

# Tongues Untied: Lord Salisbury's "Black Man" and the Boundaries of Imperial Democracy<sup>1</sup>

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In the general election of 1886 Dadhabai Naoroji (1825–1917), one-time Bombay mathematics professor and longtime Parsi merchant-entrepreneur, ran on the Liberal ticket for the constituency of Holborn and lost, with a total of 1,950 votes against 3,651 cast in favor of the Tory candidate, Colonel Duncan.<sup>2</sup> Naoroji's candidacy received little publicity outside Holborn itself and indeed, but for Naoroji's second bid for a parliamentary seat in 1892 the Holborn debacle might have gone unnoticed in the annals of parliamentary history, as did the attempts of two compatriots: David Octerlony Dyce Sombre, who was elected for Sudbury in 1841; and Lal Mohan Ghose, who ran as a Liberal candidate for Deptford just a few years before Naoroji.<sup>3</sup> Even so, Naoroji's accomplishment—i.e., election to the House of Commons as the spokesman for a colonial territory that many contemporaries, even those who were sympathetic to the cause of India, scarcely recognized as a legitimate nation, let alone a viable electoral constituency—remains one of the last untold narratives in the high political history of the Victorian period.<sup>4</sup> This omission persists despite the availability of information on Naoroji's career in Britain through the work of Rozina Visram and others, not to mention the attention given to it in the contemporary Victorian press. More remarkable still, Naoroji's bid for parliamentary representation as an Indian for "India" remains obscure despite recent attempts to understand how thoroughly empire helped to constitute "domestic" politics and society across the long nineteenth century.<sup>5</sup>

By the time the votes were counted in the general election of 1892, Naoroji

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had managed to capture the seat for Central Finsbury, also a London constituency.<sup>6</sup> He again ran as a Liberal, this time successfully, though his margin of victory was exceedingly slim: he won by just five votes. In the late 1930s, Naoroji's biographer, R. P. Masani, attributed Naoroji's success to his hard work among the electors, and to the indefatigable support of those in and outside Parliament who had canvassed on his behalf, both on the eve of the election and during the months and years preceding it. Masani was equally convinced that it was a fortuitous "slip of the tongue" on the part of the Conservative Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, which helped Naoroji win the election, by making his name a household word throughout Britain in the aftermath of his 1886 defeat. In a speech in Edinburgh in November of 1888, Salisbury explained, with the following evidently careless remark, why the Holborn election had turned out the way it did. In his view it was because

Colonel Duncan was opposed by a black man; and however great the progress of mankind has been, and however far we have advanced in overcoming prejudices, I doubt if we have yet to go to that point of view where a British constituency would elect a black man.

"I am speaking roughly," continued Lord Salisbury amidst laughter and cries of "hear, hear," and "using language in its colloquial sense," according to one contemporary account, "because I imagine the colour is not exactly black, but, at all events, [Naoroji] was a man of another race."<sup>7</sup> The impetus that Masani ascribed to the incident bears scrutiny. "Those two words," he wrote—referring to Salisbury's designation of Naoroji as a "black man"—did nothing less than "kick . . . Dadhabai into fame. The name of the hitherto little-known Indian, difficult of articulation as it had so far been, was within twenty-four hours on the lips of everyone throughout the United Kingdom."<sup>8</sup>

The Edinburgh speech and the storm that followed became highly politicized spectacles which could easily be used in the service of what Naoroji believed was the ultimately righteous cause: Indian self-government. Practically since his arrival in Britain in the 1850s, Naoroji had been thinking, writing and speaking publicly about the need for Indian representation in Parliament, as well as about the injustices of British rule in India. He did all of this while calling himself a loyal "servant of empire" and claiming to be the representative of both the masses and the various cultural and religious communities of India. Indeed, his insistence that "Hindu, Muslim, Parsi, Sikh and Christian" constituted the disparate but collective basis of "India" was to become a mantra for later nationalists seeking a foundation for Indian citizenship in the early twentieth century.<sup>9</sup> The office of President of the Indian National Congress, which was bestowed on Naoroji in 1886 (and again in 1893 and 1906), was undoubtedly a great honor, but it may have fallen temporarily short of his most cherished aspiration. That aspiration was to convince the British public, by means of personal appeal, rational economics and above all his capacity to "speak for" India, that Indian self-rule was nothing less than the fulfillment of Britain's great

imperial destiny.<sup>10</sup> The “blackman” incident should therefore be read as part of Naoroji’s decades-long attempt to harness the British public, and no less significantly, the machinery of the Liberal party, to his determination to make the parliament at Westminster a truly imperial democracy by forcing it to recognize an Indian colonial subject as one of its representatives. And although he would not have used the term, Naoroji clearly recognized that this was a transnational project, insofar as it could not be achieved without negotiating power across a variety of national-political boundaries, both imagined and real.

Could Dadhabai Naoroji have been elected to Parliament if Lord Salisbury had not made him into such a national cause célèbre? I wish to be clear that the causal relationship, if any, between Salisbury’s passing remark in the autumn of 1888 and Naoroji’s eventual election in 1892 is not of prime concern here. Of interest rather are the terms through which the public discussion of Salisbury’s comment—which was referred to alternately as an epithet, a joke, an attack, an insult and, most commonly, a “slip of the tongue”—was carried out. Salisbury’s comment is significant as much because it was innocent as because it was derisive and racist. It was innocent, that is, not of moral accountability or even, one presumes, political guile. But it was arguably innocent of the reverberations it was to have in local and national political culture, innocent of the path it would open, not just for Naoroji but for the late-Victorian press more generally, to articulate the categories of racial hierarchy and the exclusionary premises of political citizenship that circulated throughout the culture at large, but were rarely so visible or so publicly on display in national forums. Here, Judith Butler’s claims about “excitable speech” are irresistibly germane, and not just because the speech act always says and does more than it intends to, or even because “the risk of appropriation . . . accompanies all performative acts,” thereby “marking the limits of their sovereignty.”<sup>11</sup> These interpretations are undoubtedly ratified by Salisbury’s remark and the veritable Babel of tongues it unleashed in the late-Victorian metropole. What Butler’s theory enables us to see with particular clarity—especially in a case like this, where the excitable speech at hand inflicts a culturally agreed-upon verbal injury—is why the impulse to fix on the speaker himself as the author of violence (or here, racism) is inadequate for understanding the kind of ideological work that language, in its unavoidably institutional and cultural settings, is always capable of doing. Salisbury’s words, together with the torrent of response to them, were “excitable” precisely because they dramatized the ways in which a subject like Naoroji, who was “excluded from enfranchisement by existing conventions,” might, through his engagement with such speech, expose the “contradictory character” of the very universal discourse that claimed to represent him and, moreover, worked to naturalize its claim.<sup>12</sup>

That universal discourse was, of course, Victorian democracy, a political arrangement with an implicitly white, male and middle-class character, which by 1886 had managed successfully to contain, mostly by incorporation, some

of those who sought entrance into the body politic. Such was the great constitutional compromise espoused by Conservative and Liberal alike since the Reform Act of 1832 and guaranteed by the subsequent adjustments of the legislation of 1867 and 1884. British women of all classes were a notable, and increasingly organized and politically shrewd, exception to the much-touted process of incorporation at the national level. The Irish were an even more menacing threat to this process, and were only momentarily crushed by the defeat of their cause at the 1886 polls. Despite Naoroji's considerable sympathy for both English women and the Irish question, he nonetheless sought participation in this compromise through the opportunity afforded by Salisbury's unwitting invitation into the battleground of extra-parliamentary democracy in an imperial age. Thereby, one might infer, Naoroji effectively turned the tables on the Tory Party and its Prime Minister, revealing not just the imperial and racist foundations of Victorian democracy, but the vulnerability of its very processes to appropriation and transformation by an outsider and, as was then common parlance, a person of "alien" race and affiliations. In other words, he not only exposed the contradictory character of Victorian imperial democracy, but exploited it in order to win himself a place at the political table. Naoroji's triumphal election to Parliament in 1892 would seem to further bear out this inference, signaling the arrival of an Indian "native" at the very heart of the imperial government's domestic machinery, while announcing as well the basic fairness and good sportsmanship of modern western democracy.

If this conclusion seems too neat, it is in part because the Whig narrative cannot fully account for Naoroji's election or the complexities of his relationship to imperial democracy itself. For although Naoroji professed not to take offense at what many of his friends and supporters deemed Salisbury's slander against him, he did not seek any kind of identification with the phantasmagorical "black man" who was the object of the Prime Minister's scorn. As late as the 1880s, "black man" was an appellation which could in no way enhance and indeed could only endanger any subject's chances of achieving recognition as a citizen, much less as a civic representative of the people in the Mother of all Parliaments. It carried with it associations of slavery and subjugation that imperiled Naoroji's claims about the special qualification of Indian civilizations and peoples to direct representation, not to mention the august reputation he had cultivated and no doubt deserved as one of India's most respected statesman. To be sure, the metropolitan press, both urban and provincial, helped to excavate and refine this web of associations, updating it in terms readily accessible to its late-Victorian readers and, in the process, contributing to an historically specific, though not totally new, disaggregation of "the Indian" from "the African." This disaggregation helped secure certain imperial taxonomies and, possibly, to frustrate what might have been political solidarity between and among colonial peoples.<sup>13</sup> In this sense, Naoroji's rise to parliamentary power may be said to be as much an effect of the new journalism of the 1880s as of

his own individual efforts—the consequence of a diffuse yet tentacled visual/textual medium, which vied with party political organizations for the attention and the allegiance of an ever-more sophisticated, literate middle- and lower-middle class citizenry and, not incidentally, helped to make and remake the racial assumptions of the time and place in ways not confined to local or regional culture, but which affected politics in the highest places.<sup>14</sup>

Among the contributions that an analysis of the Salisbury/Naoroji “black man” debate can make to our understanding of the history of Victorian democratic culture is to illuminate how some colonial nationalists could be implicated in its populist bargains, and how questions of color and citizenship figured in the tradeoffs that were required. I want also to suggest that when we take discourses seriously—as sites of political power and cultural knowledge produced out of concrete conditions—they can be viewed as an archive, a material resource where the “socio-economic and political relations of colonial domination” are both visible and contestable.<sup>15</sup> And finally, rematerializing this Victorian debate demonstrates that although, as Butler notes, injurious speech can be untethered or untied from its original context of utterance and used as a tool for political ends, those ends are rarely as predictable as one might think. The “Blackman” debate cannot, in the end, be dismissed as merely a case study of a “world in a grain of sand.” It represents, rather, an example of how language can be made to matter in the public sphere, and of how discourses about color and complexion helped to make and remake Victorian racial assumptions in ways which were not confined to local or regional culture, but which affected politics at the very heart of the empire—thereby revealing the fundamentally transnational nature of British political culture in the fin-de-siècle.

The press debate which followed on the heels of Lord Salisbury’s remarks revolved around whether or not Naoroji could really be called “black” and whether or not that designation was accurate, appropriate to political discourse, or representative of the opinion of “the great heart of the English nation.”<sup>16</sup> While some might contend, as did the *Notts Daily Express*, that “there is nothing criminal in being black,” most agreed that “the fact that Mr. Naoroji is not black hardly lessens the sting of the insult.”<sup>17</sup> Those who rejected the association with blackness imposed by Lord Salisbury did so primarily through reference to Naoroji’s complexion or skin color. So, for example, the *St. James Gazette* argued that because Naoroji was “as fair as a Spaniard . . . it is not only incorrect but impolite to call him a black.”<sup>18</sup> The *Yorkshire Post* chided those who “professed to be greatly shocked” by Salisbury’s reference to the alleged blackness of Naoroji’s skin and reminded readers that “of course Parsis are not black, or any shade of colour approaching it in the majority of instances.” According to a contributor to the *Christian World*, Naoroji was “singularly deficient in color even for a Parsee,” while the *South Times* opined “Mr. Naoroji is anything but a black man. He is slightly copper coloured but his complexion is

nearer white than black."<sup>19</sup> For all the public discussions of the variations of non-white skin color that followed in the wake of Salisbury's remarks, it was the instability of whiteness, not of blackness, that became the issue—with Naoroji's approximation of it posing as a dangerous challenge to presumptions about who and what could count as English in an imperial culture like Britain's. Naoroji's relative "colorlessness" was attributed most often to his Parsi background, a feature which enabled him to pass in India, if not in Britain: as one commentator observed, "to the great mass of the Indian population [he] is almost as much of a foreigner as an Englishman is."<sup>20</sup> For this very reason, as a correspondent for the *Leader* insisted, Naoroji was "not at all black. Many an English man is not so fair. He has lived 30 years in England. In speech, costume, and manners he is indistinguishable from a refined, educated and courteous English gentleman; and it requires a quick eye to tell from his colour that he is not English."<sup>21</sup>

In light of such remarks, it would be easy enough to read the newspaper responses above as if they meant to suggest that English gentlemanliness, at least, was a function of "speech, costume and manners" rather than of color or of race. And yet it would be a mistake to imagine that a preoccupation with race and more specifically, with the alarming fluidity of racial taxonomies, did not motivate these public pronouncements at virtually every turn—or that the racialized debate sustained by the late-Victorian press did not also carry political and cultural meanings that far exceeded what appeared in, if not as, black and white. In the first instance Salisbury's remarks created an opportunity for inverting the hierarchies of the British class system for enemies of the Tory leader. The *Somerset Express* remarked that "apart from the low coarseness of such acts, coarseness that would disgrace a working man, could any words be imagined more foolhardy, reckless, mischievous and unstatesmanlike than calling the Honorable Dadhabai Naoroji a black?" "It is only Tory aristocrats," the author continued, "with their dislike of the toiling masses who make their wealth, that can speak so vulgarly of those who differ in complexion or accent."<sup>22</sup> In a letter to the editor of the *Star*, a correspondent, who signed himself "B.—A 'Blackman'"—called Salisbury's remark "unworthy of an English gentleman, and more so of an English Prime Minister. The sweet epithet of a black man as a designation for the dark races has hitherto been confined only to 'roughs' and ill-mannered children." The Tory leader, he went on to say, "does them honour by adopting their language and elevating it into a political phraseology, and finally giving it the sanction of his high name and authority . . . if the colour of a man's skin be any disqualification for high offices or positions, surely Lord Salisbury of all men should not be the Prime Minister."<sup>23</sup> The *Star*, for its part, maintained that "there is really nothing surprising in it. Gentlemanly ruffians like Lord Salisbury are in the habit of using such language to what they are pleased to call their inferiors."<sup>24</sup> And according to the *Glasgow Mail*, "Lord Salisbury makes no secret of his opinion that, at least within the British Em-

pire, there are no men but Englishmen, and that other races and nationalities are only inferior creatures made for Englishmen to rule.” The *Mail*’s emphasis on the “Englishness” of the speaker and his offence was surely not lost on Scottish readers of the day, and suggests some of the ways in which class politics and regionalism might converge. “His lordship is the most highly developed type of native English snob—the flower of aristocratic culture,” it continued. “If there be the germs of disaffection in India, his words will bring them into active life.”<sup>25</sup> The *Accrington Times* saw its opportunity to exploit the images that word-play might conjure among readers with even the vaguest notions of British history and English convictions of civilization and progress. Its contributor had the temerity to observe that

While Lord Salisbury’s unknown savage ancestor was hunting wild beasts in the ‘woad paint of Aboriginal Britain’ the Indian plains were teeming with fertility and were ruled by ‘principalities and powers.’ The finely woven fabrics of India adorned the ladies of Roman patricians and were esteemed more highly and were far more costly than the shawls of Cashmere known to our grandfathers . . . Moore’s ‘Lalla Rhook’ is written about these ‘black’ people. They are no more black than Persians or Egyptians.<sup>26</sup>

Not only are Salisbury’s ancestors reduced to savagery here, the authenticity of their whiteness is called into question by reference to both the woad paint used by ancient Britons and the invocation of “aboriginal,” which connoted the native, non-white peoples of Australia and even in some cases the tribal peoples of India in this period. Well might a Victorian reader smile at the implied connection between blue paint and the blue blood that was alleged to run through Salisbury’s veins.

For all the subtlety of these jibes, however, no retorts more neatly or more succinctly summed up the ways in which Salisbury’s remark undid his claim to be the arbiter of the color of citizenship than the following. The first was attributed to Herbert Gladstone, who is supposed to have said that “I know Mr. Nowroji very well, and I know Lord Salisbury by sight, and I am bound to say that of the two, Lord Salisbury is the blackest.”<sup>27</sup> The second is a remark attributed to an unnamed London politician: “Well, if [Naoroji] is black, he is not a blackguard like a certain aristocrat we know.”<sup>28</sup> Whereas for many the Prime Minister’s comments were thought to be “unspeakable,” here Lord Salisbury himself has become the unmentionable object of public satire, ridicule and fun. It should be noted that despite its wittiness, such speech was hardly less vulnerable than that of Salisbury’s: as a contributor to the *St. Stephen’s Review* was quick to remark, “Mr. Gladstone seems to think that it is a disgrace for a man to be black. Perhaps it was in the days when the Right Honorable gentleman’s ancestors dealt largely in black ivory.”<sup>29</sup> The risks of speech were many, in part because the domains of the discursive and the political were often one and the same. In this case, “excitable” speech was deemed dangerous because it had the power to influence imperial stability and with it, the very terms of colonial rule. More than one commentator echoed the sentiments of the *Leicester Daily Mer-*



cury, which warned that if "native Indians are to be treated in the spirit that induced the application of the words 'black man' to Mr. Naoroji, we are sowing the seeds of another mutiny"<sup>30</sup> (Figures 1 and 2).

As should be clear from the variety of speech elucidated above, the counter-attacks on Lord Salisbury were never a question of simple inversion. For even if the Tory leader was the real "blackguard" in the affair, the full effect of that term depended on associations between blackness and class status. "Black-guard," in other words, gained its rhetorical force in the context just cited precisely because it was incompatible not only with Salisbury's whiteness but equally crucially, with his aristocratic standing as well. In addition to the class valences which helped to shape the public debate around Naoroji and Salisbury, the discourses which emerged depended on the triangular relationship between Englishness-as-whiteness, Indianness-as-brownness, and blackness-as-Africanness. Africa was, in other words, the unspoken Other not just of Englishness but of Indianness as well. Admittedly, this transnational grid, or rather the triple matrix upon which it was established, was constantly in danger of being obscured by the polarity of white/black that the debate itself reinscribed with every newspaper column. And yet the triangularity of black-white-brown could not, finally, be suppressed. Take for instance the following excerpt from a *Manchester Guardian* article:

Of course a Parsee is not a 'black man' at all, but a man of Aryan race and light olive complexion, often no darker than Lord Salisbury himself. A little inquiry into the rudiments of Indian history would show Lord Salisbury that the Aryan races who entered India from the north prided themselves on their fair complexions, and praised their gods for subjecting the black skin to the Aryan man. That, however, is not the main point. Even if our Indian fellow-subjects were all full negroes, it should be the first care of a British statesman to avoid any invidious insistence on differences in race and colour. The raw subaltern who goes out to India and calls every native a 'nigger' is a mischievous idiot, but then he knows no better. The Prime Minister should know better, and Englishmen cannot impress the lesson on him more effectually than by finding seats in Parliament for one or two of the 'black men' in the next election.<sup>31</sup>

References to India's Aryan past were not uncommon, and could be used as a cautionary tale about the folly of presuming western culture to be the apex of civilization.<sup>32</sup> But as Thomas Trautmann has shown, it was the theory of Aryans' racial superiority, by virtue of their putatively lighter skin color, which elevated nineteenth-century Indians to a special status and required their participation in a colonialized racial hierarchy that placed them above "the negro."<sup>33</sup> At some moments it must have been difficult for Victorian readers to tell who *did* count as "black" (or alternately, as "full negroes"), since the press spilled so much ink explaining who could not reasonably fall under that rubric. Indians certainly did not, in the view of many of the newspaper men writing about the "black man" incident. As the author quoted above remarked, "Moore's 'Lalla Rhook' [an 18th century verse-poem about India] is written about these 'black' people. They are no more black than Persians or Egyptians." He ended



## INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS CARTOONS FROM THE "HINDI PUNCH."



**"SAVE US FROM THIS POLLUTION!"**

[ " In a speech which he delivered at Edinburgh, Lord Salisbury referred to the candidature of Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji for Central Finsbury, and spoke of Mr. Dadabhai as a black man, expressing his doubts whether things had yet got to the point when English electors had sufficiently overcome their prejudices to return a black man to Parliament."—*Telegram* ]

[*Hindi Punch, Dec., 1888.*]

FIGURE 1. *Hindi Punch*, December 1888 (from the collection of the British Library).

by concluding that "it is doubtful whether [Indians] are darker than the inhabitants of Palestine. Professor Max Müller maintains that they are descended from a branch of the great Aryan race to which we ourselves belong."<sup>34</sup>

In addition to being the heyday of both the Aryan race theory *and* the "scramble for Africa," this was also the period when ideas about the whiteness and blackness of ancient civilizations like Greece and Egypt were being consoli-



"WHO IS THE BLACKEST?"

A MOMENTOUS QUESTION ANSWERED BY THE GREAT MASTER PAINTER HERBERT GLADSTONE.

[ In the meantime, Mr. Herbert Gladstone is to be thanked for an entirely new light upon the question. "I knew Mr. Naoroji very well," he says, "and I know Lord Salisbury by sight, and I am bound to say that of the two Lord Salisbury is the blackest." Perhaps this revelation may lead the Prime Minister to investigate the colour of the arse of race.—The Star.]

[ *Hindi Punch*, Jan., 1889. ]

FIGURE 2. *Hindi Punch*, January 1889 (from the collection of the British Library).

dated into historical “fact” in both Britain and Germany.<sup>35</sup> Geopolitical events and the ideological projects which both produced and reflected British claims upon “black” bodies and all manner of non-white native peoples are clearly crucial, in other words, for understanding the larger historical context in which the “Blackman” controversy was mobilized for public consumption. The relationship in the debate between gradations of skin color on the one hand, and geographic location and/or culture on the other, may have been imprecise, but it was nonetheless revealing—both about what kinds of scientific and ethnographic knowledge circulated in popular culture during the late-Victorian era and about what impact that knowledge might have on apprehensions of domestic politics and political culture. The 1880s in particular witnessed an explosion of colonial exploration literature, a genre made popular by penny dreadfuls and the variety of metropolitan newspapers, journals and periodicals which were emerging as shapers of public opinion during this decade. In addition to the images of “savage” and “heathen” blacks which accounts of Livingstone’s mission to Africa helped to circulate throughout Britain, minstrelsy was still popular in this period—so much so that a commentator in 1885 believed that most English people formed their views about “Negroes” from stage representations and other caricatures.<sup>36</sup> 1885 also saw the publication of John Beddoe’s *The Races of Britain*. It was subtitled “A Contribution to the Anthropology of Western Europe,” and it devoted considerable space to the variations of hair color, head shape and physiognomy of Britons because, as Beddoe argued, “the ever-increasing rapidity of local migrations and intermixtures, due to the extension of railways and the altered conditions of society, will in the next generation almost inextricably confuse the limits and proportions of the British races.”<sup>37</sup> Given the attachment of the famous orientalist Friederich Max Müller and his popularizers to the historical and linguistic connections between Britons and Aryan Indians—not to mention the persistent associations of “blacks” with Africa, uncleanness, baseness, unregulated sexuality and cultural backwardness—it cannot be surprising that defenders of Naoroji were invested in maintaining the distinction between the “Indian” and the “negro.”<sup>38</sup> Two degrees of separation was a distance entirely too close for comfort. Indeed, policing the boundaries between brown and black was a critical rhetorical maneuver for those insistent upon refusing the designation “black man” for Naoroji. The term was repeatedly rejected not just as uncivil but as wholly inaccurate because “in the ordinary and colloquial sense of the word [sic] ‘black man,’ especially in a contemptuous connection, is synonymous with ‘negro,’ and that hardly improves the matter.”<sup>39</sup> That blackness and “negroes” were the irreducible signifiers of Africa, and by extension therefore *not* of India, there seemed to be little doubt. The author of a letter to the editor put it quite plainly: “I somewhat agree with the ministerial Marquis in his antipathy to niggers, but I am bound to confess that I have never regarded our Indian subjects in an African light. Mr. Naoroji is no more a nigger than any of the Cecil family and, as far as talent is

concerned, he unquestionably can give good points to the younger generation."<sup>40</sup> But it was the *Hawk* which framed the necessity of disaggregating Indians from "black men" most explicitly, when its correspondent wrote that "all the things [Lord Salisbury] should have called him—Baboo, Asiatic—would have been less offensive than 'black,'" which is "an adjective . . . to be avoided, at all costs and hazards, by those orators of talent, whose power over the idioms of their native tongue enables them to imagine and coin equivalent phrases."<sup>41</sup>

The terms "baboo" and "Asiatic" were laden with their own derisive, orientalist connotations even while, much as blacks themselves used "nigger," these labels could be used by Indians—and were, in the nineteenth century—in the service of political and cultural critique.<sup>42</sup> What is significant here is the concern for the crudeness of the term "black" which the *Hawk* articulated, and the paper's attempt to protect Naoroji and Indians in general from it—a concern that was typical of the rhetorical mode of chivalry which characterized the debate over Salisbury's "indiscretion." As the *Daily News* put it, "it is our interest and our duty to cultivate the best and most honourable relationship with the people of India—not to snub their eminent men from the public platform." Most importantly,

Loyal and educated Indians must not be exposed to unseemly and unwise jeers of the 'black man' type. Unity and loyalty of feeling between England and her vast Indian dependencies is a necessity of the present time; but undignified epithets and contemptuous taunts will not strengthen that spirit of unity . . . the best way to answer my Lord Salisbury . . . would be to elect Mr. Naoroji to the first vacant seat—and have a 'black man' in the House of Commons.<sup>43</sup>

Remarks like these enable us to see with particular vividness what was at stake here—and to appreciate the ways in which the discourses of chivalry and protection, with their "feminine" connotations, revealed the inseparability of racial identities from gendered ones in the "Blackman" debate. For not only was it "unseemly" to expose educated Indians to the term; Lord Salisbury's comments were considered "indiscreet," "indecent," "caddish" and—repeatedly—"wanton." Why should the vocabulary of sexual morality, and more particularly, of heterosexual misconduct, have entered into this discussion? The answer lies partly in traditions of colonial discourse, which effeminized Bengali males especially, but also all communities of Indian men who were not from among the "martial" races, Parsis included.<sup>44</sup> If Indian men could be said to occupy the same place as (middle-class) English women in the patriarchal/colonial imagination, then their protection from "unseemly" sneers and jibes would represent the fulfillment of English manhood, even as it showed up the limits and failures of a certain kind of gentlemanliness (Salisbury's aristocratic background) in the process. That this exposure was carried out by a largely urban press corps, fresh from the Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon scandal and well-versed, presumably, in the conventions of journalistic chivalry, suggests a kind of extraparliamentary attempt to reorient the codes of English masculinity along

more democratic, though still thoroughly heterosexist, lines. The body of the African slave was arguably central to the model of colonial English masculinity articulated, however briefly, during the extended debate about Lord Salisbury's remarks. For in contrast to the tremulous, base and degraded body of the "black" which haunted even the briefest of allusions to slavery, Naoroji was continually constructed as "cultured," "highly intelligent" and "well-educated," "distinguished," "refined," "courteous" and "an eminent Indian scholar."<sup>45</sup> His fitness for representing "India" did not go unquestioned, but objections had more to do with the impossibility of any one man being able to speak for the various ethnic and religious communities on the subcontinent, rather than with any defect or disqualification on his part.<sup>46</sup>

We might push the analysis further and say that the characteristics invented to describe and in most cases to defend Naoroji made him appear self-possessed rather than unfree, in contrast again to the specter of the African black and more particularly, the slave. And while the adjectives supplied by the press to characterize Naoroji could certainly be applied to a Victorian Englishman, with the possible exception of "scholar" they resonate more with the image of the bourgeois English woman than with that of a robust, muscular figure like John Bull—or, for that matter, than with the body-at-work of the slave, whose connections to the artisan set him decidedly against the scholarly Naoroji. As with the mockery of Salisbury, class played a constitutive role. For it was Naoroji's education and refinement which provided him with upper-class credentials and guaranteed that he could not be mistaken for a slave; if anything, he was a distinguished "servant" of empire, to use Naoroji's own phrase, in his capacity as one-time leader of the Indian National Congress and self-professed imperial loyalist. Nor can the "gentle" quality of Naoroji's manliness be gainsaid: if he was "indistinguishable from an English gentleman," he was also "more of a gentleman than Lord Salisbury."<sup>47</sup> He was, in the end, not-black (but brown or olive or "pale" or, simply, "colorless") precisely because of these distinguishing features. It could even be argued that as long as Naoroji was neither fully black nor fully white, determining his color with certainty was unimportant—a possibility which suggests the extent to which blackness was the determinate against which all aesthetic value was measured, and from which, in turn, all valuable possessions had to be shielded. The real scandal, the real injustice, was, therefore, that Naoroji should be mistaken for a "black man," a mistake which did not simply offend but violated the carefully managed relationships between whiteness/manliness, blackness/savagery and Indianness/culture upon which the late-Victorian imperial imagination depended, and which a variety of contemporaries—Indians included—were evidently prepared to defend. Such was the equilibrium which Salisbury threatened to upset; such were the cultural and political stakes which prompted "the manhood of England" to launch a "chivalrous attack" on Salisbury and to "condemn . . . unequivocally the gibes and flouts and sneers of the Prime Minister."<sup>48</sup>



Clearly the political and cultural significance of the speech act cannot, and should not, be underestimated, especially since the pathos of the whole Salisbury debacle rested on the presumption that the Prime Minister had merely mis-spoken—a kind of informal consensus that the unfortunate phrase “black man” was nothing more or less than a “slip of the tongue.” Some called it “clumsy;” others, “insulting” or “scandalous;” still others “pitiful,” “uncourteous,” “coarse” and even “brutal.”<sup>49</sup> The sustained play on “slip of the tongue” is quite remarkable, particularly since it appears across a wide range of newspapers and other public forums. “Lord Salisbury’s bitter tongue may cost us dear in India,” lamented the *Star*, while the *Dundee Advertiser* called the “black man” comment “a pretty precept to fall from the lips of the leader of a party which makes the integrity of the Empire its peculiar care.”<sup>50</sup> The *Pall Mall Gazette* reveled in the damage done: “few more unfortunate utterances have ever fallen from the lips of a Prime Minister.”<sup>51</sup> “If ‘Pears’ soap’ is really what it professes to be, [that is] ‘makes foul look fair,’” wrote a correspondent to the same, “a copious lather of it may be recommended to the noble lord, to be applied to his eyes and tongue six times a day.”<sup>52</sup> Whether contributors were for or against the Prime Minister, tongues, mouths and lips predominated in their remarks. The *Dundee Advertiser*, for example, called for the Tories to “show the value they put on the Empire which is so much in their mouths by offering Mr. Naoroji one of their safe seats, . . . [so that they may] thus atone for Lord Salisbury’s boorishness.”<sup>53</sup> Judgments about the tastefulness of Salisbury’s remarks conjured the mouth metonymically, if not literally, as when the *Hereford Times* complained that Salisbury’s joke was “a piece of execrable bad taste”—an image even a public apology from the Prime Minister could not banish from the debate.<sup>54</sup>

And apologize—or at the very least, explain—he did, at Scarborough on December 20, 1888. To those who claimed that the term “black man” was derogatory he had this to say:

Such a doctrine seems to me to be a scathing insult to a very large portion of the human race, a portion which contains some of the finest members of the race. The people who have been fighting at Suakin . . . are amongst the finest tribes of the world, and many of them are as black as my hat. But that is a small matter. What I deny is that I said anything about the people of India. I indulged in no contemptuous denunciation of them and in no denunciation of any kind. I did not mention them. . . . All I did was point out that you could not understand the meaning of the Holborn election of 1886 unless you remembered that the Liberal candidate was not only of a distant race—widely separated from us—but that it was marked by his complexion that it was so, so that the whole constituency knew it, and that the existing state of English opinion was a very strong factor in the decision which they gave. Whether it ought to have been a strong factor or not I did not at the time enter on. My own impression is that such candidatures are incongruous and unwise. The British House of Commons, with its traditions and understandings, having grown fitted to the people, and grown out of their daily life, is a machine too peculiar and too delicate to be managed by any but those who have been born within these isles.<sup>55</sup>

Salisbury's contention that when he used the term he intended to distinguish Indians from Africans—such as those “people who have been fighting at Suakin” who are “as black as my hat”—did little to exonerate him, but it does confirm the depth of the division between brown and black in the late-Victorian cultural imagination. It also suggests the kind of pressures which contemporary British military policy might exert on Salisbury's thinking, as well as the larger geopolitical context in which debates about the relative virtues of “brown” versus “black” might have resonated.<sup>56</sup> And finally, Salisbury's defense demonstrates that even when the distinction was maintained, the *sight* of racial difference was believed by some to take precedence over “customs, manners” and whatever other cultural practices might be held in common.<sup>57</sup> One had to be “fit to be seen” not only to be represented, in other words, but also to claim the fitness required to represent others.<sup>58</sup>

It must be noted here, if only briefly, that Lord Salisbury suffered during his entire career from embarrassing, and potentially politically costly “slips of the tongue.” Peter Marsh has called him a “powerful debater” whose style of oratory was “lean, with little literary or rhetorical embellishment . . . lightened by cynical wit.” Though his speeches were largely extemporaneous he was, in Marsh's opinion, one of the “best half a dozen speakers of the day.” Significantly, however, “his wit was the one talent he feared.”<sup>59</sup> It was a fear which may have been well-founded. His comment in 1886 that the Irish were as incapable of governing themselves as Hottentots may have been in line with a visual culture where caricatures of Irish nationalists with “negroid” features were a staple of politics, yet it could not fail to aggravate what was already a tense political mood—at a time when Home Rule for Ireland divided opinion in the country and literally rent the Liberal party.<sup>60</sup> John Morley, Salisbury's contemporary and William Gladstone's biographer, was quoted as saying that Salisbury hardly made a speech which did not contain “at least one blazing indiscretion.”<sup>61</sup> Constraints of space do not allow for an extensive discussion of the Prime Minister's infamous tendency for gaffes, which included derisive comments about Jews and Scots as well as the Irish.<sup>62</sup> Suffice it to say that Salisbury (who called himself “an illiberal Tory”) had little consideration for the niceties of civil discourse—or, for that matter, for the subject peoples of the empire either.<sup>63</sup> To be sure, his imperial attitudes were scarcely different from those of many of his contemporaries; as Marc Gilbert observes, Salisbury's Indian policy, “like his overall imperial policy, was unashamedly expressed in racial terms.”<sup>64</sup> He was, in W. T. Stead's assessment, “John Bull through and through.”<sup>65</sup>

Salisbury had, moreover, nothing but contempt for democracy, and never more so than when it was embraced by his Tory leader, Disraeli, whose pandering to the masses he deplored, and whose embrace of the necessity of democratic government he could only regard with terror—even as, to quote Peter Marsh, he at times “danced along the banks of the mainstream of British poli-



tics toward democracy" himself.<sup>66</sup> The people, in his view, were "a myth"—in part because they lacked the capacity to speak, either properly or in ways that merited their participation in government and politics.

Except on rare emergencies, when they are excited by some tempest of passion . . . the 'people' do not speak at all. You have put an utterance into their mouths by certain conventional arrangements, under which assumptions are made which, though convenient, are purely fictitious: as for instance . . . that a man's mind is a perfect reflex of the minds of fifty-thousand of his fellow-citizens on all subjects because he was chosen, as the best of two or three candidates, in respect to a particular set of subjects . . . by a bare majority of those who took the trouble to vote on a particular day.<sup>67</sup>

That Salisbury should have referred to democracy as a kind of "speech" put into the people's "mouths" through the ballot box is by no means exceptional: it was one of the chief metaphors for representative government throughout the mid-to late-Victorian period. Nonetheless, the question of speech and its symbolic meanings continued to shape the discussion which followed Salisbury's "apology" and, not incidentally, to keep the image of the mouths and lips alive. "He says the word 'black' does not necessarily involve contempt," reported the *Weekly Despatch*. "Perhaps, but in his mouth it did."<sup>68</sup> The *Leader* was even more explicit: if there were a seat available, Naoroji would get it—and "that would be a well-deserved slap in the face from the black man to the still blacker one—in heart and mouth—who traduced him."<sup>69</sup> Dr. Spence Watson echoed this hope, expressing his conviction that "the day would come when [Naoroji] would be the mouthpiece of his people in the British House of Commons."<sup>70</sup> Indeed, it would seem that the principal effect of Lord Salisbury's comments was to secure a place in the public imagination for Naoroji, that "modest and retiring Parse whose name has been on every one's lips for weeks past."<sup>71</sup>

The hazards of orality in general, and of particular speech as well, quickly emerged as a dominant theme in the nationwide debate about the Prime Minister and the Indian Congressman. For when tongues were untied, as in Salisbury's case, the words he uttered might end up being "quoted in every paper and pass[ed] from mouth to mouth in every bazaar in India"—a kind of verbal intercourse guaranteed in part by the metropolitan press itself, which undoubtedly helped to spread the word from London to Calcutta, Delhi and beyond.<sup>72</sup> The possibility of miscegenation, not to mention homosexual contact across the color line, which such language had the power to conjure adds another dimension to the sexual politics of the Salisbury episode, by demonstrating—to the Victorian middle-class public and to us—just how unstable the heterosexist economy of colonial masculinity was, and how crucial to imperial politics its preservation might be. The *Worcestershire Echo* was oblique but on the mark in this regard: "Lord Salisbury possesses, as everyone knows, a tongue which is subject to a most deplorable knack of running away with its owner."<sup>73</sup> Of significance here is the fact that capacity for careful, controlled speech—versus the excited, excitable kind—was recognized as a mark of civilization, culture

and of course, of Englishness itself in Victorian Britain. Salisbury had become a slave to his own tongue, and for many, he had thereby forfeited his claim to represent the English people. The equivalence of controlled speech with Englishness made itself felt through the insinuation that by letting his tongue run away with him the Prime Minister had spoken in a fashion “unworthy of an *English* gentleman.”<sup>74</sup> The equation of good speech with perfect English was also sometimes made by reference to that much-revered master of English linguistic perfection, William Shakespeare. Like the images of tongues and lips and mouths, Othello and Hamlet dotted the discursive landscape of the Salisbury debate, appearing sometimes by name, sometimes by allusion. The most common occurrence was via a quotation from *Othello*, “Mislike me not for my complexion,” which Naoroji partisans jokingly suggested should be his retort to Salisbury’s “black man” comments.<sup>75</sup> The *Surrey Advocate*, however, unleashed Shakespeare against Naoroji’s supporters, borrowing from *Hamlet* to accuse his friends in the press of “tearing a passion to tatters” on his behalf.<sup>76</sup> So did another of Naoroji’s opponents, Sir Lepel Griffin, when he wrote to the *Times* that Naoroji should have known that his hosts at a National Liberal Club dinner “cared as little for him as did Hamlet’s player for Hecuba.”<sup>77</sup>

In the end, Griffin asked what was essentially Salisbury’s question, but in a different way: “what qualifications beyond a gift of fluency common to all Orientals, has Mr. Dadhabai Naoroji which should commend him to an English constituency?” His reference to the “fluency of Orientals” was an example of the contempt with which many members of the Indian National Congress were viewed in the English press. Especially in the wake of a visit to London by INC delegates in 1885, the press had characterized the group as “gushing, vamping” politicians, whose pretensions to the platform were poor imitations of the Englishman’s true oratorical skills.<sup>78</sup> The Congress was referred to as “the Indian talking shop,” and delegates as “persons of considerable imitative powers”—as well as in less flattering terms.<sup>79</sup> As the *Globe* wrote of the first INC session, it was “a mere congress of mosquitoes . . . the delegates buzzed and created a certain degree of momentary irritation . . . but that sums up the entire result of their labors.”<sup>80</sup> These idioms were not new to the 1880s.<sup>81</sup> Since Macaulay and perhaps before, Indian men had been seen not as incapable of speech, like Africans or slaves, but as capable only of inexactitudes, of speech that mimicked and approximated English but never actually succeeding in *being* English.<sup>82</sup> Nor was this limited to the empire “over there.” As Patrick Joyce has shown, school inspectors gathering information for the 1861 parliamentary reports on popular education displayed considerable contempt for local dialects. Well into the later part of the century (and beyond), language “stood for decidedly different ideas of what ‘culture’ was.”<sup>83</sup> At the same time, the conviction that Indians only used “jargon,” that they “frothed” and “bubbled” at the mouth, speaking about matters of which they had no real knowledge, produced images of failed speech with a particular colonial inflection that continued to animate

public discussions of Indian nationalism in the 1880s and 1890s, spurred on in part by the "black man" controversy, but by all accounts also antecedent to it.<sup>84</sup> The failure to be anything except an imitation of the Englishman was part of what secured Indians' "Indianness," as well as their status as subjects and not citizens. What could Naoroji possibly have *said*, one wonders, to contest these challenges to his legitimacy, when such challenges revolved around the very mastery of language which Indian men were supposed to fall short of—especially since even his friends could not deny "that electors could not feel enthusiastic about a candidate whose name they were unable to pronounce"?<sup>85</sup>

Naoroji's biographer reports that electors had no trouble remembering how to pronounce his name after the 1892 election, when he succeeded to office by a margin of merely five votes: they promptly, and memorably, dubbed him "Mr. Narrow-Majoritee."<sup>86</sup> Naoroji's public engagements with the effects of his notoriety in Britain are equally intriguing. His response to the "Blackman" debate was careful and cautious, befitting the reputation for statesmanship which had helped to shape his image as a gentleman in the Victorian press. At the first of several banquets held in his honor following the Salisbury gaffe, Naoroji was reported as saying little or nothing after being toasted by the assembled group. He "gave us no figures and no rhetoric, and was as cool as the water in his wine glass"—a subtle reference to his sobriety, both literal and figurative, on such a potentially volatile occasion.<sup>87</sup> But Naoroji did not hold his tongue for long. He was back on the stump immediately, hammering away at many of the same arguments he had been propounding, in print and in private, in India and in Britain, for nearly three decades—about the necessity of Indian self-government, the injustice of the economic drain through which Britain exploited the resources of India, the negative impact of an unreformed Civil Service, the promise the INC offered in its role as "a national body" for India. References to the fact that Indians wished to be viewed as citizens and "not as slaves" peppered his speeches as he canvassed for Central Finsbury in the late 1880s and early 1890s. It is tempting to read these instances as evidence that Naoroji was deliberately refusing the identification with the image of the black man that had been pressed upon him. But the invocation of slavery-versus-citizenship was a rhetorical practice which had a long history in British political culture, dating from at least the seventeenth century, and it cannot therefore be exclusively attributed to the association with blackness which Salisbury had tried to attach to him. Nor was the binary opposition of slave/citizen new to Naoroji's speech in the 1880s: as early as 1866 he had mobilized similar terms to argue for Indian self-government. These speeches were given publicly, in London, in the context of the Second Reform Act and in the wake of the controversy over Morant Bay—historical circumstances which, as Catherine Hall has persuasively shown, brought the subject of black men and "niggers" before the Victorian public in ways that made the debate about legislative reform as much a matter of imperial as of domestic politics.<sup>88</sup> The rhetoric of slavery was,

in other words, a discursive convention so well-established in British political culture that it functioned simply as one of a number of well-chosen idioms, which could be counted upon to resonate with an English public whose Liberal sympathizers, at any rate, were possessed of a strong sense of English history and a familiarity with its tropes and signifiers.<sup>89</sup> In this respect, Naoroji may be said to have neutralized the negative effects of being associated with blackness by proving that he could walk the walk, talk the talk, and speak the speech as it had been pronounced for centuries—“trippingly on the tongue,” as it were. As Henry Louis Gates has shown, blacks’ supposed incapacity for correct speech and above all, for articulate “English,” was believed by many Britons and North Americans to disqualify Africans and others deemed “negroes” not just from access to culture and civilization, but from humanity as well.<sup>90</sup> Given the severity of this test of personhood, and the conditions it required with respect to literacy and the speech act itself, Naoroji’s embrace of the electoral platform, his public orations and his innumerable performances on the hustings may well have been interpreted by the late-Victorian reading and listening public as evidence of his difference from a black man, if not of Indians’ essential differences from Africans. Thus, by demonstrating his capacity for speech in the longstanding British oratorical tradition, Naoroji distanced himself, implicitly at least, from whatever notions of primitiveness Salisbury’s epithet may have succeeded in pinning on him. He made it clear, in other words, that *he* could tell “black from brown,” and this quite literally, since it was in the “telling,”—i.e., in the sophistication of the speech itself—that such differences would be audible, if not visible as well.

In fact, at the variety of dinners and gatherings at which he appeared in the months and years after the “black man” debate had ceased to be front page news, Naoroji rarely spoke directly to or about Salisbury’s “slip of the tongue.” This was in part because the chairmen who introduced him inevitably made a reference to Salisbury’s comments, as at Glasgow meeting in February of 1889 when Sir William Wedderburn prefaced his remarks by saying that “some men sneered at others because of the colour of their skin. As well might they sneer at men because of the colour of their hair.” Applause followed.<sup>91</sup> Whether he wished it to or not, the specter of the “black man” followed him to one of the high points of his public career: when he won Central Finsbury in 1892, Naoroji was greeted by crowds of supporters who raised three cheers to “Lord Salisbury’s Black Man.” The phrase itself was sometimes printed as “Blackman,” suggesting that, attempts to distinguish him notwithstanding, he may have become synonymous in public discourse, if not also in the public mind, with blackness *tout court*. As accounts of his appearances around the country in the late 1880s make clear, no one actually needed to refer to the incident in order to make it the subject of Naoroji’s speeches or public appearances. In this sense the moniker was not unspeakable, exactly; rather, Naoroji had become so identified with it that it was scarcely necessary to name “the black man” for “him”

to be present.<sup>92</sup> If a retort were needed, Naoroji's return to Parliament in 1892 was, arguably, the ultimate comeback—articulated, no less, through the voice of the people. On those rare occasions when Naoroji did address Salisbury's remark, however, he did so by vowing not to "enter into a discussion of the incident"—a maneuver which participated in the unspeakability of the whole affair, while allowing him to claim the moral and, one must add, the rhetorical high ground as well. In a speech at Liverpool he went so far as to say that the comment "meant something deeper than words seemed to indicate," but he left that meaning unspoken, and focused instead on the promise for reform and justice held out by the Indian National Congress. "For what [is] Congress?" he asked the audience. It was "men of different castes, creeds and races, speaking different languages, from north, south, east and west, collecting together, *speaking one language*, and aspiring to [the] political condition" of equality.<sup>93</sup> That "one language" might be Indian nationalism, but it was also equally the *English* language. And if Naoroji was loathe to articulate the obvious, his supporters were not as reticent. In the preface to Naoroji's speech at Glasgow, Wedderburn reminded the audience that "the millions of India had long been dumb. We had now for a generation given the people of India education, and . . . they had now found a voice. Not only had they found a voice, but they were now speaking in very articulate tones." Though in this context Wedderburn was referring to the Indian National Congress, Naoroji's capacity to speak for the "dumb" Indian millions was more than implied. It was, thanks in part to Lord Salisbury's excitable speech, the very presumption upon which Naoroji's claims about participation in imperial democracy were based.

Salisbury may have been a racist, but this did not make him exceptional, and it certainly cannot account for the explosion of public debate following his remarks about Naoroji. More significantly, Salisbury flaunted contemporary usages: he got the syntax of racial discourse wrong—and when he did so he brought down the fury of the political press on his head because his imprecisions threatened the certainties of Victorian racial discourse.<sup>94</sup> The "blackman" debate can thus be read as an exercise in the restoration of public order, through speech that was equally if differently racist, in part because it aimed to stabilize meanings through a recourse to persistently racialist categories. If all speech entails risk, then Lord Salisbury's "Black man" remark surely illustrates that not all speakers entertain the same risks, whether of degree or of kind. It was arguably more dangerous for an Indian seeking inclusion in the imperial body politic to be identified with the body of the black man than it was for a Prime Minister to be identified as a racist—though the fact that Naoroji was in a position to make even ambiguous meaning out of that racism surely signifies his relatively privileged position as well.<sup>95</sup> And yet these conclusions beg several larger questions, the first involving the nature of Victorian democracy in an imperial culture. There is little doubt that despite the system of two-party politics which the Liberals and the Tories worked to create and manage—and

also no doubt because of it—there were those in the press and in the extra-parliamentary public sphere more generally who were determined to interrogate the leadership precisely because such a dialectic was considered proper to the democratic process. That this was a conviction with roots in plebeian traditions long preceding the rise of the two-party system has also been well documented.<sup>96</sup> What remains virtually unexplored in the historiography of Victorian politics is how and under what circumstances that democratic process was framed by imperial questions. The debate about Lord Salisbury's remarks, together with national, public events like the discussions around the Eyre controversy and the Second Reform Act (as detailed by Catherine Hall), require us to "rethink" Victorian domestic political history as a scene routinely intruded upon, if not always fully constituted, by the fact of empire.<sup>97</sup> The attention paid by the metropolitan press to the "slight" against Naoroji may not have been organized enough or sustained enough to be counted as an expression of political will, but it *was* nonetheless an exercise in the display of colonial knowledge, which aimed to wield cultural authority in order to shape political outcomes. Here, cultural authority was clearly not limited to local, regional or national politics, but encompassed knowledge about the larger imperial context, its history and its meanings for participation, no less than its ramifications for citizenship and subjecthood. The public debate about Naoroji stands as a challenge to the persistently insular historiography of Victorian high politics, which has largely stood aside from recent work on empire, except occasionally to critique it either for not being "historical" enough or for privileging the category of culture over the domain of the political. Salisbury's gaffe and its many reverberations signal how imperial social formation, to use Mrinalini Sinha's phrase, was one of the contexts for whatever collective identities existed in Victorian society as well as for whatever consensus there may have been about "civic virtue" in the later nineteenth century—a context so naturalized that it still remains difficult to see it, let alone to read it, as a complex (and contested) imperial terrain at the "high" political level.<sup>98</sup> If the risks inherent to democracy mean that "one cannot know the meaning the other will assign to one's utterance, what conflict of interpretation may well arise, and how best to adjudicate that difference," then the "black man" case also demonstrates that the effort to "come to terms," as Judith Butler puts it, "is not one that can be resolved in anticipation but only through a concrete struggle of translation, one whose success has no guarantees."<sup>99</sup> In the transnational context produced by British imperialism, where those terms involved not just Englishness but speech acts in the English language itself, what ensued cannot be viewed simply as an incidental debate or an innocent dialogue, but must be understood as Victorians represented it—that is, as an essentially conflictual social and cultural dynamic.<sup>100</sup>

As important as Naoroji's story is to the project of rethinking the Whig national frame of British political history, however, to leave it there would be to reproduce the circularity of imperial logic and obscure the multiplicity of ter-

rains upon which racial and cultural identities were being articulated in this period. In the first instance, we cannot ignore the role that organized Indian nationalism played both in promoting Naoroji as a candidate for parliament and in organizing the "black man" debate for public consumption, both in Britain and in India. In 1889, G. P. Varma Brothers Press of Lucknow assembled excerpts from British metropolitan newspapers that had covered the Salisbury/Naoroji debate. Lucknow was a site of tremendous newspaper activity in the later nineteenth century; Ganga Prasad Varma, of the Varma press, published two prominent papers in the city and as Sanjay Joshi notes, "was the real organizing force behind Congress activities in Oudh in the early days of the party"—so much so that he has come to be known as "the maker of modern Lucknow."<sup>101</sup> The anonymous author of the preface to *Lord Salisbury's Blackman* made it clear that one reason for re-printing the newspaper selections and other ephemera (including verse and some images) was to prove that the Prime Minister's insult notwithstanding, the British public had demonstrated that it did not view Indians as inferior peoples, "whom, like the proverbial dog, any stick is good enough to beat with"—a concern which suggests how intimately related the protocols of sociability and the promise of political equality might be.<sup>102</sup> He also noted with satisfaction that as a result of the Salisbury affair, "there is, we believe, hardly a borough in England where 'The Blackman' is not known, and hardly a town of political importance where he is not only known but loved and respected."<sup>103</sup> So, while British newspapers had displayed knowledge of and cultural authority over racial hierarchies and imperial taxonomies, nationalist leaders in India broadcast not just their familiarity with the intricacies of the British electoral system (as evidenced by pride that Naoroji was known in towns of "political importance") but their desire to influence its political outcomes as well. The fact that with a few exceptions (like the *St. James Gazette*) the compilers chose quotes from liberal, radical and/or Gladstonian newspapers (like *Reynolds* and the *Newcastle Daily Chronicle*), signals their canniness about the ins and outs of Victorian political culture and their willingness to use that inside knowledge for their own political purposes—especially since, as they must have known, the liberal press was virtually decimated in the wake of 1886.<sup>104</sup> In fact, the practice of extracting from metropolitan weeklies and dailies was standard in the Victorian period, so that G. P. Varma Brothers was simply using familiar customs for its own nationalist ends.<sup>105</sup> The impact of this selectivity on circulation of the final product in India and in Britain cannot be underestimated: indeed, the preface to *Lord Salisbury's Blackman* borrows liberally from the idioms used in the British press to characterize the insult, calling Salisbury's remarks "wanton," and invoking the same critiques of Salisbury's alleged gentlemanliness as were common currency in the newspaper coverage. In this sense, Indian public opinion and its makers must be factored into whatever "dialogue" was going on between the British public and its political leaders in this instance, especially since *Lord Salisbury's*



*Blackman* was published after the Prime Minister's "explanation," but well before Naoroji's 1892 election contest.

This dialectical relationship—between British government and popular sentiment on the one hand, and Indian nationalism on the other—effectively removes "domestic" imperial democracy from the heart of the narrative, a central location which the urban and provincial press in Britain seemed invested in staking out, despite occasional references to and even sympathies for INC activities. Nor is the political struggle for Indian self-government and against colonial rule the only one which merits our attention where debates about race and Englishness are concerned. Given the role of Home Rule in the fate of the Liberal party, not to mention Indian nationalists' attachments to and coalitions with Irish radicals in and outside parliament, the landscape in which the Naoroji incident took shape was influenced by "imperial" social formations in quite complicated ways.<sup>106</sup> Add to this the fact that Irish nationalists were often caricatured as "Negroes," and the relationships between Naoroji, blackness and colonialism become yet more complex. The facts that Parsis were often compared to Jews, and that Lepel Griffin did not believe Naoroji had any more right to represent Englishmen than "a Polish Jew settled in Whitechapel," makes any simple or dichotomous reading of late-Victorian "racial politics" virtually impossible.<sup>107</sup> These convergences serve to remind us that discourses are products of concrete, material social conditions and struggles, even as they also shape the terms through which such conditions are experienced, articulated and circulated throughout culture.<sup>108</sup> "Black" men themselves were also implicated in contemporary contests over what color colonial subjects were and what color British citizens could or should be, in part because of changing social and political conditions across the colonial landscape. By the 1880s, for example, Africans were beginning to play a role in electoral contests in the Cape Colony, where their votes not only effected political outcomes, but also gave shape to discourses on race, which affected Indian populations in South Africa and, in turn, the direction of the INC and the African National Congress equally—as Gandhi's political trajectory eloquently testifies.<sup>109</sup> Elsewhere, as Belinda Edmondson and Faith Smith have both argued, elite West Indians of African descent were deeply invested in marking themselves off as legitimate, sovereign political subjects against conventions of African "savagery" and against stereotypes of Indians as represented in Caribbean discourse and culture in the later Victorian period. The parallels and overlaps between these debates and the issues of color and citizenship raised by the "black man" incident are quite remarkable. J. J. Thomas' *Fraudacity* (1889) was a searing indictment of J. A. Froude's *English in the West Indies* (1888), which actively engaged the terms of Englishness and blackness in an effort to prove the much-vexed connection between literary/linguistic mastery and the political equality which all black men claiming status in modernity were required to demonstrate.<sup>110</sup> The position of the Indian man was crucial to this claim, even while it was often white

metropolitan Britons who encouraged the contest between black and brown in the first place: as Froude put it in 1887, "the two races are more absolutely apart than the white and the black. The Asiatic insists the more on his superiority in the fear perhaps that if he did not the white might forget it."<sup>111</sup> Meanwhile, Smith argues, "pronouncements about 'Indians' were part of the discourses of 'race vindicators' like William Herbert, who took Charles Kingsley to task in the *Grenada Chronicle and Gazette* for suggesting that 'Hindoo peasants' could teach African "natives" about good husbandry and thrift."<sup>112</sup>

Like Naoroji, Herbert was at worst a collaborator in the ideological work of empire, at best an ambivalent and contradictory reader of imperial ideology and its twisted promises.<sup>113</sup> Taken together, the two men exemplify the predicament of imperial and colonial histories which fail to recognize what Madhavi Kale calls "the mutually constitutive and complicating stories of the British empire in India and the Caribbean, and of Britain."<sup>114</sup> The figure of "the black man" was by no means confined to or contained by the narrow parameters of British "domestic" imperial culture or democracy: it exceeded the boundaries of Home and Away, criss-crossing as it did to India and the Caribbean and back again in a circuitous and highly politicized trajectory. Such motility highlights what Kale again calls "the prolific instability of empire as a discursive resource," precisely because it illuminates how dangerous it is to privilege one contact zone over another, or to imagine that the temptation to do so is not part of the seductive legacy of imperialism itself.<sup>115</sup> If neither speech nor democracy are self-evident subjects whose historical meanings we can predict or stabilize, how could it be otherwise for the nation or the empire, which are even more at risk because of the very sovereignty which they—through their historians and other cultural representatives—have traditionally been at pains to claim?

#### NOTES

1. The title of this piece owes its origins to the late Marlon T. Riggs and his film *Tongues Untied* (1989).

2. R. P. Masani, *Dadhabai Naoroji: The Grand Old Man of India* (London: George Allen Unwin, 1939), 247.

3. Rozina Visram, *Ayahs, Lascars and Princes: Indians in Britain, 1700–1947* (London, Pluto, 1986), 78; see also S. R. Mehrotra, *The Emergence of the Indian National Congress* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1971), 405 and ff. Dyce Sombre (1808–1851) was a person of mixed Indian and European ancestry who, despite the fact this his election was "controverted" the next year, did sit and vote on several bills. I am indebted to Michael Fisher for this information. See his entry on Dyce Sombre in *The New Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

4. Though he ran for a London constituency and was its official representative, Naoroji was also, and consistently, viewed as "the representative for India" to the House of Commons.

5. See for example Jonathan Schnerer's *London 1900: The Imperial Metropolis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), which devotes an entire chapter to Naoroji but only briefly mentions the "Blackman" incident.

6. The *Finsbury and Holborn Guardian* remarked of Central Finsbury—"or, as it still prefers to be called, Clerkenwell." 23 May 1891, 5.

7. Masani, *Dadhabai Naoroji*, 263.

8. *Ibid.*, 263, 264.

9. As Lala Lajpat Rai put it in 1920, "The Indian nation, such as it is or such as we intend to build [it], neither is nor will be exclusively Hindu, Muslim, Sikh or Christian. *It will be each and all.* That is my goal of nationhood." Quoted in Gyanendra Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992), 213. The period during which Naoroji attempted to secure a seat in parliament overlapped with the general historical moment during which "the Muslim" was being constructed as a different kind of dark, abiding, signing presence by Hindus and British reformers alike. See Mushirul Hasan, "The Myth of Unity: Colonial and National Narratives," in David Ludden, ed., *Contesting the Nation: Religion, Community, and the Politics of Democracy in India* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), 185–210.

10. In fact, work for Congress and the work of electoral politics in Britain went hand in glove in Naoroji's mind; see Anil Seal, *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism: Competition and Collaboration in the Later Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 282–85; and Hira Lal Singh, *Problems and Policies of the British in India, 1885–1898* (New York: Asia Publishing House, 1963), 219.

11. Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 10, 93.

12. *Ibid.*, 89.

13. Charles Dickens' essay, "The Black Man," is instructive here: written in 1875, it routinely refers to the black man as coming from "Asia or Africa"—suggesting that the distinctions between Indians and Africans (or "West Indians") was either a product of the 1880s or, more likely, was continually in flux. The essay may have been written by Dickens or by one of his colleagues. See *Household Words* 13 [new series] (March 6, 1875), 489–93, and also George F. Rehin, "Blackface Street Minstrels in Victorian London and its Resorts: Popular Culture and its Racial Connotations as Revealed in Polite Opinion," *Journal of Popular Culture* 15 (1981): 19–38.

14. For discussions of the "new journalism" see Allen J. Lee, *The Origins of the Popular Press in England, 1855–1914* (London: Croom and Helm 1976), esp. 117–30, and Stephen Koss, *The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain: The Nineteenth Century*, Vol. 1 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981); and Judith R. Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

15. Lata Mani, *Contentious Traditions: The Debate on Sati in Colonial India* (Berkeley: University of California, 1998), 4.

16. Quoted in [Anon.], *Lord Salisbury's Blackman* (Lucknow: G. P. Varma and Brothers Press, 1889), 21.

17. *Ibid.*, 30.

18. *Ibid.*, 3.

19. *Ibid.*, 11 and 10.

20. *Ibid.*, 3.

21. *Ibid.*, 26.

22. *Ibid.*, 18–19.

23. *Ibid.*, 6–7.

24. *Ibid.*, 29–30.

25. *Ibid.*, 15.

26. *Ibid.*, 17.

27. *Ibid.*, 4.

28. *Ibid.*, 18.

29. *Ibid.*, 34.

30. *Ibid.*, 16.

31. *Ibid.*, 16.

32. *Ibid.*, 12.

33. Thomas Trautmann, *Aryans and British India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); see also J. R. Seeley, *The Expansion of England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 190.

34. *Lord Salisbury's Blackman*, 17.

35. Martin Bernal, *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1987).

36. Quoted in Douglas Lorimer, "Bibles, Banjos and Bones: Images of the Negro in the Popular Literature of Victorian Culture," in Barry M. Gough, ed., *In Search of the Visible Past: History Lectures at Wilfred Laurier University* (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 1975), 44. See also James Walvin, *The Black Presence: A Documentary History of the Negro in England, 1555–1860* (New York: Schocken Books, 1972).

37. John Beddoe, *The Races of Britain: A Contribution to the Anthropology of Western Europe* (Bristol: J. W. Arrowsmith, 1885), iv; see also idem, "On the Testimony of Local Phenomena in the West of England to the Permanence of Anthropological Types," *Memoirs Read Before the Anthropological Society of London 2* (1865–1867): 37–45, and L. Owen Pike, "On the Psychological Characteristics of the English People," *Memoirs Read Before the Anthropological Society of London 2* (1865–1867): 153–88. For a brief discussion of Beddoe see Robert Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture, and Race* (London: Routledge, 1995), 72, 76, 81.

38. Trautmann, *Aryans and British India*.

39. *Lord Salisbury's Blackman*, 2.

40. *Ibid.*, 24–25.

41. *Ibid.*, 44.

42. See for example Mokshodayani Mukhopadhyay (sister of W. C. Bonnerjee), from "Bangalir Babu" (The Bengali Babu), in Susie Tharu and K. Lalita, *Women Writing in India*, Vol. 1 (New York: The Feminist Press, 1991), 220–21.

43. *Lord Salisbury's Blackman*, 14. See also *English Opinion on India*, 3 (October 1888), 441–42.

44. See Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: The 'Manly Englishman' and the 'Ef-feminate Bengali' in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995).

45. *Lord Salisbury's Blackman*, 1, 2, 3, 10, 26, 48.

46. *Ibid.*, 25.

47. *Ibid.*, 9 and 18.

48. *Ibid.*, 26.

49. *Ibid.*, 1, 2, 5, 10, 28.

50. *Ibid.*, 11 and 40.

51. *Ibid.*, 4.

52. *Ibid.*, 10–11.

53. *Ibid.*, 22.

54. *Ibid.*, 24.

55. *Ibid.*, 32–33. Actually, what was on Salisbury's mind in the fall of 1888 was not Africa but India and, more specifically, proposals for the reform of the Indian councils. See Lady Gwendolyn Cecil, *Life of Robert Marquis of Salisbury*, Vol. 4 [1887–1892], (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1932), 193–202.

56. For Suakin see Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher with Alice Denny, *Africa and the Victorians: The Climax of Imperialism* (New York: Anchor Books, 1968), 133, 139, 140, 346, 357, and J. A. S. Grenville, *Lord Salisbury and Foreign Policy at the Close of the Nineteenth Century* (London: The Athlone Press, 1964), 117–18.

57. See Homi Bhabha, “The Other Question: Difference, Discrimination, and the Discourse of Colonialism,” in Houston A. Baker, Jr., Manthia Diawara and Ruth H. Lindborg, eds., *Black British Cultural Studies: A Reader* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 101; and George Birdwood on the photograph of Naoroji as evidence of the inaccuracy of Salisbury’s remarks, quoted in Christopher Pinney, *Camera Indica: The Social Life of Indian Photographs* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 97–98. As Frantz Fanon puts it, “If I am black, it is not the result of a curse, but it is because, having offered my skin, I have been able to absorb all the cosmic *effluvia*.” See *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York: Grove Press, 1967), 45 [emphasis his].

58. I draw here from Etienne Balibar, “Ambiguous Universality,” *differences* 7 (Spring 1995), 63.

59. Peter Marsh, *The Discipline of Popular Government: Lord Salisbury’s Domestic Statecraft, 1881–1902* (Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1978). For the tradition of flawed speech among aristocrats see Edward Bulwer Lytton, *England and the English* (1833; University of Chicago Press reprint, 1970).

60. Marsh, *The Discipline of Popular Government*, 145. This remark was much criticized in India; see Iqbal Singh, *The Indian National Congress: A Reconstruction, Vol. I, 1885–1918* (Riverdale, Maryland: The Riverdale Company, 1988), 35. See also L. P. Curtis, *Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian Caricature* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1971).

61. Both are quoted in G. N. Uzoigwe, *Britain and the Conquest of Africa: The Age of Salisbury* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1974), 8; see also Lady Gwendolyn Cecil, “Lord Salisbury in Private Life,” in Lord Blake and Hugh Cecil, eds., *Salisbury: The Man and his Policies* (London: Macmillan, 1987), 30–59.

62. See Uzoigwe, *Britain and the Conquest of Africa*, especially the preface and chapter 1; Viscountess Milner, *My Picture Gallery, 1886–1901* (London: John Murray, 1951), 78–83; Arthur D. Elliot, *The Life of Lord George Joachim Goschen, First Viscount Goschen, Vol. 1* (London: Longman’s, Green and Co., 1911), 61–62; and Percy Colson, ed., *Lord Goschen and His Friends* (London: Hutchinson and Co., 1946), where Colson writes that the young Lord Cecil “had all the contempt of a Cecil for a ‘Jew Adventurer,’ a contempt he expressed with cynical frankness” (99 and 22). It is not surprising, though it remains little commented on, that Salisbury introduced a private member’s bill in 1894 to restrict the entry of anarchists and destitute aliens into Britain. See Bill Schwarz, “Conservatism, Nationalism and Imperialism,” in James Donald and Stuart Hall, eds. *Politics and Ideology: A Reader* (Milton Keynes: The Open University Press, 1986), 167.

63. Quoted in Marsh, *Discipline of Popular Government*, 26; see also Lord Roseberry, *Miscellanies Literary and Historical Vol. 1* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1921), 274; D. Steele, “Lord Salisbury at the India Office,” 117, and A. N. Porter, “Lord Salisbury, Foreign Policy and Domestic Finance, 1860–1900,” 149, both in Blake and Cecil, eds., *Salisbury*; and R. J. Moore, “The Twilight of the Whigs and the Reform of the Indian Councils, 1886–1892,” *The Historical Journal* 10 (1967): 414.

64. Marc Jason Gilbert, “Insurmountable Distinctions: Racism and the British Response to the Emergence of Indian Nationalism,” in Roger D. Long, ed., *The Man on the Spot: Essays in British Empire History* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995), 162–63.

65. Uzoigwe, *Britain and the Conquest of Africa*, 8.

66. Marsh, *Discipline of Popular Government*, 5.

67. Quoted in Marsh, *Discipline of Popular Government*, 12. This is from Salisbury's essay, "Disintegration" [also known under its original title of review of "Speeches of the Right Hon. W. E. Forster, M.P., at Devonport and Stonehouse,"] *The Quarterly Review* 156 (1883): 571; see also Jonathan Parry, *The Rise and Fall of Liberal Government in Victorian Britain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 305.

68. *Lord Salisbury's Blackman*, 37.

69. *Ibid.*, 47.

70. *Ibid.*, 66.

71. *Ibid.*, 54.

72. *Ibid.*, 26.

73. *Ibid.*, 2.

74. *Ibid.*, 9; italics mine. To quote J. R. Seeley's precise formula, "the English are those who speak English." See Seeley, *The Expansion of England*, 174. For recent work on the English language and colonialism see N. Krishnaswamy and Archana S. Durde, *The Politics of Indians' English* (Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1998) and Alastair Pennycook, *English and the Discourses of Colonialism* (London: Routledge, 1998).

75. *Lord Salisbury's Blackman*, 19.

76. *Ibid.*

77. *Ibid.*, 63.

78. See Antoinette Burton, *At the Heart of the Empire: Indians and the Colonial Encounter in Late-Victorian Britain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), esp. chapter 2; and W. T. Webb's *English Etiquette for Indian Gentlemen* (Calcutta: S. K. Lahiri and Co., 1915 [fifth ed.], 6.

79. A character in Salman Rushdie's recent novel echoes and continues this tradition, referring to the twentieth-century Congress as "a talk-shop for wogs." See *The Moor's Last Sigh* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1995), 19.

80. Quoted in *English Opinion on India* 4 (February 1890): 3 and passim; see also *English Opinion on India* 1 (March 1887): 70 and Singh, *The Indian National Congress*, 31. Because the INC sessions met on Boxing Day, "a newspaper wit in England [took to calling it] . . . the Great Indian Pantomime" (Singh, 91).

81. See Gerald Sider, "When Parrots Learn to Talk, and Why They Can't: Domination, Deception, and Self-Deception in Indian-White Relations," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 27 (1987): 3–23. For earlier Indian contexts see Parama Roy's *Indian Traffic: Identities in Question in Colonial and Postcolonial India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 36, and T. M. Lurhmann, *The Good Parsi* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 87.

82. See for example, [Anon.], "Our Future," *Calcutta Review* 30 (June, 1858): 449.

83. Patrick Joyce, *Visions of the People: Industrial England and the Question of Class, 1848–1914* (Cambridge University Press, 1991), esp. chapter 8; and Eugenio F. Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform: Popular Liberalism in the Age of Gladstone, 1860–1880* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 417, where a commentator in 1886 describes a villager using "his homely Doric" dialect to address Gladstone on the hustings.

84. See Burton, *At the Heart of the Empire*, ch. 2 and Thomas Babington Macaulay, "On the Athenian Orators," in his *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, Vol. 3 (Philadelphia: Carey and Hart, 1843), 413.

85. *Lord Salisbury's Blackman*, 18.

86. Masani, *Dadhabai Naoroji*, 279.

87. *Lord Salisbury's Blackman*, 54.

88. See Dadhabai Naoroji, "The European and Asiatic Races," in Chunilal Lallubhai Parekh, ed., *Essays, Speeches, Addresses and Writings of the Hon. Dadhabai Naoroji* (Bombay: Caxton Printing Works, 1887). He was responding specifically to John Craw-



furd, "On the Physical and Mental Characteristics of the European and Asiatic Races of Man," *Transitions of the Ethnological Society* (London: n.d.). The paper was delivered on February 13th, 1866. For Catherine Hall's work see her "Competing Masculinities: Thomas Carlyle, John Stuart Mill and the Case of Governor Eyre," in her *White, Male and Middle Class: Explorations in History and Feminism* (London: Routledge, 1992), 255–95; idem, "Rethinking Imperial Histories: The Reform Act of 1867," *New Left Review* 208 (1994): 3–29; and idem, "Imperial Man: Edward Eyre in Australasia and the West Indies, 1833–66," in Bill Schwarz, ed., *The Expansion of England: Race, Ethnicity and Cultural History* (London: Routledge, 1996), 130–70. For an example of anthropological discourse on "the Negro" at around the time of the Second Reform Act see James Hunt, "On the Negro's Place in Nature," *Memoirs Read Before the Anthropological Society of London* 1 (1863–84): 1–83.

89. John Vincent, *The Formation of the Liberal Party, 1857–1868* (London: Constable, 1966), xxiv.

90. Henry Louis Gates, Jr., *Figures in Black: Words, Signs and the 'Racial' Self* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987); David Dabydeen, "On Not Being Milton: Nigger Talk in England Today," in Christopher Ricks and Leonard Michaels, eds., *The State of the Language* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 7; and Lorimer, "Bibles, Banjoes and Bones," 31–49; and Rehin, "Blackface Street Minstrels," 19–38.

91. *Lord Salisbury's Blackman*, 71.

92. The persistence of this nomenclature is remarkable, as Fred Leventhal has noted in his biography of George Howell, who was defeated by Mancherjee Bhowanagree for the seat for NE Bethnal Green in 1895. Ten years after the fact, Howell recalled bitterly that "I was kicked out by a black man, a stranger from India, not one known in the constituency or in public life." See *Respectable Radical: George Howell and Victorian Working Class Politics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), 212.

93. *Ibid.*, 81.

94. I am indebted to Gary Wilder for seeing this point so clearly, and for offering such an articulate rendition of it as well.

95. I am grateful to Sudipta Sen for this point.

96. See Koss, *Rise and Fall*; Lee, *Origins*; and Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform*.

97. See Hall, "Rethinking Imperial Histories," 3–29.

98. See Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity*; and Eugenio F. Biagini, ed., *Citizenship and Community: Liberals, Radicals and Collective Identities in the British Isles, 1865–1931* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), esp. 2. The Naoroji case is evidence that empire was one of the things which gave Liberalism its ideological coherence "at all levels," and would thereby strengthen Biagini's argument against John Vincent and D. A. Hamer. But empire remains almost completely occluded in Biagini's work. See his *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform*, 2–4 and ff.

99. Butler, *Excitable Speech*, 87–88.

100. I am borrowing here from Rajeswari Sunder Rajan, "Fixing English: Nation, Language, Subject," in her edited collection, *The Lie of the Land: English Literary Studies in India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992), 14.

101. Sanjay Joshi, "Empowerment and Identity: The Middle Class and Hindu Communalism in Colonial Lucknow, 1880–1930," Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1995, 35–36, provided courtesy of the author. See his book, *Fractured Modernity: The Making of a Middle Class in Colonial North India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

102. *Lord Salisbury's Blackman*, i, and Antoinette Burton, "'A Pilgrim Reformer; at the Heart of the Empire: Behramji Malabari in Late-Victorian London,'" *Gender and History* 8 (1996): 190. Interestingly, the visit of Mancherjee Bhowanagree to India in



1896–97 (he had been elected to Parliament in 1895 as a Conservative) prompted harsh criticism from the nationalist press and the publication of a book called *The Indian Political Estimate of Mr. Bhavnagri*, which reprinted over one hundred negative articles on him from Indian newspapers. I am grateful to John McLeod both for this information and for the opportunity to read his unpublished paper, "Sir Mancherjee Bhownagree and the Transvaal Question."

103. *Lord Salisbury's Blackman*, ii.

104. See Koss, *Rise and Fall*, 306. A propos of this, see W. T. Stead, "Government by Journalism," *Contemporary Review* 49 (1886): 653–74.

105. See Koss, *Rise and Fall*, 22. Koss remarks that "the press, a ravenous animal, has always fed on itself, not always with appropriate acknowledgment."

106. See S. B. Cook, *Imperial Affinities: Nineteenth Century Analogies and Exchanges between India and Ireland* (New Delhi: Sage Publications 1993); Curtis, *Apes and Angels*; and Daniel T. Dorrity, "Monkeys in a Menagerie: The Imagery of Unionist Opposition to Home Rule, 1886–1893," *Eire-Ireland* 7 (Fall 1997): 5–22.

107. Cited in Visram, *Ayahs*, 85. For a further discussion of how Jewishness unsettles facile imperial/metropolitan dichotomies see Judith R. Walkowitz, "The Indian Woman, the Flower Girl, and the Jew: Photojournalism in Edwardian London," *Victorian Studies* 42 (Autumn 1998/99): 3–46.

108. I am exceedingly grateful to Gary Wilder, Sidney Lemelle and Dan Segal for urging me to take this point seriously during the course of discussions of my paper at Pomona College in December 1999.

109. Stanley Trapido, "African Divisional Politics in the Cape Colony, 1884–1910," *Journal of African History* 9 (1968): 79–98; James Hunt, *Gandhi in London* (Virginia: Nataraj Books, 1994); and Mohandas K. Gandhi, *An Autobiography, or The Story of My Experiments with Truth* (1927) (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1990).

110. See Belinda Edmondson, *Making Men: Gender, Literary Authority and Women's Writing in Caribbean Narrative*, esp. chapter 1, "'Race-ing' the Nation: Englishness, Blackness and the Discourse of Victorian Manhood" (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999).

111. Quoted in Faith Smith, "Gentlemen, Not Savages: Negotiating Respectability in Nineteenth Century Trinidad." Paper presented at the Collegium of African American Research's "Mapping African America" Conference, Liverpool, England, April, 1997, and at the 22nd Annual Conference of the Caribbean Studies Association, Barranquilla, Columbia, May 1997, 2, and provided courtesy of the author.

112. *Ibid.*, 6–8.

113. I borrow here from Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak, "The Burden of English," in Carol Breckenridge and Peter Van der Veers, eds., *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 145.

114. Madhavi, Kale, *Fragments of Empire: Capital, Anti-slavery, and Indian Indenture Migration* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), 6.

115. *Ibid.*, 5.