploring themes like neo-imperialism and racism, condensed *The Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands* (1857) to a docudrama, *BBC[8]'s Mary Seacole: The Real Angel of Crimea*, offering a mixture of interviews, b-roll, and staged re-enactments of the Jamaican nurse's life.

[8] BBC; British Broadcasting Company

As representation of the nurse has been minimal, Seacole, like many stories written by black women in the African diaspora, tend to receive visual representations by white filmmakers, sparking inquiry around the validity of white Westerners telling the story of "the other". Adaptations like John Alexander's televised interpretation of Andrea Levy's *Small Island*[9] and Steven Spielberg's epic *The Color Purple*[10], adapted from Alice Walker's esteemed novel, critics find conflict in white filmmakers retaining the essence of intersectional trauma without surrendering to white fragility, colonial exoticism, and cultural appropriation. In both film and literature, the story of "the other" applies to post-colonial theory, which critiques the socioeconomic power of colonial empires and their perspectives on marginalized identities. Many works, including Seacole's autobiography, (and docudrama adaptation) deal with representational issues conveyed by hegemonic Eurocentrism, suffering from labels such as "exotic", "irrational", or "foreign", a problem more drastic for women of color. Engaging in this discourse, coining the term, *subaltern*, theorist Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak writes, "between patriarchy and imperialism, subject-constitution and object-formation, the figure of the woman disappears, not into a pristine nothingness, but into a violent shutting which is the displaced figuration of the 'third-world woman' caught between tradition and modernization" (Chakravorty Spivak 102) The third-world woman, as defined by Gender Studies professor at Syracuse University Chandra Talpade Mohanty, is defined as "victims of male violence, women as universal dependents, victims of the colonial process, victims of the familial systems, victims of the development processes, and victims of religious ideologies". Thus, many third world women fall invisible between the binary dynamics of race, class, immigration status, and gender,

[9] *Small Island* is about two Jamaican immigrants entering interracial relationships with World War Two soldiers.
[10] *The Color Purple*, written by Alice Walker, follows Celie Johnson, a young black girl, as she grows up in early 1900s.

leaving their narratives in void to mainstream audiences. Yet, Seacole, a Victorian hero, rejects the stereotyped oversimplified trauma applied to third world women, leaving her voice, ethos, and reverence in British history a profound foundation for Fernando, a first-generation British woman of color, to echo in the docudrama. Through Fernando's directorial decisions, as exemplified by mis-en-scene, cinematography, editing, and sound, the docudrama adapts post-colonial theory in literature to the theory in cinema to deconstruct Seacole's colonial otherness as she mobilizes beyond the restraints that society placed on her multiracial identity and within the realms of British capitalism. Thus, Fernando technically exploring the theory cinematically for BBC in parallel to how Seacole engages this expands conversations surrounding intersectional experiences from Caribbean black women in both medium for mainstream audiences and the responsibility a filmmaker should be considerate of when adapting these works.

Post-Colonialism looks at the critical analysis of colonialism's relevance in modern generations, challenging exploitation, imperialism, and classism. Writing on a post-colonial landscape requires reflection on traumatic discourse, looking at self-authoritative writing as a reclamation of cultural identity and pride in resistance. In "Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts Second Edition", the textbook defines post-colonialism, "Post-colonialism (or often postcolonialism) deals with the effects of colonization on cultures and societies. As originally used by historians after the Second World War in terms such as the post-colonial state, 'post-colonial' had a clearly chronological meaning, designating the post-independence period" (Ashcroft, Griffith, Tiffin 168). Only recognizable in Fernando's time period in contrast to the lack of critical analysis for Caribbean black writers in Seacole's generation, the freshly new critical analysis offers a platform for post-colonial writers and filmmakers to take agency in the

history of colonial violence and disrupt the societal perspective placed on the “other”. The term, however, has been controversial for declaring colonialism as an element of the past, as cultural critic Ella Shohat argues.

Post-colonial theory in literature and film explores the imperial consequences the subjects’ experiences, who go through transnational journeys and cultural self-awareness, but communicates this differently through respective literary elements. Post-colonial theory is an intellectual discourse challenging the effects of imperialism, navigating through identity, space, and hybridity. As Helen Gilbert and Joanne Tompkins write, “postcolonialism is, rather, an engagement with and contestation of colonialism's discourses, power structures, and social hierarchies ... A theory of postcolonialism must, then, respond to more than the merely chronological construction of post-independence, and to more than just the discursive experience of imperialism.” (Chousein 4). This cultural examination expands to feminist critique, characterizing their denial of power and agency mainly by their gender. Audre Lorde, writer of “Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference”, writes “As white women ignore their built-in privilege of whiteness and define woman in terms of their own experience alone, then women of Color become "other," the outsider whose experience and tradition is too "alien" to comprehend.” (Lorde, 3) Othering Caribbean women’s narratives limits attention and reclamation of power for women of color navigating their transnational experiences. Literary works that explore post-colonial feminism in diasporic literature include *Brown Girl, Brownstones* (Marshall 1981) and *Small Island* (Levy 2004). Post-colonial cinema, like theory, engage with the semantics of world representation, but uses looked-at-ness and the oppositional gaze to justify the relevance of migrant identities hybridized in Westernized hegemony. Sandra Ponzanesi, writer of “Postcolonial Theory in Film”, contributes,

“ Postcolonial theory has critically contributed to revisiting the representation of the Other, addressing long-standing tropes and stereotypes about cultural difference and racial otherness. This implies new interventions on how visual representations are implicated in the policing of boundaries between East and West, between Europe and the Rest, the self and the other, undoing or rethinking the ways in which the visual field conveys operation of a mastery that needs to be undone and decoded.” (Ponzanesi 2) The postcolonial optic, though not restricted to any genre or classification, can be solidified through four objectives: challenging stereotypes, confronting colonial language and perspective, reclaiming power in hegemonic spaces, and decolonizing narratives in Third World Cinema. Seacole’s autobiography and Fernando’s docudrama examines postcolonial feminism through the lens of a subject’s personal account to deconstruct the colonial impact on her identity, engaging different techniques familiarized in each medium’s critical analyses.

Fernando initiates the film with a montage, exhibiting ailing men fetal positioned from the affliction, presenting to the audience the tone, the setting, and the conflict faced by the titular nurse-businesswoman (0:00-0:12). By establishing the conflict within the first seconds through low-lit, slow paced, mobile pans of the soldiers, Fernando complements Seacole’s disregard for expository pleasantries, having the narrator mirror the tonal austerity journalist Sir William Howard Russell embodied in the preface. Russell says, “If singleness of heart, true charity, and Christian works; if trials and sufferings, dangers and perils, encountered boldly by a helpless woman on her errand of mercy in the camp and in the battle-field, can excite sympathy or move curiosity, Mary Seacole will have many friends and many readers.” (Seacole, vii) As the narrator introduces the medical climate present in Crimea, Fernando cuts to famous nurse Florence

Nightingale staring intimately with the audience from a medium shot angle. Framed fully within the frame, Fernando not only presents the nurse as a figure familiar to British audiences, but also highlights the racial preference audiences anticipate to when dealing with narratives led by women on screen. Seacole, a Caribbean Black woman inhabiting a predominantly white English space, recognizes the double burden race and gender presents for her identity in medical spaces, as intersectional prejudice disallows them to co-exists with white counterparts. bell hooks, a feminist and film theorist responsible for “In "The Oppositional Gaze: Black Female Spectators" (1992), explains how black women are not only underrepresented in film, but their gaze is prohibited and don’t get the same “looking” gaze privileges as other identities. “Looking indicates a sense of power with which the black female body is not sociologically endowed. The role of the black woman in American society and film is, to play the role of object in direct relation to white female existence” (hooks 1992). Having Nightingale centered frame, accompanied by the narrator’s words, “but the cult of the lady of the lamp has cast a shadow on another hero”, Fernando identifies the conflict within the narrative and the conflict presented theoretically: through handling external conflicts, many black women or women of color face lack invisibility or appreciation for their contributions compared to white women who contributed to the same capacity.

The British director, then, dismantles this harmful norm by transitioning the dark-lit close up of Nightingale to a well-lit “hero shot” of Mary Seacole, riding fiercely on a galloping horse (0:27-0:35). Fernando reveals Seacole with a blurred wide shot, disfiguring the detail of her figure and clothes amid a diurnal atmosphere. This directorial decision echoes the expectations audience has for figures (white men, mostly) who tend to enter frames valiantly, making the costume design, racial identity and gendering more ambiguous. As the narrator makes note the

facets of her identity that would put her at socioeconomic disadvantages in Victorian-era London saying “middle-aged, illegitimate, and from the outer reaches of the British empire” (0:37-0:40), Seacole treads through mud, carrying her satchel and comforting a near-dead soldier from his stationary position. The docudrama cuts to an extreme close-up portrait of Seacole, donned in a Yellow Victorian dress, similar to the framing Nightingale received when introduced in the first seconds of the film. “After a century of obscurity, Mary Seacole is reclaiming her place in history” (0:57), the narrator announces before the esteemed nurse gazes at the frame, disavowing the expectations black women lead have been restricted to when telling their narrative. Not only does she stare, but Seacole winks, validating a different interaction and experience she has with the viewers and distinguishing herself from the stern, austere Nightingale, who leers earnestly. Fernando replicates Seacole’s description of Nightingale in their only exchange, saying “In half an hour’s time I am admitted to Miss Nightingale’s presence. A slight figure, in the nurses’ dress; with a pale, gentle, and withal firm face, resting lightly in the palm of one white hand, while the other supports the elbow—a position which gives to her countenance a keen inquiring expression, which is rather marked.” (Seacole 91). With this interaction, Seacole and Nightingale represents two types of narratives, with the latter fitting the description desired by white British society in the Victorian era. Seacole, escorted by British soldiers high in frame, represents a new hero: one not working in spite the caricatures and labels her identity suffers from, but geared towards aspirations and ambitions she generated from her own life experiences.

Moreover, the narrator segues the docudrama to speak referentially to the autobiography from which the docudrama is based off, having the nurse herself flip the first page. By offering Seacole that agency, Fernando allows the narrative to be delivered by her voice and perspective,

matching the ethos Seacole employs in her epic autobiography. Fernando allows the actor portraying Seacole to reenact the words adapted directly from the autobiography in verbatim, allowing Seacole's retelling more interactive between subject and audience. Seacole's first adapted excerpt stems from the first chapter, where the nurse reminisces, "sometime in the present century. As a female, and a widow, I may be well excused giving the precise date of this important event. But I do not mind confessing that the century and myself were both young together, and that we have grown side by side into age and consequence." (Seacole 1). Significantly, this line introduces the humor and comfortable side the nurse exhibits, a quality unheard of for respected leaders in pre-Antebellum black literature. Fernando and actor Angela Bruce captures this venerable essence, magnifying her diction through flashback and pictorial imagery representing Jamaica (mangroves, mosses, and muddy waters). Seacole, a young girl in Jamaica, rows through an unidentified river, taking awe of the greenery and using her senses to indulge the natural experience. This scene recognizes the power of scope through Seacole's lens, foreshadowing how her attentiveness and ministration for the world influences the service she provides in the British Hotel. Seacole, partnered with the flashback scenes, continues, " I am a Creole, and have good Scotch blood coursing in my veins. My father was a soldier, of an old Scotch family; and to him I often trace my affection for a camp-life, and my sympathy with what I have heard my friends call "the pomp, pride, and circumstance of glorious war." When Seacole communicates her racial identity proudly to the audience, she challenges colonial constructions of racial caricatures by subverting how each side of her cultural identity is presented. Analyzing Seacole's autobiography, Haitian-Canadian writer Myriam J.A. Chancy writes, "to her Creole blood she attributes her doctoring skills. She (thus) attempts to dismantle both racial and gender categories imbedded in each: by attributing her 'vigor' to her Scotch blood, she effectively

neutralizes that vigor one might associate to an ‘African’ sexuality primarily inscribed in the black female body. Concomitantly, by attributing her skills as a doctor to her Creole blood, she effectively neutralizes the idea that her medical prowess can only be attributable to an English (via Jamaica) education.” (Chancy 443) Identifying her mixed-raced scope as a way to engage her cultural influences, Seacole recognizes her post-colonial optic as she finds herself resistant to hegemonic entities. Fernando using flashback corresponds Seacole’s navigation through her past and present, both on a mental and global landscape, a perspective only can be captured by those who experience or descendant of migrant identities.

More so, Fernando expands Seacole’s post-colonial voice and narrative control by allowing her to intimately interact with the audience, executed through breaking the fourth wall. Seacole writes her autobiography with a sense of her self-awareness, recognizing how colonial maternity enhances her entrepreneurial ventures in Balaclava and Sebastopol. The surrogacy Seacole assumes consolidates authority of self with rationalizing the interactions she can have with patriarchal systems without seeming parasitic as a black immigrant woman. Amy Robinson, writer of “Authority and the Public Display of Identity: ‘Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands’”, writes, “Seacole is well aware that these men are not her “sons” and that she is not their ‘Mother,’ and yet she uses this language in the context of her attempts to authorize her behavior in the Crimea. Invoking a familial metaphor in which she is always already a derivative of the “real” white mother, Seacole inserts herself in a paternalistic colonial paradigm” (Robinson 547). Seacole ethically appeals to her Victorian audience with constructing her service around filling that absent void with “maternal” stereotypes such as cooking and cleaning. As expectations for mothers amplified through pious sermons, literary texts, and conversational

language in the Victorian Era, 1850s England foresaw an insurgence of white womanhood in medical spaces as a way to appease British men, especially those involved in the recent Crimean war. In “Self-Writing, Literary Traditions, and Post-Emancipation Theory: the case of Mary Seacole”, mixed race studies scholar Evelyn J. Hawthorne remarks, “Seacole produced her memoir in a Victorian ideological environment, with its ambiguous racial and gender discourses, and constraining literary traditions. Among the most pressing questions to ask of this text is what the literary restraints were for the gendered and racialized subject in the mid-century Victorian environment.” (Hawthorne 312)

The Jamaican nurse feels no attachment to the cultural margins dictated by colonial structures, hence finding a confident value in her subaltern voice. For Seacole, her colonial maternity has occupied a third space in a tension between her Jamaican and Scottish identity, manifesting an invisible home. For Seacole, the nurse shared this invisible space virtually with her Victorian audience the same way Fernando explored this comforting invisible space with breaking the fourth wall. A metatheatrical term coined by dramatist Denis Diderot, breaking the fourth wall de-establishes the boundary between viewer and subject for a comedic or dramatic effect, a rare instance for narrative entertainment. The first instance dates back to 1918 where Mary MacLane interrupts vignettes to speak (and smoke) with her audience in her short biographical film, *Men Who Have Made Love to Me*. At the time of this docudrama’s release, breaking the fourth wall, or the intimate address to the audience, appeared mainly in male-centered narrative films like *Ferris Bueller’s Day Off, Annie Hall,* or *Fight Club*. By Seacole acknowledging the camera, she disables the gaze and activates a level of ethical equality between the viewer and the nurse. While all her soliloquies adapted directly from Seacole’s text, the

cinematic space uses sound and scope to maximize Seacole's intimate relationship with the audience.

As Seacole reflects on the hotel experience, she retells, "I tell you, reader, I have seen many a bold fellow's eye moisten at such a season, when a woman's voice and a woman's care have brought to their minds recollections of those happy English homes which some of them never saw again; but many did, who will remember their woman-comrade upon the bleak and barren heights before Sebastopol" (Seacole 127-128) Seacole's relationship with her readers strengthens with her descriptive storytelling, evoking the sorrow and emptiness many soldiers felt when deployed in an Eastern European country. The Jamaican nurse's surrogate self-awareness represents acclimation to British society and serve as a representation for their identity, customs, and beliefs, while sustaining her own. An individual wants to establish themselves not only defined by the basis of their background or biological circumstances, but correlation to influential forces, a dynamic between innate and adapted. Navigating patriarchy and imperialism, Seacole manages through successfully, using the facets of her identity as vessels for power and dominance in a colonial empire. Christine Craig, a Jamaican writer, acknowledges Seacole applying her experiences, both internal and external from her Creole identity to make authoritative decisions in pre-dominantly white and male spaces, but still show a nationalistic attachment to Britain's presence. Craig states, "as her autobiography shows how strong her own maternal instincts were, one can imagine that the term 'mother country' was deeply internalized. However, as we have already seen, the 'mother' culture was not uncritically assimilated but accepted only so far as it did not run counter to her own Creole sense of self" (Craig 41). In her post-colonial optic, Seacole's relationship with Great Britain consolidates the

maternal presence her mom served her and her hotel business with the “mother country” title assumed by Great Britain at the time, as consequence of Queen Victoria’s rule. This surrogacy allows Seacole to maneuver through hybrid influences to establish a singular, yet-layered image of a maternal figure. As a mixed woman, Seacole’s colonial maternity hybridizes the medicinal healing learned from her Jamaican mother and the adventurist mentality of her Scottish lieutenant father, establishing her own identity in cultural ambivalence.

Fernando honors Seacole’s power of voice established in the autobiography, not liminal to the forces she discusses in her narrative, which may be inhibiting to her socioeconomic status in the transatlantic market. Mary Seacole’s mixed-identity and independent status allows her to see both privilege and oppression depending on the majority of geographical landscape. Daniel Livesay, a scholar focused on the intersection of race and slavery in the Caribbean, identified four phases of mixed-race Jamaicans’ involvement in Jamaican society and European culture. “Beginning in 1733, the first phase was characterized by the Jamaican assembly’s attempts to augment the island’s white population by privileging the status of mixed-race individuals,” Livesay said. “After Tacky’s Revolt in 1760, Jamaican leadership’s attitudes toward free people of colour shifted during a second phase which coincided with the growth of abolitionist movements and new concerns over family formation in Britain and the Atlantic empire. The third phase, occurring in the 1780s, saw the vilification of migrants of colour in Britain and the condemnation of inheritance practices. Finally, the early nineteenth century brought the social and familial exclusion of mixed-race Jamaicans in the British Atlantic world. What began as a society that exhibited fluidity in racial status and kinship in the early 1730s ultimately led to the hardening of differentiation in race and familial membership by the early

19th century." Seacole's heroic characterization stems from this "superhero" trope where a significant parent figure is not present. The "superhero" trope, common with comic book characterization, praises the alterity of being raised in a disruption to heteronormative parent relationship and persevering, painting this abandonment to two-parent as villainous and abnormal. As Mariglynn Edlins, a scholar in health and humanities at University of Baltimore, notes, "at the core of these superheroes, are two primary elements that make them extraordinary: they succeed in the pursuit of a valiant mission, despite their great loss, and access great power and resources to do this. These attributes of resilience and access to resources lay the foundation for an emergent archetype of orphans as superheroes" (Edlins 12). Although Fernando shows Seacole's characteristics and events similarly to superhero caricatures, her racial identity and gender isolates her from cinematic depictions of superheroes such as Batman and Superman. Although Fernando's docudrama is based on non-fiction, her narrative structure accepts the alterity of her parents' absence later in life without adding any obscure death to either parent for dramatic purposes. Her mixed identity enhances her alienation from both cultures, forcing the Jamaican nurse to navigate the world through an individual scope. Seacole wrestled with the symptoms of her mixed-race privilege, understanding the benefits of her freedom, the discrimination she faced by white Europeans in London, and the exclusion she faced from integrating into British culture as an immigrant black woman. Nevertheless, Seacole soared through her colonial otherness and set an empowering standard for black women in transatlantic expeditions.

Succeeding, Fernando's first interview source reveals to be Jamaican academic and University of West Indies scholar Verene Shepherd, who honored the late nurse at the Institute of

Jamaica Function to Honour Mary Seacole. Recognizing the fortitude Seacole displayed despite the limited resources she possessed, Shepherd vocalizes, “I was surprised that you had only your little maid for a traveling companion; but admired you for defying the gender conventions of the time. Still, you were lucky it was then: now a single black woman roaming all over the world like Digicel and Cable & Wireless and carrying herbs would have attracted attention including body scan! As an attractive Jamaican woman, brown or not, you would have been mistaken for a drug mule, sniffed by colour-prejudiced dogs and have your ample body feel, feel up by strange men and women.” (Shepherd 2) Shepherd, a Jamaican black woman, hypothesizes Seacole’s journey in contemporary England, as updates in technology and security has grown aggressively discriminatory, expanding the idea that ‘til this day, black women fail to be protected despite offering selfless service to a colonial empire that devastated international economies. The professor’s cognizance continues in Fernando’s docudrama, embracing how her Scottish ancestry assisted her socioeconomic status in Jamaica, commenting how colorism and freedom status “gave her an enroll into white society”. (2:58) However, Fernando insists, through the narration, her racial identity continued to provide obstructions to her migratory ambitions.

Gad Heuman, director of Caribbean studies at University of Warwick, lists activities or rights not provided to Jamaicans such as voting, run for public office, sitting in different sections for theater and church, and buried in separate burial sites, usually with more impoverished conditions. (3:48) Crucially, black women suffered from domesticated subservience brought by gender and racial inequality, restricting agency in opinion or ownership. However, Seacole, a brown woman with freedom and agency, proved to be a pariah in her society and used that liberty to model after her mother’s medicinal healing skills. For Seacole, resolving otherness

required engaging capitalist values and a strong business acumen, but sociologically justified with cultural influence and identity development. The tension between culture and capitalism for Seacole mirrored the dynamic between Seacole's mixed identity and her self-identification, a phenomenological experience explained by clinical psychologist Maria Root's Resolution for Otherness. Root's theory demonstrate mixed-race identities as fluid, suggesting bi-racial individuals, "might self-identify in more than one way at the same time or move fluidity among a number of identities". In other words, Seacole's fluid racial classifications allowed her to dismantle the prejudices delineated to her but stay conscious of how both races and her own biracial identity may impact the trajectory of her journey. Fernando reminds the audience of Seacole's duality through compositing a string-heavy Victorian score whenever the nurse nears British lifestyle or culture and with a percussive tribal tune when discussing her childhood in Jamaica. As the score informs the audience what the world sounds like, Fernando's composer Andy Cowton recognizes the power of sound as a language to elevate Seacole's memories in Jamaica by communicating to the audience what her mother's influence meant for her as a nurse.

Subsequently, Shepherd acknowledges Seacole and her mother as doctresses, a label denied because of the historic preference for westernized European medicine in colonial expansion. As ingredients for African herbal medicine and traditional medicine are passed down orally, the hegemonic prescription of European pharmaceuticals repressed cultural healthcare in the African Diaspora, a power asset that devastated trust between black individuals and modern science. As colonization devastated indigenous medicine, Adlila Hassan, co-author of Health & Democracy, recognizes, "cultural imperialism and apartheid in South Africa have held back the development of African traditional health care in general and medicines in particular. During

several centuries of conquest and invasion, European systems of medicine were introduced by colonizers. Pre-existing African systems were stigmatized and marginalized. Indigenous knowledge systems were denied the chance to systematize and develop." (Hassan 207). Similar colonial interferences from Spain and England generated centuries of abuse and famine, but a conglomerate identity formed from communal oppression between the Arawak Indigenous populate and the West African slaves. This cultural exchange, between religion, cuisine, and medicine, allowed for a shared identity for future Jamaican generations, a custom passed to Seacole and her mother. Contrary to European medicine's chemical composition, Seacole's mother, through Fernando's quick montage editing, uses natural resources such as ginger root, jackfruit, and pomegranate seeds, a practice Seacole acquired later on. Tilting from Seacole's mother concocting medicinal herbs to a young Mary Seacole, supports the narrator's speech, "she passed this local knowledge down to her daughter, who also picked the brains from British doctors".

Fernando adapts Seacole's procession to developing her own medical identity through both herbs and service to British customers. Mixed with supporting visuals of a young Seacole trotting around treating her dogs (and herself), the nurse narrates, "Before long it was very natural that I should seek to extend my practice; and so, I found other patients in the dogs and cats around me. Many luckless brutes were made to simulate diseases which were raging among their owners and had forced down their reluctant throats the remedies which I deemed most likely to suit their supposed complaints. And after a time, I rose still higher in my ambition; and despairing of finding another human patient, I proceeded to try my simples and essences upon—myself." This intimate relationship Seacole has with the audience, filled with humor, wit, and

ambition, presents a comforting anomaly where the Jamaican nurse revels in her decisions and dreams without being pressured by the societal structures implemented to halt her success. Confronting colonial language and perspectives through a humorous tone adds new texture to post-colonial voices, reflecting on British racial mores and subjectivity through a fresh lens not accessible to her white Victorian audiences. Chancy engages in Seacole's jovial, yet conscious subjectivity, managing through the boundaries between her Negritude and her allegiance to British white capitalism. "Though Seacole was conscious of the dictates of her time, she lived beyond their boundaries," she states. "she was reduced to producing a text palatable to contemporaries who had yet to achieve her freedom of thought and intent, but she encoded the text to signal an unyoked subjectivity and a desire to be free of British racial mores. In a humorous tale, for instance, she recounts when she first arrived in Tchernaya, 'very much delighted seemed the Russians to see an English woman. I wonder if they thought they all had my complexion' (Chancy 444) Seacole's subjectivity offers a humorous awareness of Eastern European's mindset, showcasing how the facets of her identity and perspective can help elucidate an audience navigating their life through privilege and wealth.

Seacole's liberation advanced from her mother's socioeconomic status when Fernando included historical context surrounding ownership and entrepreneurship when Heuman reports, "the status of a free person of color was changing. In 1830, the Jamaican House of Assembly passed legislation, making Jamaican people of color the legal equals of whites" (6:57). Transitioning from this interview to a close up with Seacole and the body of water cascading in the background indicates a narrative shift for the nurse: her relationship with her ambitions and expeditions seemed unstoppable, but unfortunately the shadowed presence contrasted from the

luminescent waters may imply that her greatest opponent may be herself or societal views of her. In bell hooks' "The Oppositional Gaze", the theorist reflects, "imagine the terror felt by the child who has come to understand through repeated punishments that one's gaze can be dangerous. The child who has learned so well to look the other way when necessary" (hooks 115). Fernando recognizes the repressed identity and the lack of agency conceptualized for children of color and how this gaze that Seacole possesses cultivates anxiety and limitations not only for Seacole, but for black viewers as well. For the Jamaican nurse, however, these mental incapacitations grew normal, conscious that every move she made fell victim to high examinations, discrimination, and threats by opposing parties.

Moreover, Fernando indulges in Seacole's personal life through temporal editing, exploring a mixed-race relationship with continuity, abstraction, and love with little conversation around race relations. The scene initiates with Seacole's husband, Edwin Hamilton Seacole, suited, holding a top hat with the Jamaican nurse, donned in a white wedding dress. Fernando suspends verisimilitude with a bleak obsidian background followed by scintillating confetti, matching Seacole's elation as she enters this romantic union. After kissing her husband's forehead, Seacole, maintaining eye contact with the viewers, traces towards the frame before pausing at a close-up angle. Fernando channels the apparatus theory, causing the viewers to temporally empathize with Seacole's emotions and connectivity as she progresses from the genesis to the coda of her marriage to Mr. Seacole. The apparatus theory, used through the mechanics of cinematography and editing, maintains an ideology between the viewer and the subject, and all beliefs are constructed by composition and perspective. French theorist Jean-Louis Baudry, writer of "The Apparatus: Metapsychological Approaches To The Impression of

Reality in Cinema", states, "for we are dealing here with an apparatus, with a metaphorical relationship between places or a relationship between metaphorical places, with a topography, the knowledge of which defines for both philosopher and analyst the degree of relationship to truth or to description, or to illusion, and the need for an ethical point of view" (Baudry 691). For Seacole's vantage point and Fernando's direction, identification between the text and the audience and the cinema and the audience, respectively, indulges in the former's aesthetics and values, establishing her as the foundation for "metaphorical place" for the viewers. With having Seacole as the foundational perspective, told through Fernando's direction, audience can engage in her post-colonial hybridity and understand the isolation from privilege in a Victorian society.

With many films depicting the relationship between a white man and a black woman, the former possesses a more focused, successful characteristic, while the latter spends the film stressing over racial identity and how the politics of the relationship impact her emotionally and physically. Films such as *Loving* (Nichols, 2016), *Monster's Ball* (Forster 2001), and *I Passed for White* (Wilcox, 1960). For many of these films, their relationship is carried out through privacy or seclusion because of the politics of their relationship. As Jodi Lynn-Rightler, a scholar at University of Tennessee-Knoxville, states, when discussing the aforementioned 1960s drama, "'I look white...I married white...Now I must live with a secret that can destroy us both!' Those are the words printed on the front cover of the film, *I Passed for White.* The film tells the story of a beautiful young mixed woman, Bernice Lee or Lila Brownell (played by Sonya Wilde), who runs away from home to start a new life as a white woman . She falls in love and marries the man of her dreams, Frederick "Rick" Leyton (played by James Franciscus) – a rich, white man from a

well-to-do family. The entire movie is based on her living her lie and trying to keep it a secret from everyone around." The secrecy towards affection embodied the leads consequentially brings anxiety and distrust for the characters to live quotidian lifestyles. Averting this stereotype, Seacole remains gleeful married to Edwin Seacole, to which the relationship allowed her to stay financially focused and motivated in the medical business. With limiting the narrative to this match cut edited montage, the politics of Seacole's relationship doesn't overpower her iconic status in British history.

Match-cut editing, a filmmaking technique popularized by Stanley Kubrick, continues one shot to another where the composition of the shot is identical to communicate a shared relationship between the two frames. According to Max Winter, the co-editor for Press Play, a media editing platform, match cuts are used for four reasons: symbolic leaping, storytelling transitions, wordless commentaries, and pure imaginative explosions. Regarding symbolic leaping, Winter mentioned the bone-spaceship transition in Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*, gesturing simple innovation could lead to the development of vast spacecraft, yet the foundation stays consistent. As Fernando shows Seacole (played by Angela Bruce) removing the veil from her head and transitioning the scene to Seacole using a cloth to kneel dough, this symbolic leaping shows how their marriage engendered a reciprocated value between the two, running business partnership with the establishment of the hotel in Jamaica. The narrator supports this, recounting, "her husband gave her ample opportunities to practice her skills" (7:40). Additionally, Fernando recognizes Seacole's narrative by using match cut editing to tell a swift tragic narrative between the nurse and her husband. Winter notes, "a match cut can explain what has happened in the world of a story with shorthand that is both moving and beautiful." (Winter,

2016). Transitioning from the dough to a cotton blanket, Seacole finishes discussing the relationship, reminiscing, “Poor man! he was very delicate; and before I undertook the charge of him, several doctors had expressed most unfavourable opinions of his health.” (Seacole 6) This montage editing, predominantly reserved for white male characters in action or drama films (Buster Keaton, Orson Welles, Alfred Hitchcock, David Lynch, Stanley Kubrick, etc.), allows Fernando to indulge in a short, yet instrumental moment of her life, similarly to how much Seacole engages with this subject matter in the film. By graphically using Seacole as the reference for continuity editing, Fernando reclaims authority of spectatorship and offers visibility to a woman that has been denied this platform until very recently.

Helen Rappaport, a biographer interviewed in this docudrama, alleges Seacole taking opportunity from caring for her husband’s sickness as a way to elevate her status in the medical industry. “I suspect that it was a marriage of convenience on both sides,” Rappaport reveals. “Edwin Seacole, who was very sickly, needed a good nurse. On the other hand, Mary Seacole, a Creole woman in that period, saw a very well-off white man has a stepping-stone in the elite of Kingston, Jamaica”. Although there are reservations towards Rappaport denying the veracity sustained in their eight-year marriage, as mixed-raced couples fall victim to stereotyping and ulterior motive allegations, Seacole’s Victorian ethos of capitalistic opportunities is not something unfamiliar to both Fernando and many critics. Seacole’s romanticization towards her travel journeys may seem imbalanced to her relationship with her husband, as the nurse speaks candidly and formally around the circumstances regarding her husband. This may reflect the Victorian morality established in 19th century Britain, which valued religion, morality, personal improvement, and industrial work ethic. However, for black women, the social landscape for

economic mobility delegated contradictory influxes around race relations, gender, and class. As Montaz Marche, a University College London graduate, identifies, “The differing attitudes towards blackness between the Caribbean and England, despite their unity as one empire, highlights the distinct and rare opportunities for black women in Britain in this period.” Seacole’s assimilatory attitude towards socioeconomic security, and finding opportunity from her husband’s health, proves that for black women in Victorian era, establishing a survival mechanism may mean surrendering the true, intimate moments she has with herself and her culture. “The reality of what it meant to be black, to be a woman, and to be British for all black women in Britain was to assimilate into British society,” March continues. “Black women assimilated rather than integrated because integration implies an acceptance of black cultural practices in the British community, which did not largely occur. These cultural norms conflated with traditions of Christianity, gentility and status that British character prided itself upon.” Yet, Seacole, who championed herself as equal to white individuals in Jamaica and England, didn’t allow the full forces of colonial influence to makeshift her decisions nor deny the significance of her cultural identity as a Jamaican biracial woman.

Fernando, however, doesn’t organize the dialogue chronologically identical to the events she visualizes for the film. As the narratives takes Seacole to the events she experienced in Panama, finding it “awashed with gold prospectors, freewheelers, and disease” (9:27). Seacole’s words, as communicated through breaking the fourth wall, reads, “ I am sure I do not know what it is to be indolent. All my life long I have followed the impulse which led me to be up and doing; and so far from resting idle anywhere, I have never wanted inclination to rove, nor will powerful enough to find a way to carry out my wishes.” (Seacole 2) Seacole’s assertion resounds

deeply with the exhausting defense black women must endure to prove to a predominantly white society (mostly male) their credentials and work ethic, despite the evidence sufficiently supporting this. Seacole, a woman from the Victorian century, shares the same anxiety and post-colonial defense black women characters and spectators experience. When discussing black women spectatorship and oppositional gaze, bell hooks concludes, "identifying with neither the phallocentric gaze nor the construction of white womanhood as lack, critical black female spectators construct a theory of looking relations where cinematic visual delight is the pleasure of interrogation. Every black woman spectator I talked to, with rare exception, spoke of being " on guard" at the movies." (bell hooks 1992) Seacole condemns stereotyping, a postcolonial oversimplification standardized of little knowledge of the culture and society by hegemonic powers, but inadvertently does not express this same rejection towards the people around her. In Victorian Era, colonial stereotypes about non-white individuals embedded itself as common language within society, art, science, and literature. Indicative of the oppressive relationship and treatment colonizers possessed with the colonized, Seacole's place in society seemed only determined by the privilege positions placed by white subjects. However, by deactivating the power stereotypes may have over colonial subjects, Seacole acknowledges the anxieties placed on her based on her physical attributes but still ensures that "indolence" is not a characteristic used to describe her or her people.

As literature dominated leisure culture in Victorian age, cinema dominated distribution of information post-World War 1, which can be controlled with a myopic lens if a certain hegemony supervises. Spectatorship for black women saw black bodies in servitude positions, hence the development of a new pleasure that ignored typical structures of power in

consumerism culture. bell hooks' oppositional gaze expands Laura Mulvey's male gaze, where "women are the bearer of meaning and not the maker of meaning". The application of the male gaze stems from early cinema, where women are simply on screen to be observed and objectified for the viewers to gaze at her. However, Fernando, cognizant of this, decided to allow certain audiences to see Seacole in a heroic light with candor and strength. When adapting this scene to the dramatic re-enactment, Fernando initially frames the Jamaican nurse level-headed with the audience when listening to the speech. As Seacole leaves her seat to reply, the camera pans up accordingly, leaving the Americans in the lower half of the frame. Fernando, appealing to feelings of abandonment and absence black women felt, designed the scene to establish direct eye contact between the audience and Seacole. The Jamaican nurse, designed as the indicating point for the camera, signals her significance, not being subjected to a male gaze and persevere the self-actualization Seacole demonstrated in her autobiography.

Fernando affirms Seacole's medical identity and validity with the inclusion of interviewee Professor Michael Heinrich, a tenured pharmacognosy and phytotherapy instructor at the University of London. Heinrich comments, "she was simply very proactive for her time. She picked up all the typical remedies that she felt that were useful. At the same time, obviously, she did work under the specific circumstances of nineteenth century medicine. And they are completely different from what we have now. We have to remember synthetic drugs which are available now were available then." (10:17) Very recently, Mary Seacole's legacy in modern medicine led to the erection of a memorial statue at St. Thomas' Hospital laid before a marble disc, projecting her shadow to share her heroic space and all it suggests for future achievements. Unfortunately, Seacole's statue has continued intersectional exclusive conversations that the

esteemed nurse commented on regarding her contributions to medical nursing in oppose to Florence Nightingale. Lynn McDonald, a former Member of The Parliament of Canada, critiques the purpose for Seacole's statue, making remarks to her lack of British formal training and lack of relationship she had with governments to reform healthcare like Nightingale. Seacole's practices may have been alternative, but the colonial preference for traditionalism is repressive and unfair as immigrant women of color did not have the access, mobility, funds, or teamwork to make significant impact in British education. Seacole did not come from a well-connected British family nor benefited from a neo-imperialistic culture of Great Britain that allowed her advanced education and resources in war, but she relied on her strength, knowledge, and power to persevere.

Seacole, as if she's instructing her audience how to approach her medicine, converses, "The simplest remedies were perhaps the best. Mustard plasters, and emetics, and calomel. When my patients felt thirsty, I would give them water in which cinnamon had been boiled" (10:29). Matched with warm lighting and inserts following Seacole stirring the crushed cinnamon in the boiled water, Fernando generates a comforting, burnt-orange ambience where the audience feels comforted by her care as if the viewers, themselves, are patients to her narrative. Heinrich supports Seacole's centuries-old remedy solutions, affirming, "these aromatic properties would have helped with a sense of gastrointestinal cramps and other things" (10:49). The Jamaican nurse intimately indulges in her practices, expanding from modern medicine to physical therapy and body oil application. Her healing techniques remind the audience how cultural influences from her mother remain apparent in her updated treatments and practices. Seacole's home remedies, for the most part, challenged formal British nursing in a healing manner, ushering

different ailing soldiers back to health. Seacole, herself, is a biracial Jamaican-Scottish woman, and married a British white man, finding comfort in the uniqueness of her multinational identity, and the invisible space medicine provided her. For many dealing with the social consequences of hybridity, finding a homeland in intangible spaces allow unlimited access for the subject to be them. For Seacole, her homeland was not Jamaica, Panama, London, Cruces, or even her hotel, but the freedom medicine gave her to exercise her entrepreneurial agency to be the woman modern British culture reveres today.

Highlighting one of the pivotal moments in Seacole's autobiography, Fernando challenges actor Angela Bruce to capture the nuances and confidence the Jamaican nurse possess as she addresses a group of white Americans, rejecting stereotypes of "angry black woman" or "overtly-compliant mammy". Sandra Gunning, a scholar of Afro-American studies at University of Michigan, remarks Seacole's autobiography is "the result is a more ambiguous and therefore less restrictive identity for Seacole, one that skirts the stereotype of the mulatta as openly licentious but also revises the sexless and equally restrictive stereotype of both mother and black mammy." (Gunning 972) Managing through the diametrically opposing caricatures of compliance and aggressive rejection is a post-colonial consciousness many women of color face when engaging hegemonic spaces that predispose ideas of these identities. When accepting an award from Americans in Gorgona, Cruces for her services to the community regarding the yellow fever, a white American soldier's address exemplified the hesitation and ignorance towards celebrating Seacole for her accomplishments, revealing how much her identity informs her place in society. His introductory speech reads,

"Well, gentlemen, I expect you'll all support me in a drinking of this toast that I du——. Aunty Seacole, gentlemen; I give you, Aunty Seacole——. We can't du less for her, after what she's done for us——, when the cholera was among us, gentlemen——, not many months ago——. So, I say, God bless the best yaller woman He ever made——, from Jamaica, gentlemen——, from the Isle of Springs——Well, gentlemen, I expect there are only tu things we're vexed for——; and the first is, that she ain't one of us——, a citizen of the great United States——; and the other thing is, gentlemen——, that Providence made her a yaller woman. I calculate, gentlemen, you're all as vexed as I am that she's not wholly white——, but I du reckon on your rejoicing with me that she's so many shades removed from being entirely black——; and I guess, if we could bleach her by any means we would——, and thus make her as acceptable in any company as she deserves to be——. Gentlemen, I give you Aunty Seacole!" (Seacole 48)

This scene reminds the readers and the subject of the intersectional obstacles she must handle to demand respect from her colleagues in the medical field and how despite lacking the formal education privy to whites only, she still manages to communicate with a stronger command of the English language. The evangelical whiteness Seacole is coerced to listen to recognizes a hegemonic belief towards non-American women of color that despite one's efforts, Seacole internalizes that those who praise her are "vexed" that Seacole is "not wholly white" and not "a citizen of the great United States". Additionally, the spokesperson then continues to make colorist comments, suggesting bleaching her skin so that Seacole can be "accepted in any company". Concepts of colorism suggests a harmfully objectionable spectrum that doesn't appreciate the diversity in black women but scales them in preference to the white gaze.

Along with concepts of whiteness and white gaze, Seacole finds herself wrestling with the relationship between religion and postcolonialism. Although Jamaica's predominant religion is Christianity, Seacole continues to suffer from postcolonial westernization of Christian principles, a tactic used to justify the abduction, dissolvement and eradication of people from the African, Asian, and Indigenous diaspora. Westernized Christianity has been used to justify the psychological and physical control of black mortality, where the sentiment appears heavily in this speech. With denial towards her existence to an epistemological degree, Seacole handles the remarks with protection and conviction, syntactically presented with a stronger command of the English language than her white counterparts, saying:

"Gentlemen,—I return you my best thanks for your kindness in drinking my health. As for what I have done in Cruces, Providence evidently made me to be useful, and I can't help it. But I must say, that I don't altogether appreciate your friend's kind wishes with respect to my complexion. If it had been as dark as any nigger's, I should have been just as happy and as useful, and as much respected by those whose respect I value; and as to his offer of bleaching me, I should, even if it were practicable, decline it without any thanks. As to the society which the process might gain me admission into, all I can say is, that, judging from the specimens I have met with here and elsewhere, I don't think that I shall lose much by being excluded from it. So, gentlemen, I drink to you and the general reformation of American manners." (Seacole 49)

Seacole's humorous acceptance of this honor, declining the "bleaching" comments, reflects a contained exasperation for more recognition for her race and gender than for her contributions to medical health. In this speech, Seacole reckons "Providence made her useful", reclaiming the Christian values the white men denied her and reforming a religion that's

inclusive and celebratory of her presence and contribution to medical culture. The esteemed nurse disclaims the colorist scale used to justify her services, insisting no matter what complexion, the magnanimity in her work speaks for itself. Seacole's humorous disposition shows more when insulting the mannerisms and nature of Americans, saying, "I don't think I shall lose much by being excluded from it". Seacole's acceptance and recognition of her own power in this speech alone demonstrates a resistance to a hegemonic culture that dared to define limits to her agency.

Lorraine Mercer, writer of "I Shall Make No Excuse: The Narrative Odyssey of Mary Seacole", alludes to W.E.B. Dubois' double consciousness when describing Seacole's navigation through spaces, looking at oneself through the eyes of others filled with pride and doubt. Mercer believes Seacole's hybrid identity allowed her to marry the two emotions to successfully set her hotel in Crimea. She writes, "The sophistication with which Seacole manipulates these rhetorical structures is apparent throughout her work. With complete awareness of the ironic gaps in these structures she places herself both within and without the imperialist space mapped by white women from the British Empire and men of all colors who travel fully in the public sphere. Seacole intervenes in both overlapping imperialist discourses, but as one who consciously and masterfully manipulates the stereotypes". As another suppressor in post-colonial hierarchy, colorism in the United States reinforced institutionalized white privilege by normalizing an imbalance between lighter-skinned individuals and darker-skinned individuals. Seacole's response confronted her Victorian readers with the reality of diasporic racism and the consequences placated by institutionalizing white privilege in transnational conquests, a manner unfamiliar at this time. By using the same diction, the American followed by a casual rebuttal,

Seacole ethically challenges the American's perspective and reinforce the power and self-sufficiency of the colonized. Fernando honored Seacole's autobiography when addressing her updated audience.

Fernando, cognizant of this, decided to allow certain audiences to see Seacole in a heroic light with candor and strength. When adapting this scene to the dramatic re-enactment, Fernando initially frames the Jamaican nurse level-headed with the audience when listening to the speech. As Seacole leaves her seat to reply, the camera pans up accordingly, leaving the Americans in the lower half of the frame. Fernando, appealing to feelings of abandonment and absence black women felt, designed the scene to establish direct eye contact between the audience and Seacole. The Jamaican nurse, designed as the indicating point for the camera, signals her significance, not being subjected to a male gaze and persevere the self-actualization Seacole demonstrated in her autobiography.

Transitioning to the genesis of the Crimean war, the crux of Seacole's autobiography, Fernando uses mobile b-roll, specifically archived oil pastel paintings detailing the extremities experienced. Carried by Jane Copeland's haunting narration and Andy Cowton's base-heavy percussive score, the fading between dialogue-free visuals demonstrates what a disastrous and casualty-heavy external conflict Seacole must endure to continue her business and treat the soldiers stationed in Balaclava. Contextually, the Crimean War was a deadly military conflict between Russia and a joined alliance consisting of France, Ottoman Empire, United Kingdom, and Sardinia over religious entitlement to a Holy Land. The 1856 war led to dismantling Sevastopol and weakened the Russian Empire's role in global imperialism and European power.

Fernando's birds-eye perspective of dead soldiers laid flat on a blank, infertile landscape offers a bleak understanding of the Jamaican doctresses' motive, followed by the narrator's "as Mary Seacole read of soldiers, she treated in Jamaica sailing to their fate, in Britain public outcry of the mismanagement of the war was about to bring down the government" (16:30). Seacole became aware how her inclusion as a qualified nurse, medicinal healer, and therapeutic provider could boost the morale to help the soldiers win the Crimean War. Bruce recognizes the passion and determination Seacole evoked through her impassionate monologue, "what delight should I not experience if I could be useful to my own "sons," suffering for a cause it was so glorious to fight and bleed for! I never stayed to discuss probabilities or enter into conjectures as to my chances of reaching the scene of action. I made up my mind that if the army wanted nurses, they would be glad of me" (Seacole 76) The intensity crescendos as the camera pans close to Seacole's face, indicating a dynamic shift between her time at Panama to Balaklava, Crimea. The jump cut featuring the sail shows a strong-willed Seacole looking outwards similar to the same gaze she demonstrated when she was a child. This narrative continuity persists the deviation to oppositional perspective and how looking for both black spectators and black characters can solely exist without reacting or resisting to the discriminations normalized and institutionalized by white supremacy.

Contrasting Seacole's light-toned framing, Florence Nightingale walks in wide-framed, lit similarly to a villain entrance. Fernando communicates to the audience Nightingale serves as Seacole's foil, denying the Jamaican doctress inclusion in the Crimean Fund and thus leaving the author no monetary input or resources to provide medical services to the soldiers in Crimea. In British history, Mary Seacole's legacy tend to tangentially appear with the well-known "Lady

with the Lamp", Florence Nightingale. Recognized as the founder of modern nursing, awarded the Royal Red Cross, the Lady for Grace and Order, and Order of Merit, Nightingale's medical distinction is internationally lauded, especially for her contribution to the Crimean War. However, Nightingale's hygienic achievements followed Seacole's hotelier treatments to British Soldiers in Crimea before Russians claimed peace in Sebastopol. When seeking employment at the War Office to treat the army, the British government denied Seacole's services, despite her international contributions to medical hygiene and treatment, on the course of social prejudices and discriminations that Seacole, herself, is cognizant of. Chronologically looking at the life of Mary Seacole, British historical site History Heroes states, "so the British government and the Times Newspaper gave Florence Nightingale funding to improve conditions for the soldiers; in 1854 Mary Seacole arrived in London. Like Florence Nightingale, she wanted to help out in the Crimean War. The British government would not take her on as a hospital nurse- some say they rejected her because of color." (History Heroes 1:3) When the founders of the Crimean Fund, which included the management of Nightingale, failed to allow Seacole into their army of nurses, she recounted, "Doubts and suspicions arose in my heart for the first and last time, thank Heaven. Was it possible that American prejudices against colour had some root here? Did these ladies shrink from accepting my aid because my blood flowed beneath a somewhat duskier skin than theirs? Tears streamed down my foolish cheeks, as I stood in the fast-thinning streets; tears of grief that any should doubt my motives—that Heaven should deny me the opportunity that I sought." (Seacole 80) Social invisibility in diasporic literature is a critical perspective that relates deeply with immigrant black women, feeling discomfort and trepidation with how much their skin color and gender identity informs devastating socioeconomic expectations. While Nightingale received compensation for her medical achievements, Seacole's poverty as an

immigrant black woman forced her to return back to Jamaica and ridiculed in newspaper ads for her public request to fund her domestic life in England.

Cinematography and lighting serve instrumentally to constructing Nightingale as the supporting antagonist, using dark shadows and cold colors to evoke a shared emotion towards the nurses' treatment of Seacole. Nightingale's biography has been adapted to theatrical plays *The Lady of the Lamp*, four American films portrayed by revered pre-Hollywood actresses, and portrayals in televisions and documentaries, including one by Academy-Award winner Emma Thompson and the daughter of Prime Minister Sarah Churchill. On the other side, Seacole's first live-action adaptation comes out later this year in late December 2021. Victorian legacy, coordinated and organized by white historians, favors white women over women of color and black women in media, literature, film, and memorandum, communicating how underrepresented black women are in mainstream venues of visual entertainment. McMatty's, an editing digital platform, references skull lighting, "Strong top-down lighting throws the eyes into shadow and brings out the "skull" shape of the face. This has been used by numerous DPs to make villains look less alive and more dead, none more famous than Hannibal the Cannibal. By hiding the eyes, we obscure the connection we feel for other humans". Seacole's true villain, however, exists in both light and shadows, a non-concrete force Seacole deals with since a little girl: intersectional discrimination.

As Seacole enters a Victorian building, preparing to enter different rooms, she is denied entrance or access to rooms closed by invisible forces and endless staircases, a reinforced idea Fernando recognizes for many women of color. Visualizing doors locking right as Seacole nears

the knob echoes the lack of opportunities and inclusion for black women in predominantly white spaces, making Victorian values like social mobility and economic achievements much harder to obtain, thus making it more arduous to sustain a capitalistic lifestyle. By framing the camera before the door shutting places the audience in perspective of Seacole's rejection, having the audience familiarized with black female spectatorship being denied for black female audience members. bell hooks observes, "just as mainstream cinema has historically forced aware black female spectators not to look, much feminist film criticism disallows the possibility of a theoretical dialogue that might include black women's voices" (bell hooks 1992). With fast-paced editing and duplicating the Jamaican nurse in the same frame, Fernando embodies the tension Seacole experiences trying to find validation within a white job landscape. This technique helps the audience comprehend the exhaustion faced by black Caribbean women in Victorian London (and now) in establishing status, while white womanhood continues to be socially nurtured by racial hegemony. Seacole returns to the audience, vulnerably expressing, "Once again I tried, and had an interview this time with one of Miss Nightingale's companions. She gave me the same reply, and I read in her face the fact, that had there been a vacancy, I should not have been chosen to fill it." (20:52) Returning to double consciousness, Seacole remained aware how her racial and gender identity influenced the prejudice and block from opportunities by the Crimean Fund, organized by British government officials. When Seacole exits the architecturally grandiose building, the camera leans towards the Jamaican nurse and then pans up, glaring at her with a bird's eye view. This rejection ignited a self-sufficient attitude she always possessed, using her oppositional gaze not as a tool of resistance, but a vessel for economic independence. Jan Robinson, an interviewee, concurs "she invests that shock and that disappointment and turn that into the vigor and the work that she wanted to do" (21:56). When

Seacole return to this realization, the camera movement returned back to tracking her steps, tracing the Jamaican nurse down the steps to then stationed while the nurse leaves frame. Fernando honors Seacole's autobiography, understanding how the Victorian heroine recognized the conflicts and found purpose in her own identity in culture, medicine, and national relations.

When Seacole arrives in Sevastopol, the dark lighting contrasts the previous frame, representing how this landscape may pose larger conflicts than Seacole's ambitions allowed her to see. As a doctress, Seacole recognizes the failure to properly treat the patients, criticizing the hotel for creating bleak, pessimistic atmosphere that aggrandizes the pain they are experiencing. Seacole's hands-on approach dismantled the gaze established by white womanhood, possessing a more intimate, interactive experience with the patients, some familiar from her time in Jamaica. Fernando shows Seacole and Nightingale diametrically opposed on opposite sides of the same frame, indicating an old-fashioned duel between the two nurses: one who practices distanced care and the other who favors hospitable treatment and tactile care. Seacole heads four days away from Nightingale's nursery station to construct her own Jamaican hotel. Fernando's speed manipulation offers a fun, entertaining moment for Seacole, as she takes pride in collecting food, resources, ingredients, and spices to help establish a home environment for the incoming patients.

Reciprocating maternal-like services and fostering a community filled with laughter and familiarity, Seacole subsidized the soldier's high payment and used the profit to maximize her business. Seacole's sacrificial approach to her hotelier services may be beneficial to the soldiers, but consideration for herself and her mental health failed to be mentioned in the docudrama, and

interestingly, the autobiography. Seacole surrenders herself to the Jamaican hotel, adopting a maternal identity to serve her soldier patients and to increase capital for the business. the docudrama's diegetic and incidental music echoes the capitalistic attachment Seacole has with Great Britain, imitating the imperialist's value to advance through society. While Seacole takes no hesitation to correct or confront racist American values targeted against her, the Jamaican nurse's rhetoric demonstrates an appreciation and excuse for the colonial hierarchy Great Britain developed in multi-national countries. Seacole's reverence for the British economy stems from an embryonic nationalism formed in resistance to slavery, or as Bhabha describes as colonial mimicry. This postcolonial term, coined by Bhabha in "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse", is a subconscious consolidation of resemblance and menace, imitating the cultural attitude of their imperialist. Seacole orchestrates a rendition of "God Save The Queen", the de facto national anthem for Great Britain and the Commonwealth countries (34:38) Like many national anthems, the exclusive intended audience never seem to branch out to people of color, impoverished statuses and indigenous citizens of the respective nationality. Rosa Simonet, a journalist at Manchester Media Group, reports, "Arguably, institutional racism and discriminatory forces within British society can be rooted in our symbols of national pride. The idyllic portrait of empire in 'God Save the Queen,' acts as a tribute to those of upper class, White British descent. The second verse alone "Scatter her enemies | And make them fall | Confound their politics | Frustrate their knavish tricks," condones the brutality of colonialism and the discrimination of the Other." Seacole adopts the surrogate maternal figure to serve the soldier community, despite the lack of inclusivity Seacole experiences from the country that harbors this tune. Seacole's colonial maternity deviates the mammy stereotype, manipulating the American jargon for economic profit and customer appeal.

Seacole's term of endearment, "Mother Seacole", a maternal persona displayed to men devoid of their families, allowed her to establish personal relationship with her patients, a method that helped her business thrive. Seacole recounts, "Pleasure was hunted keenly. Cricket matches, pic-nics, dinner parties, races, theatricals, all found their admirers. My restaurant was always full, and once more merry laughter was heard, and many a dinner party was held, beneath the iron roof of the British Hotel." (Seacole 179) Seacole's relationship with her patients echoed what she witnessed in her mother's relationship with Jamaican patients, displaying a generational influence of positivity and instillation of inherited contributions. This mirrors the longevity of culture in resistance to colonial devastation. Gay Wilentz, a scholar at East Carolina University, recognizes the significance of maternal influence in texts recognizing the African Diaspora, analyzing Efua Sutherland's Foriwa, which centers the rejuvenation of a festival in a Westernized community. Wilentz comments, "the rejuvenation of the festival is aidrect result of a mother-daughter coalition with others in the community, and it is evident that the desire to maintain and strengthen the rituals of their culture has been passed on from the Queen Mother to her daughter Foriwa" (Wilentz 391). Like Foriwa, Seacole maintains the medicinal prowess her late mother manifested in her work and provided that protection and security for unhealthy patients. Seacole's maternal term of endearment, however, can reflect an American mammy stereotype that initiated by Aunt Chloe's character in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom Cabin*. However, Seacole reclaims the stereotype and manifests power by serving white British soldiers by choice and employing servants on her own accord. Seacole even comments, "Then their calling me "mother" was not, I think, altogether unmeaning. I used to fancy that there was something homely in the word; and, reader, you cannot think how dear to them was the smallest thing that reminded them of home." (Seacole 127). However, Seacole's relationship with her

soldiers took an emotional toll as she witnessed the tragic passing of her patients first-hand. When the war ended, Seacole's relationship with her patients ceased, leading to her business dismantling.

Frustrated by the termination of her business, Seacole, with rage, destroys the interior of her business and stops to ponder as the narrator speaks, "Mary Seacole is left with nothing" (38:16). Seacole's oppositional gaze came with a consequence that invokes an anxiety for many audience members, especially those who identify as black women or women of color. The camera pans away from Seacole, slowly losing her relationship with the audience and increasing her doubt, similar to the pan out as she left the Crimean Fund Building earlier in the film. Subsequent to the war's cessation, Seacole's hotel business grew bankrupt, but her army indulged her and organized funds and charities for her labor, but nothing came fruitful. Seacole sent a letter to Punch Magazine, her favorite article, which then ridiculed her plea for funds, as fundraising efforts set by rich British men were not enough to support her. These post-colonial anxieties Seacole suffered from and tried her best to resist returns to haunt her once again. In the satirical cartoon, captioned "Our Own Vivandiere", the article reads, "Who would give a guinea to see a mimic-sutler woman, and a foreigner, frisk and amble about on the stage, when he might bestow the money on a genuine English one, reduced to a two-pair back, and in imminent danger of being obliged to climb into an attic?"

[11]

Very similar to the speech presented to her for her medical efforts, Seacole's request for funds as a poor Jamaican woman receives mockery, claiming her sutler roles as mimicry and the money should be prioritized to actual citizens that fear economic disparities. Seacole's intersectional apprehensions puts to question the validity of post-colonial resistance for Caribbean women, even for Seacole in her final reflections. Seacole states, in response to the Punch article, "The sentries at Whitehall relax from the discharge of their important duty of guarding nothing to give me a smile of recognition; the very newspaper offices look friendly as I pass them by; busy Printing-house Yard puts on a cheering smile, and the *Punch* office in Fleet Street sometimes laughs outright. Now, would all this have happened if I had returned to England a rich woman? Surely not." (Seacole 199) Seacole's apprehension towards the outcome of her actions stands with disappointment, but sure pride in her hotel establishment and medical services in Crimea. Unbeknownst to the Jamaican nurse, institutionalizing West African-

[11] English School, (19th century). Medium: engraving. Date: 1857. Jamaican nurse in Crimean War; Provenance: Private Collection. "Vivandiere" is a French name for sutlers supplying military troops with food, drink, or other rations.

Jamaican hybrid medical practices in British medical education reinforced her post-colonial resistance to European hegemony, though for decades, society denied the recognition she deserved for contributions in her lifetime.

When Mary Seacole returned to London, Fernando finally offers the heroine with an extreme-close up as she glares at the fireworks there to celebrate her service (40:16) Seacole, communicates one last line, advising, “Reader, now that we have come to the end of this chapter, I can say what I have been all anxiety to tell you from its beginning. Please look back to Chapter VIII., and see how hard the right woman had to struggle to convey herself to the right place.” (44:10) As audience reflect on Seacole’s legacy, they must understand how Seacole, a Caribbean black woman in Balaklava, Crimea, revolutionized medicinal healing and contributions to herbs and treatments in British medical culture. As the first visual of the painting showed the destruction and tragedy of the Crimean war, Fernando reuses the painting medium to finish the narrative with the painting of Mary Seacole, echoing the Jamaican nurse transforming negative moments into moments of strength and resilience in history.

Reviews

To assess the popularity of this docudrama, both on a national level and international recognition, film reviews and rating numbers provide quantitative analysis on audience viewership. These critical evaluations possess great effects to consumer's decision to watch the film and serve as a financial indicator for how the project perform in visual media markets. However, these reviews, conducted by critics tend to receive less trust from viewers than informal reviews by their peers. In a study conducted by Jacob R. Pentheny, "Consumers with a high Need for Cognitive Closure were discovered to prefer reviews written by other consumers as opposed to critics, and positive reviews have the strongest effect on them. The Self-Monitoring individual difference measure was less effective in uncovering as many significant results, but we found that people who are low in Self-Monitoring tend to appreciate reviews more than those who are high in it." (Pentheny 3) These self-monitoring mechanisms work differently for television, where the British rating system is governed by the Broadcasters' Audience Research Board. Founded by British Broadcasting Corporation, Channel Four, Channel Five, Institute of Practitioners in Advertising (IPA), SkyTV, UKTV, and iTV, this not-for-profit industry provide audience numbers and viewership metrics for broadcasting channels to assess the success of a show. Film reviews for this docudrama count to less than ten, indicating how a lack of attention and coverage can deter mainstream education of the Jamaican nurse.

In the first review of *Mary Seacole: The Real Angel of Crimea* by James Delingpole, published to The Spectator, the journalist opens up about how he came across the documentary on Channel 4, Sunday. Delingpole acknowledges the educational erasure Mary Seacole's history

faces in public schools but realizes his audience may have a bias mindset towards non-white heroes in England. He writes, “I would guess this means most Speccie readers—probably have a cynical suspicion that her achievements have been bigged up and imposed on the National Curriculum as part of a PC mission to make black children feel good about themselves.” (Dellingpole 2005) His assumption proposes a racial detachment between predominantly white audiences with understanding the significance of seeing representation of black Caribbean’s on screen. Admiring the cinematography and the acting of Angela Bruce, Dellingpole praises Seacole’s depiction, recognizing her as “the most remarkable people of any colour or sex in history”. This review echoes how stories feature black subjects fail to garner any attention, also indicated by the number of reviews and critical reception given to this documentary.

Published in the Royal College of Nursing Publishing Company, Margaret Paul writes, “With dramatised sequences, dialogue based on her autobiography, newspaper reports, letters and diaries, this film celebrates the bicentenary of Mary Seacole's birth and the rediscovery of a long-neglected nurse pioneer. Recently voted the greatest black Briton, Channel 4 recounts her life as an 'angel' in the battleground of the Crimea” This review memorializes Seacole’s legacy and itemize each element that contributed to the framework of Fernando’s docudrama. The phrasing, “angel”, stems from a report in The Times, who gave Florence Nightingale this nickname. “She is a "ministering angel" without any exaggeration in these hospitals, and as her slender form glides quietly along each corridor, every poor fellow's face softens with gratitude at the sight of her,” E.T. Cook writes. “When all the medical officers have retired for the night and silence and darkness have settled down upon those miles of prostrate sick, she may be observed

alone, with a little lamp in her hand, making her solitary rounds." Although the review celebrates Seacole's achievements, the reinforcement of denigrating Nightingale's contributions to nursing by uplifting the former gathers more negative feedback to representing Seacole properly in British history. As Nightingale did provide medical services, sponsored by Queen Victoria's funding, Seacole self-funded nursing contributions is a landscape of its own.

The third, and final, review confronts the British Broadcasting Company for its refusal to initially display the docudrama nor make it possible to watch the program again on any streaming platforms or channels. In "BBC criticized over refusal to show Mary Seacole film: documentary on black nurse 'does not fit editorially' with terrestrial TV, says BBC", Pat Healy reports how the BBC has been accused of hampering attempts to raise awareness about the nurse, considering they greenlit and commissioned the docudrama when released. Healy reached out to Elizabeth Anionwu, head out of Mary Seacole Centre for Nursing Practice at Thames Valley University, who believes the BBC's stance is "crazy". The professor has been using her website platform to campaign for BBC to show the film. Seacole's docudrama was only broadcasted as part of Black history Month, an American race-related tradition, where BBC responded, "We have to think carefully about what repeats are shown on BBC2, and because this programme was made for BBC Knowledge, it does not fit editorially with BBC2 at this time" (Healy 2005). With BBC, an international hegemonic force in visual media, using phrasing like "did not fit editorially", it reinforces the erasure and refusal to maximize black narratives that many platforms predominated by white leaders engage with.

Seacole (2021)

Mary Seacole's narrative will arrive to the silver screen with the adaptation of her autobiography titled *Seacole*. Produced by American filmmaker Billy Peterson and Racing Green Pictures, the film will cover Seacole's journey to Crimea after her husband's death and the hotel business she established during the war. Peterson states, "Having her story out there and telling it in a poignant way and in a very high-quality production film is going to inspire so many people today to embrace the challenges they need to overcome to achieve what they want to achieve." The film, slated for release in late 2021, will be directed by Charlie Stratton, written by Marnie Dickens, Dianne Houston, and Stratton, himself, and starring Gugu Mbathaw-Raw as the titular nurse, Sam Worthington as her business partner, Thomas Day, and Sylvia Hoeks as nurse Florence Nightingale. Although adapting Seacole's narrative is a huge progressive triumph for British black cinema on an international platform, there must be considerable thought on how white filmmakers should approach black narratives, especially dealing with triggering historical tragedies like slavery and imperialism. While opportunity is given to black actors and artists, helming a post-colonial voice on a theatrical platform requires social consciousness and political correctness.

When white filmmakers take on black narratives, conversations around race relations and socioeconomic disparities tend to get pacified for a white-centric audience. To contextualize black narratives, yet omit any creative input by a black writer, director, or producer is an alarming trend where white filmmakers profit off black trauma and history. Charles S. Dutton, an accomplished actor and director, shared his frustrations with Hollywood's proclivity to

financially benefit from displaying post-colonial black lives for commercial entertainment. "Don't do a black story and have the gall not to hire any black people," he said. Famous black-centric narratives helmed by white filmmakers include *Green Book (2017)* by Peter Farrelly, *The Help* (2011) by Tate Taylor, and *The Color Purple* (1985) by Steven Spielberg. Although some filmmakers prioritize the black experience perspective without filtering through a white person's lens, it's hard to support white filmmakers being paid for telling black narratives when black people seldom receive opportunity in directing, writing, producing, or acting in the Hollywood industry. In a Hollywood Diversity Report by University College of Los Angeles, 1.3 out of ten working directors are people of color and less than 1 out of ten working writers identify as a person of color. Charlie Stratton's last theatrical director credit came from an adaptation of *Therese Raquin*, a French Victorian novel by Emile Zola detailing a woman entering an affair, while suffering from marital strife from her first cousin and socioeconomic (and gender) pressures by her overbeating aunt. *In Secret*, starring Elizabeth Olsen and Jessica Lange, is set in the same time period as Seacole's autobiography, hence Stratton's possible specialty in adapting Victorian literature and reimagining Victorian aesthetics and language on screen. However, handling a legacy like Mary Seacole requires an investment and education by the filmmaker, given the responsibility that her history is seldom discussed to British publish schools.

The film's leading actress, Gugu Mbatha-Raw, is a first-generation biracial actress with an international career in film, television, and theater. Mbatha-Raw's breakout role as Dido Elizabeth Belle comes from a 2013 period drama, *Belle*, both directed and written by black women, Amma Asante and Misan Sagay, respectively. In a review of Asante's *Belle*, Observer

film critic Mark Kermode writes, " Intelligently combining the enticing pleasures of a ripe costume drama with the still shameful legacy and lessons of the slave trade, *Belle* dresses its entryist agendas in the fashionable finery of a multiplex crowd-pleaser. The result is a handsomely mounted and emotionally engaging drama that smartly examines issues of race, class and gender while leaving nary a dry eye in the house." (Kermode 2014) As successful this film was critically, it didn't reach major award circuits or performed too well in box office as other period dramas do in British film markets.

As the first Seacole biopic near theatrical release, non-black filmmakers must be wary of methods in adapting post-colonial voices in caution of misrepresentation, overgeneralization, and socio-ethical responsibilities as an auteur interpretating a black voice. First, to understand a post-colonial voice, filmmakers must reach out responsibly and willing to learn and acknowledge the blind spots they possess and the education they need to properly adapt this work. Many mistakes have been made from white creators trying to capture the nuances of the black experiences from default exaggerated slang vernacular to overwhelming black caricatures dominating the screen. In a roundtable conducted by The Hollywood Reporter, Damon Lindelof, showrunner of *Watchmen*, reveals, "when we were put in the writer's room for [Watchmen], I reached out to Mr. Ta-Nehisi Coates' agent and I wanted to acknowledge he inspired this work and maybe see if he has any ideas for Watchmen. About two months later, I heard on a podcast, Mr. Coates say, 'all these white people in Hollywood are trying to reach out to me so that I will give them the approval stamp." (The Hollywood Reporter 10:50-11:30) Lindelof's revelation that he's a part of this Hollywood trend that may seek black approval recognizes the tokenism and reliance on a singular black experience for communal approval. When engaging with these

works, filmmakers must be patient and understanding how uncomfortable how the politics of their narrative being used for capitalistic entertainment can be exploitative and traumatic. When gathering research, non-black filmmakers must be patient and responsible in their critical analysis, but emerge themselves with the history, the culture, and the disadvantages faced by post-colonial voices. However, they must be willing to surrender their power over the narrative as director and prioritize the subject's voice as the foundation of the production.

Second, non-black filmmakers must be conscious and respectful they are adapting someone else's story to honor their legacy and re-emerge their significance in national history. Regardless of race, gender, or national origin, adapting someone's life span, filled with a series of events and desires, and limit years of life to a two-hour duration, may force a director to make creative decisions on which elements are important to sustaining the thematic essence the autobiography possessed. For Fernando, Seacole narrowed her decisions to focus on what made Seacole the hero she's revered today: establishing a hotel catering to dying soldiers despite society places barriers on her ambitions because of her intersectional identity.

Finally, collaborating with or funding post-colonial voices in the arts allow more global education on the effects of imperialism and the cultural proliferation generated from oppressive circumstances. Allowing black artists and creators the platform to elucidate audience through visual media places black voices as narrators of their own stories. With authenticity and entertaining storytelling, post-colonial black voices can now take authority and power over the information passed to new generations and reconstruct the racial undertones in storytelling that has de-stabilized the power post-colonial voices have over their identity and experience. Virginia

Hamilton, author of *The People Could Fly*, states, “No matter who you are or where you come from, the human spirit wants—no, needs—to be validated. While story means so much in every culture and ethnicity, I know that black folk, no matter how they got here, are planted in story and shared lived experience. It’s the way we witness.” (Hamilton, 2019) For the adaptation on the autobiography, Stratton recruits Dianne Houston, the first African American woman nominated for an Academy Award for short film directing. A Howard alum, Houston has shown, through her body of work, the nuances and dimensions of the black experience, regardless of class, gender, or individual story. Allowing Houston to have writing credit for this film instills hope that a post-colonial voice can empathize with the conflicts and double consciousness Seacole faced when maneuvering through British society. Seacole, a Caribbean black woman in an imperialist country ahead of her times, left an amazing narrative that will soon cement itself not only a part of black British history, but British history overall.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to Mary Seacole, Karen Hoffmann, Passion Freeman, and the many black Caribbean women in my lives that are my family and my friends.