Victorian Values and Colonial Education: Mechanism of Colonization in the British Caribbean

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Victorian Values and Colonial Education: 
Mechanism of Colonization in the British Caribbean

The alternative tradition is belly-centered: in the beat, the drum, the apparent bawdy. This region, as opposed to the Romantic/Victorian virtues of the ‘head,’ is the centre of Sparrow’s art; is the source of Louise Bennett’s vitality; is the blood-beat of the ska and jazz.

Edward Kamau Brathwaite\(^1\), *Roots*.

In any colonized society, a ruler’s values and influences do not easily disappear. It is the same with the Caribbean region, which had been dominated by European hegemonies for more than three centuries. As stated by Edward Kamau Brathwaite above, the African–Caribbean people in the former British colonies, descendants of African slaves, have inherited two values from their colonial history: their “heads” haunted by “the Romantic/Victorian virtues” and their “bodies” influenced by passionate African rhythms. These heterogeneous cultural aspects have continued to persist today.

Historically, however, the African racial and cultural backgrounds, which tended to prevent smooth colonization, had been repressed for a long time. The British Empire utilized Anglocentric education as a strategic tool for infusing their superiority and ideology into the hybrid colonial societies. As a result of such education, the suzerain values, particularly the Victorian middle-class values, were widely diffused in the British Caribbean.

This paper, beginning with an analysis of Queen Victoria’s portrait, the very icon in the Victorian age, discusses how deeply colonial education and Victorian values contributed toward colonization. In addition, this paper examines the works of Erna Brodber, Elizabeth Nunez, and Jamaica Kincaid, three African–Caribbean women writers who were imbued with such British colonial education and Victorian val-
1. Messages from Queen Victoria’s Portrait

*The Royal Family* (1846) (Fig. 1) by Franz Xaver Winterhalter, that is one of the most famous paintings in the Royal Collection of Buckingham Palace, is an impressive portrait of Queen Victoria’s family. It depicts Queen Victoria surrounded by her family—her reliable husband, Prince Albert, and their five lovely sons and daughters. Drawing her oldest son close to her side and taking Albert’s hand harmoniously, she smiles satisfyingly as a monarch, a wife, and a mother. At first glance, the image of the royal family appears to represent perfect domestic and marital bliss as a social model from the period. It also serves as a type of propaganda that suggests the ideal vision of a family to her people.

Interestingly, upon closer examination of the painting, we find rare flowers and fruits placed on both sides of the family. For example, a pineapple and a red mango placed on the right side of Prince Albert represent tropical vegetation from several British colonies. According to historical records, pineapples have been widely known in Europe since Christopher Columbus first discovered them in Guadeloupe in 1493. Guadeloupe, located in the Lesser Antilles of the Caribbean, is now an overseas region of France, but it used to be British territory. The red mango (Fig. 2) is very similar to the detailed illustration, “The mazagon mango of Bombay with the Papilio bolina or purple-eyed butterfly,” in James Forbes’ *Oriental Memories* (1813) (Fig. 3), therefore it appears to come from India. Turning our eyes toward the left side of the family, a plant with clusters like red flowers arranged in the vase is the “Bruguier gymnorrhiza” of the Rhizophoraceae family, which is commonly known as the “black mangrove” (Fig. 4). This singular plant was first discovered in Australia by Captain James Cook’s expeditionary party on their first voyage across the Pacific Ocean. The illustration of “Bruguier gymnorrhiza” (Fig. 5) by Frederic Polydore Nodder (a member of Cook’s party) is now kept in the collection of botanical arts at the Natural History Museum in London, England.

In short, these plants and fruits from the British colonies were hunting trophies of imperialism. Historically, as the art of navigation developed, many European countries encouraged their explorers and plant hunters to travel to the so-called end of the world as a national policy so that they could quickly monopolize as many territories and rarities as possible. The British also expected to gain enormous wealth from such travels into “new world.” From this point of view, the composition of the portrait—the glorious royal family in the center and the rare vegetation on both sides of them—indicates that the prosperity of the British Empire was greatly supported by the exploitations from these territories. Based on these aspects, the painting is not only a portrait but also represents the strength between the ruler and the ruled as well as the strategic implication of colonialism.

Here, Ania Loomba’s comment regarding the symbolic relationship between women and the nation is
Fig. 1. Flanz Xaver Winterhalter. *The Royal Family* (1846).

Fig. 2. Winterhalter.

Fig. 3. James Forbs.

Fig. 4. Winterhalter.

Fig. 5. Frederic P. Nodder.
interesting, especially the social representation of Queen Victoria:

If the nation is an imagined community, that imagining is profoundly gendered.... National fantasies, be they colonial, anti-colonial or postcolonial, also play upon and with the connections between women, land or nations. To begin with, across the colonial spectrum, the nation-state or its guiding principles are often imagined literally as a woman. (215)

Loomba also indicates that the nation-state is sometimes represented as a woman similar to Britomart in Edmund Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene* (1590), the spirit of the French Revolution in Eugène Delacroix’s *Liberty Leading the People* (1830), and Mahatma Gandhi in India. In short, “As national emblems, women are usually cast as mothers or wives, and are called upon to literally and figuratively reproduce the nation” (Loomba 215–6). Figuratively, it is probable that Queen Victoria was recognized as a “Great Mother of the British Empire.” On the celebration day of her Jubilee, her people waved flags at her. Considering that the phrase written on them was “The Jubilee, Mother, Wife, Queen,” it is obvious that her people accepted her as the “National Mother.”

Moreover, this image as the “Mother of the Nation” was also used for ruling the colonized territories, and it justified the control of her “children,” that is to say, her colonies and people. Loomba refers to the metaphor of the family in the colonial context as follows:

In the colonial situation, the familial vocabulary was not limited to the relations between state and subject but became the means of expressing racial or cultural relations as well. The white man’s burden was constructed as a parental one: that of ‘looking after’ those who were civilisationally underdeveloped (and hence figured as children), and of disciplining them into obedience. (216–7)

In her “parental” role, she had the right to enlighten her uncivilized colonials, and they had the duty to be subordinated by their “Mother.” Figuratively, she functioned as an icon of the age that insinuated the validity of colonization for her “children.”

In fact, the identification of Queen Victoria as their “National Mother” was successful in strengthening the colonial structure, and her popularity was not lost among the British Caribbean. Because the emancipation of slaves in the British colonies was virtually realized during the reign of Queen Victoria,² she established her popularity and ultimately inculcated Victorian values into the colonized territories. For example, one of the Emancipation Songs collected in the village of Woodside in St Mary, Jamaica, shows how much she was loved and respected by her people:
Queen Victoria gi [gave] wi [us] free
Gi wi free, gi wi free
Queen Victoria gi wi free
This is the year
Of Jubilee (A Emancipation Song in Woodside, St Mary, Jamaica, 1966)

According to Erna Brodber’s *The Continent of Black Consciousness* (2003), after the 1860s, many Jamaican freedmen managed to “find a respectable place within Queen Victoria’s family. The successful in this effort became the new black middle class, beginning as small proprietors but steadily amassing more lands and more facility along with the Euro-Jamaican culture” (68). Louis James also states that “By 1900, middle-class Jamaicans felt themselves a nation, a proud part of the British Empire” (46). As Brodber and James mention, the middle-class Caribbean’s commitment to the Victorian values as well as Queen Victoria herself was remarkable, which suggests that their thought control was successfully promoted. For them, Queen Victoria’s family was ideal, and the cultural values were accepted as the mainstream.

The Victorianism, however, did not disappear after the queen’s death. According to Dilip Hiro, when Jamaican senior high school students in 1960 were asked to name the most important figure historically, Queen Victoria was ranked second. Surprisingly, there was no mention of “Marcus Garvey, the father of the ‘Black is beautiful’ movement” (20). Hiro remarks that “Even Marcus Garvey, the Jamaican leader denounced by the authorities as an extremist, could not refrain, in his speech in London in 1928, from referring to ‘a woman by the name of Victoria the Good’” (20). Interestingly, even though such values had already become “a relic of the past” in England, they remained basically unchanged in the colonies and were reinforced even more in order to promote colonial policies. With regard to the colonial subjectivities shaped by the Victorian ideology, Kathleen J. Renk comments that “Victoria loomed over the islands like a shadowy, ghostly figure and that her shrines of enlightenment radiated in the colonies long after her death in 1901 and well after nineteenth-century British colonialism reached its zenith” (2). As Renk indicates, the goal of British colonization was “the creation of Little Englands across the globe” (2). The inhabitants of these “Little Englands,” children of the great “Mother,” internalized the ideology swiftly and attempted to behave in the British manner so that they would not be imperfect clones of England. In this sense, the British Caribbean has been haunted by the “Victorian ghosts.”

Even now when traveling there, one can find vestiges of these ghosts everywhere. For example, many post cards of Queen Victoria are sold at local souvenir shops, and the historical architecture is extremely Victorian. One of these Victorian structures, Greenwood Great House built in 1790, is decorated with several portraits and torsos of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert as well as a large painting of her coronation ceremony. Such art in the Victorian drawing room represents the owner’s retrospective feelings of
the former prosperous years in addition to their eulogy on Queen Victoria as the great “Mother.”

As the Victorian ideology and British supremacy spread throughout the area, colonial education based on the British system also functioned well. In the context of colonialism, education actually played an important role in controlling the colonized territories.

2. Colonial Education

Dilip Hiro explains the characteristics of colonial education in the British Caribbean as follows:

Generally speaking, conscious and subconscious attachment to English values was more prevalent among the middle class, the educated. . . . Formal education in the West Indies meant a thorough grounding in the concept of Britain as the mother country, the land of hope and glory; and the imbibing of Victorian social values—church marriage, marital fidelity, dressing for dinner, chivalry to the “ladies,” social snobbery and formality in conduct. West Indian teachers, the recipients and propagators of these Victorian middle-class values, were especially notable for their educational role. (20–1) 

The education system completely ignored the local circumstances and stressed on Christian faith. This was simply a copy of the British system without regional modifications. The Royal Stationery Office also admits the policy of Anglocentric colonial education in the area.

The English examinations require a knowledge of Roman history rather than West Indian history, of the British monarchy rather than the crown colony system, of empire geography rather than West Indian geography. Furthermore, English examiners do not and cannot have a competent knowledge of West Indian conditions. British West Indian teachers, therefore, are not encouraged to study their environment, nor is there any incentive to provide text books with materials suited to the West Indian environment. (12)

The British educational policy and system continued until their independence. However, to be precise, attachment to the Victorian values and their overvaluation of the British education still remain today. Geographically speaking, the United States is closer than England, but many Caribbean intellects in the former British colonies prefer studying in their “Mother” country and acquiring higher education from Oxford or Cambridge Universities.

Historically, basic and practical skills were first emphasized in early colonial education. “Most colonial powers,” as Philip G. Altbach indicates, “when they concentrated on education at all, stressed humanistic
studies, fluency in the language of the metropolitan country” (453). During times of slavery, although teaching English to African slaves from different tribes was strictly prohibited to prevent them from communicating with one another and inspiring riots, the British colonial government gradually recognized that it was necessary for them to learn English, especially since they spoke creole English, which their masters and assistants could not understand. This issue can be seen in Sir Henry MacLeod’s correspondence with the Secretary of State on October 13th, 1841:

...the differences of languages and religion make it more imperative that the system to be adopted should be one under the control of the Government, not only with a view to make it accessible to all parties and creeds, but to cause the language spoken to be that of the Country to which this Colony belongs. (William 196)

On January 8th of the following year, the Secretary of State, Lord Stanley, answered the governor, stating that “it should be a leading object with the Government to encourage by every means in their power the diffusion of the English language” (197). The officials admitted that teaching them “standard” English as a beginning of colonial education was a matter of great urgency; in the case of Trinidad, it was even more serious. After the island was discovered and named by Christopher Columbus in 1498, it was controlled by the Spanish until seized by the British in 1797. Most of the plantations, however, were developed by the French; therefore, many people could not communicate in English, although it was a British colony. In addition to the multicultural social situation, many immigrants from India and China arrived there to fill the gap that African slaves had created after they were emancipated in 1838. The cultural and racial diversity of the Trinidadian society was supposed to be an obstacle to the promotion of colonization, and therefore, the government attempted to unify the miscellaneous people through colonial education. Of course, this was not only a problem for Trinidad. The colonized territories in the British Caribbean had to be enlightened immediately so that they could accept the values of their rulers as authentic. Dale Bisnauth also indicates the necessity of enhancing the moral status of the former slaves: “The primary objective of education was the inculcation of that kind of morality that would make the ex-slaves respect order and behave in a civilized manner” (205–6).

While colonial education focused primarily on diffusing “standard” English and the Anglocentric values among the former slaves, Christian missionaries took the initiative. According to Franklin W. Knight, “At the end of the nineteenth century, the churches virtually monopolized elementary education in Jamaica, Barbados, and Guiana and ran a majority of the primary schools in Trinidad, Grenada, and Antigua” (285). Until the middle of the twentieth century, the missionaries of the Anglican Church, the Baptists, the Moravians, the Presbyterians, the Wesleyans, and the Jesuits actually operated colonial education in-
stead of colonial governments. Thomas Burchell, a Baptist missionary proudly reported the educational effects on former slaves as follows: "many, who knew not letter in the alphabet twelve months since, are now able to read fluently, are writing and commencing arithmetic" (310). While they promoted colonial education as a part of their missions, the governments considered them to be agencies of implementing their educational policy. Through education, the churches encouraged the colonized to have their allegiance to their suzerain, white colonizers and churches. Namely, their purpose of such promotion did not only give their pupils knowledge along British cultural and Christian philosophies, but it also attempted to preserve, as W.A. Lawson indicates, "their upper class standing while repressing any chances of ‘social barbarism’" (173). The colonial education was considered to be necessary, especially for the social control of the lower classes. The colonial governments and missionaries had common interests in strengthening the colonial structure, and therefore, the British government aided the missionaries financially. In 1835, the British Parliament decided to make £20,000 available for the education of former slaves, and the Negro Education Grant continued till 1845. The colonial education, operated under the control of the churches, inculcated the Anglocentric values, especially the Victorian values, into even former slaves in the lower classes.

Three famous African–Caribbean women writers, Erna Brodber (from Jamaica), Elizabeth Nunez (from Trinidad), and Jamaica Kincaid (from Antigua), were born in the 1940s, and received such Anglocentric education. Actually, Kincaid tells Selwyn R. Cudjoe in an interview that, “When I was growing up, we still celebrated Queen Victoria’s birthday on May 24.... So, my education, which was very ‘Empire,’ only involved civilization up to the British Empire...” (217–8). In class, she was taught only to read “the Brontës, Hardy, Shakespeare, Milton, Keats...” (218), and she thought that “all the great writing had been done before 1900” (218) when she was young. Remembering her childhood under the influence of colonial education, she tells Cudjoe that “Everything seemed divine and good only if it was English” (217). In Nunez’s autobiographical novel, Beyond the Limbo Silence (1998), Sara, the female protagonist, recollects her own education: “Our island [Trinidad] was an outpost in the British Empire and books took forever to get to our colonial library. The most modern we had were the novels of Jane Austen and Emily Brontë” (29). In addition, when she begins to study in the United States, she immediately recognizes her unbalanced reading experience since she did not read any books by American writers in her country. Just like Kincaid, Sara also enjoyed reading only the best works of English writers such as “Chaucer, Shakespeare, Spenser, Milton, Pope, Johnson, Byron, Shelley, Keats, Wordsworth, Fielding, Austen, Brontë, (and) the Brownings” (34). In her novels, Brodber also deals with the unequal dynamics between the "educational producer" (England) and the "peripheral consumers" (the Jamaican). In Jane and Louisa Will Soon Come Home (1980), the colonized as “peripheral consumers” are described with accuracy: “We had patriarchs. The one pale etchings of principle, invisible gifts of daffodils fluttering in the breeze, Hamletian castles and wafer
disintegrating on your tongue; the other black with anger” (30). The two “patriarchs” of the colonized includes the English ruler (pale father) and their biological father (black father). In the novel, through the British-style education program, children of the colonized are obliged to read Wordsworth’s poems at school, even though they have never seen daffodils fluttering in the breeze on the tropical island. In addition, they are obliged to speak “standard” English such as the “wafer disintegrating on your tongue,” instead of the local vernacular of “patois.” Nevertheless, their black fathers have to remain silence and repress their anger at the educational policy that completely ignores their individual black culture. As “peripheral consumers” of education, they are forced to accept an illusion that their ruler’s culture must be universal. Kincaid also refers to the poem in Lucy (1990): “do you realize that at ten years of age I had to learn by heart a long poem about some flowers I would not see in real life until I was nineteen?” (30). This statement shows her anger against strategic colonialism camouflaged as education.

The novels that Kincaid, Nunez, Brodber, and their characters read in their school days are typical English literary canons. According to The Empire Writes Back (1989), they are “produced by the intersection of a number of readings and reading assumptions legitimized in the privileging hierarchy of a ‘patriarchal’ or ‘metropolitan’ concept of ‘literature’” (176). As the colonized internalize the “reading assumptions” based on the ruler’s cultural superiority through such education, they regard themselves as inherently inferior—“savage, primitive and wild.” Helen Tiffin mentions the functions of English literature in the British colonies.

The construction of the colonial audience as English readers meant that Nigerians, Indians, Caribbean peoples or Aboriginal Australians were asked to read and internalize ethnocentric and racist representations and denigrations of themselves, their very climates, religions, cultures as if these were ‘fact.’ They were forced to read as if they were Englishmen and shared English economic interests and ethnocentric assumptions. That famous and false critical binary—universal versus local—had its effective basis in colonial control.... (29)

This process of creating the negative self-representation of the colonized and sharing Anglocentric ideology was the very “creation of Little Englands across the globe” (Renk 2). In Brodber’s novel, Myal (1988), the same process of internalizing “the inferior collective identity” by reading an allegory in a primary education school textbook titled The Caribbean Reader, is described. After reading it, the children acknowledge the British ethnocentric assumptions as true and the educational effects are so strong that they accept their inferior identity without having any doubts. The colonial education is, as Bill Ashcroft states, “a conquest of another kind of territory—it is the foundation of colonialist power and consolidates this power through legal and administrative apparatuses” (425). This situation designates the ingenious
functions of education as a powerful technology of social control.

Female education in the British Caribbean was also extremely Victorian. It had been dominated by strong patriarchy in which women should devote themselves entirely to the domestic sphere. Olive Senior refers to the conservatism of the female education in the area: “Until a few decades ago, female education was explicitly shaped by the ideology based on gender-role stereotyping which had its origins in Victorian England—that the female is a dependent being whose true locus is the home and whose vocation is that of wife and mother” (47). Furthermore, Senior, with regard to the influence of churches over female colonial education, indicates that “religious denominations generally tend to support patriarchic structures and would have a vested interest in reinforcing conservative women’s roles” (47). In the male-dominated Caribbean, women were confined within the roles of wife and mother, and deprived of their social autonomy. Like an ideal Victorian woman, Caribbean women were taught not to intervene in the male affairs but to devote themselves to their domestic roles as a good wife and a wise mother.

Although the demerits of colonial education in the British Caribbean have been discussed so far, as George Wilson Bridges mentions, “education in short, tends to abolish the different grades of society—renders the lower classes dissatisfied, skeptical and ripe for revolution” (815). Senior also remarks that “Education is a key to woman’s empowerment, to the acquisition of power and status both within the society and in her domestic life” (44). It is true that colonial education gradually transformed the colonized. According to F. W. Knight, two groups were formed through such education: “Education produced two groups in the British West Indies. The first identified closely with the British system” (286); and “The second group was more populist, more independent, and more inspired by a semi-millennial spiritual return to Africa” (287). Albert Gomes, a member of the Marxist Radical group in Trinidad stated:

It is important, moreover, that we break away as far as possible from the English tradition; and the fact that some of us are still slaves to Scott and Dickens is merely because we lack the necessary artistic individuality and sensibility in order to see how incongruous that tradition is with the West Indian scene and spirit. (31)

Some Caribbean intellectuals, including Albert Gomes, realized the ingenious functions of education as a powerful tool of social control, and started pushing for independent from the British Empire. Of course, meanwhile, some of the colonized attempted to retain the Anglocentric social systems and values, but a new way of thinking, a spirit of independence, appeared among the people as a result of the education. Erna Brodber, Elizabeth Nunez, and Jamaica Kincaid, who actually received colonial education, are also representatives of women writers raising objection to colonialism. Through their works describing the history of colonization and representing their female protagonists as confronting the strong patriarchal
Victorianism resolutely, they attempt to invert British superiority and depict women straying from their conservative roles. Their trials are very strategic and political.

For example, in Kincaid’s novel, Annie John (1985), a young girl’s ironic comment implies the untold truth of colonization in the British Caribbean: “all of us celebrated Queen Victoria’s birthday, even though she had been dead a long time. But we, the descendants of the slaves, knew quite well what had really happened, and I was sure that if the tables had been turned we should have acted differently...” (76). Her words reveal the deceit of colonialism. In Brodber’s novel, Myal, Ella, a female protagonist, insists that colonial education is spirit thievery that makes the colonized “zombies, living deads capable only of receiving orders from someone else and carrying them out” (107). In the interview with Evelyn O’Callaghan, Brodber states that colonialism is a “zombification” of the colonized, namely, a theft of culture. Brodber also considers colonial education to have functioned as the primary influence of colonization, which took their particular worldview away from them and paralyzed them with the Anglocentric values. In Prospero’s Daughter (2006), Nunez rewrites Shakespeare’s masterpiece, Tempest (1611), from Caliban’s point of view. In her essay titled, “Challenging Shakespeare (2006),” she remarks that the intent is “to examine my [her] attitude toward the British, why in spite of my [her] anger for their colonization of my [her] island, I [she] continue to admire then and find it impossible to summon up a rage similar to the rage that many of my [her] African friends have toward white America” (25). By writing the novel, she faces her internal ambivalence toward England again, and attempts to rewrite the inferior representation of the colonized through the relationship between Prospero (the ruler) and Caliban (the colonized). For Kincaid, Brodber, and Nunez, writing novels retells the untold history of the colonized in their own words and allows their readers to recognize it again. It is not simply creating fiction, but it is the process of gaining autonomy of the colonized.

This paper shows how ingeniously colonial education had contributed to the colonization of the British Caribbean as well as controlled the colonized. In fact, Victorian values inculcated by the Anglocentric education still influence them. On the other hand, it eventually paved the way for subversive and revolutionary processes in which African–Caribbean women writers, such as Brodber, Nunez, and Kincaid, attempt to invert the inferior representation of the colonized by retelling the truth of colonialism in their novels. They originally internalized the incorrect self-representations by reading English literary canons, but they ultimately intend their readers to internalize new self-representations by reading their novels. It is their strategic literary counterblow against colonialism.
Notes

1. Mighty Sparrow is a Trinidadian Calypsonian, and Louise Bennett is a Jamaican poet and actress. They have greatly influenced nationalism in the Caribbean. E. Kamau Brathwaite is a famous poet from Barbados. Ska is a style of fast popular music in Jamaica in the 1960s, a forerunner of reggae.

2. In 1833 during the reign of William IV, the act for the abolition of slavery throughout the British Colonies was passed.

3. Daffodils are one of British representative flowers, which are depicted as the national emblem of Wales. They do not range in the Caribbean area.

4. Jamaican patois is a local dialect, which is quite different from standard English.

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【Abstract】

ヴィクトリア朝的価値観と植民地教育
—英領カリブ海地域に見る植民地化の手法

岩 瀬 由 佳

本稿は、旧イギリス領カリブ海地域において、宗主国の価値観、特にヴィクトリア朝的価値観を基盤とする植民地教育がいかに植民地化に深く関与してきたのかについて明らかにするとともに、実際にその植民地教育を受けてきたアフリカ系カリブ女性作家の作品をもとに、教育によって被植民者側に与えられた「劣性表象」を転倒させる文学的戦略の可能性を検討した。

まずは、Franz X. Winterhalter によるヴィクトリア女王一家の肖像画から論を発し、Ania Loomba らの論を手掛かりに、女王が「偉大なる大英帝国の母」として比喻的に表象されることにより、国民または被植民地を支配する正当性を提示しうることになり、「子」である国民ないし被植民者たちは親である「母」に従うべきであるという支配構造がそこに構築され、「中央に位置する女王一家とそれを支える植民地」という構図が一枚の肖像画からも読み取れる点を示した。

実のところ、カリブ海地域における女王の人気は、彼女の治世中に奴隷解放令が施行されたことによるもののが大きいが、イギリス本国では「過去の遺物」として形骸化したヴィクトリア朝的価値観もカリブ海地域では彼女の死後も温存され、強化されていった。それに大きく関わっていたのが、キリスト教教会主導による「植民地教育」である。それは、宗主国の文化的、社会的「優位性」を流布し、被植民者たちに「劣性表象」を内面化させることにより、円滑な植民地支配を補完してきたが、その教育は、結果的に、被植民者の知性を高め、独立運動を助長することになった。アフリカ系カリブ海女性作家、Erna Brodber、Elizabeth Nunez、Jamaica Kincaid らはまさに、自らの作品を通じて植民地主義そのものに「異議申し立て」を唱える代表者であり、イギリス式教育によって、イギリス中心の価値観を吸収した被植民者たちに、自分たちの歴史を、植民地主義の真実を語り直し、誤った「劣性表象」を書き換えるひとつの契機として、文学を用いている。そういった意味で、彼女たちは作品は、単なる「フィクション」ではなく、読者に対して政治的、社会的に発信する文学的かつ戦略的な試みであると結論づけた。